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ABSTRACT

These nine articles reflect the diversity of activities taking place in adult education and adult literacy in the Boston area. An introduction briefly describes each article; notes on the authors follow. In "A Different Third 'R'--Radical Math," Marilyn Frankenstein describes a mathematics course that, through content and method, both broadens political consciousness and makes participants active self-educators, in addition to teaching math. "Holistic Teaching and Learning Methods" (Adele MacGowan) discusses ideas that fall under the category of "holistic" approaches that engage the learner in real and substantive contexts for learning. "Organizing a Language Arts Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults in a Classroom Setting" (Sylvia Lotspeich Greene) describes in detail the multifaceted components of a basic reading and writing program and curriculum for adults. "Special Projects in ESL--One Class' Story" (David Russell) tells how a magazine of student writings and a videotape focusing on students' lives came into being through an English as a Second Language class. "Missing Pieces--A Proposal to Reappraise Adult Literacy Using Different Frames of Mind" (Lynellyn D. Horne) surveys the literature and thinking on the definitions and effects of literacy. "Developing Listening Skills--Rationale and Discrimination Exercises" (John Croes) identifies the need for listening exercises in daily ESL lessons and describes some useful formats for presenting them. "Jobs for Youth's Competency-Based G.E.D. Curriculum" (Jean Chambers) is a brief account of the curriculum development process and a description of this curriculum model in its current version. "A Counseling Model for Adult ESL Students" (Stuart Gedal) focuses on the needs and opportunities facing adult education programs in the area of counseling. "Making Things Clear--A Program Handbook Really Written for Students" (Elaine Schear) is an actual brochure for students entering Boston's External Diploma Program. (YLB)

CONNECTIONS

A Journal of Adult Literacy

Connections is a publication of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, located at Roxbury Community College, 625 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115. Our phone numbers are 232-4695 or 734-1960 x212. The ALRI is a joint project of the University of Massachusetts at Boston and Roxbury Community College and is funded by the Boston Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency.

The Adult Literacy Resource Institute provides training, technical assistance, and other resources to local adult basic education programs and advocates for the needs of these programs and their students. The ALRI also publishes, in addition to this journal, an adult literacy newsletter. The ALRI is part of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative, which was created in 1983 by the city to raise the basic, life, and English language skills of Boston adults, enabling them to continue or complete their education, enter training programs, and obtain or advance in employment. Reflecting the intent of the initiative, the ALRI promotes the use of competency-based approaches and models as effective ways to educate adults. The ALRI further promotes educational practices that understand and reflect the cultural, ethnic, racial, and class diversity of the urban population it serves.

Connections is intended to provide a means for Boston-area adult educators to communicate with their colleagues, both locally and nationwide.

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Cover drawing by Bonnie Acker.

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Introduction

JOHN CROES and STEVE REUYS
Adult Literacy Resource Institute

The articles in this first issue of Connections were selected with several things in mind. We wanted this collection to: 1) reflect the diversity of activities taking place in adult education in the Boston area; 2) appeal to a wide variety of people working in adult education and be of practical use to them in the field; and 3) be interesting and readable, as well as present a variety of approaches and styles. We feel that these intentions have been met to a large degree.

Topics of the articles range from reading, math, and ESL to the GED and the External Diploma Program, from counseling and holistic teaching to forms of literacy and the history of one individual class' special projects. The articles also exhibit a variety of approaches: four (Greene, Croes, Frankenstein, and MacGowan) are essentially "how-to" articles for teachers, with varying amounts of background and theory provided as well; Horne's is almost exclusively focused on theory; Gedal's discusses a specific program component; Chambers' describes a particular curriculum; Russell's takes a narrative approach to telling the story of one class; and Schear's is an orientation booklet directed toward students. The following paragraphs will briefly introduce each of these articles and give some of our thoughts on ways in which they relate to one another and to the overall field of adult education and adult literacy.

Jean Chambers presents the results of one agency's striving for a competency-based method of GED preparation in her article, "A New Competency-Based Approach to the GED." She begins with a useful discussion of competency-based education (CBE) and competency-based adult education (CBAE), then explains the decisions she and others had to make to arrive at the particular approach they would take in developing the curriculum, and finally concludes with a presentation of their program as it currently exists.

John Croes' work with teachers of Indochinese refugees in Thailand and the Philippines provided the basis for his article, "Listening Discrimination," which delineates the value of listening exercises in a language class. Besides helping students to focus on listening as a skill and to develop that ability in a non-threatening way, listening exercises help both the teachers and the student verify what the student has understood. Moreover, the author maintains that developing listening skills helps the student become an independent learner who is more capable of directing his/her own learning outside the class. The article presents a number of formats that teachers can use in developing exercises and issues to consider before presenting them.

In "A Different Third 'R': Radical Math," Marilyn Frankenstein compellingly argues for an approach to math literacy that enables people to "reason quantitatively,...to use numbers to clarify issues and to support or refute opinions" in their daily lives. She describes a mathematics course that, through content and method, both broadens political consciousness and makes the participants active self-educators, in addition to teaching math.

The needs and opportunities facing adult education programs in the area of counseling for ESL students (and, by extension, counseling for all students) is the subject of Stuart Gedal's article, "A Counseling Model for ESL Students." He explores some of the specific reasons for doing this sort of counseling, qualities needed in such a counselor, and problems that may be discovered during the process. The article highlights the importance of supportive services, such as counseling, in adult basic education, especially ESL, and it emphasizes the fact that our programs and learning centers exist, not in a vacuum, but within the context of a specific community, various population groups, and a myriad of other social service agencies and organizations.

Sylvia Lotspeich Greene's article, "Organizing a Language Arts Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults in a Classroom Setting," describes in detail the multifaceted components of a basic reading and writing program and curriculum for adults. Though advocating small group instruction for basic reading and writing, the article will be helpful both to teachers in classrooms of all sizes and to the volunteer tutors whom more and more programs are using to work with individual students. Significantly, many of the techniques she discusses have successfully helped learning-disabled adults, a population most classroom teachers understand insufficiently. Here, then, is a thorough outline of what has evolved into a comprehensive reading/writing program over several years at one center.

Lynel Horne's "Missing Pieces: A Proposal to Reappraise Adult Literacy Using Different Frames of Mind" surveys the literature and thinking on the definitions and effects of literacy. Rejecting the claim that "literacy, necessarily, in and of itself, affects generalized changes in cognitive ability and metalinguistic knowledge," Horne argues that written literacy is simply another symbolic technology which is useful for a particular task. She contends that a "frames of mind" approach provides a broader perspective on literacies and the

tasks they enable people to perform.

Adele MacGowan's article, "Holistic Teaching and Learning Methods," discusses some of the ideas that fall under the category of "holistic" approaches to teaching--that is, those strategies which engage the learner in real and substantive contexts for learning. She focuses on four specific holistic techniques--the language experience approach, dialogue journal writing, conference-centered writing, and the use of ethnographic techniques. Each of these approaches involves a good deal of writing by the students, and the ideas in this article are important both for their applicability in working with students specifically on writing (which also comes under such other rubrics as "English," "grammar," etc.) and for their value in presenting different types of writing as teaching strategies in other areas.

In his article, "Special Projects in ESL--One Class' Story," David Russell tells how a magazine of student writings and a videotape focusing on students' lives came into being through one of his ESL classes. In his narrative, he discusses how the idea of these projects originated, the process by which they were developed, and the problems that were encountered along the way. This article presents an interesting view of a class that, in the orientation of its activities, chose to look, at least partially, outward toward the community rather than exclusively inward toward itself.

Elaine Schear's contribution, "Making Things Clear--A Program Handbook Really Written for Students," is the actual brochure which her agency, Women, Inc./ WEAVE, gives to their students as they enter Boston's External Diploma Program at their site. While the handbook does present information about the Boston EDP, it was chosen for inclusion here primarily as an example of the clear and concise information that education programs (and others) need to provide their students. It's an example of public writing that is truly intended to communicate to its audience, rather than to provide information in the formal, jargon-filled, frequently incomprehensible language that is too often typical of human service and educational institutions.

Although these articles do intentionally span a wide range of topics, we would like to mention some of the connections between articles that occured to us as we read and edited this material.

Adele MacGowan's holistic approaches and the more "agenda-based" programs described, for example, by Sylvia Greene and Jean Chambers provide an interesting contrast. One issue that has been of concern to programs of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative, reflecting as they do a competency-based model, is to what extent the CBAE approach prescribes or proscribes particular content and teaching techniques. Although CBAE certainly does emphasize the specifying of objectives and the directing of instruction toward these objectives, it is nevertheless our view that a CBAE approach should allow for a wide variety of teaching techniques, including those here termed "holistic."

David Russell's article has several interesting points of comparison with Stuart Gedal's. Besides the obvious fact that

both are concerned with ESL populations, the projects undertaken by Russell's class fit very well with the type of community outreach by adult education programs that Gedal refers to, and the "outside-the-class" problems which surface through these projects well exemplify the types of problems Gedal's ESL counseling seems directed at. Russells's projects may also be viewed in the light of MacGowan's article as examples of holistic approaches to teaching and learning.

MacGowan's and Gedal's articles connect in that both are concerned with treating the student as a whole person. Whether with regard to the creating of situations that totally involve the student in real learning or to the providing of the services and support that enable students to take part in learning at all, both articles emphasize that students must be treated as total persons rather than as collections of unrelated parts.

Both Frankenstein and Croes describe methods that nourish a similar goal for adults--the development of skills and attitudes that enable active, self-directed learning. To this end, Frankenstein employs dialogue journals, an unusual approach for a math class, but one which MacGowan uses to encourage writing. Frankenstein's thoughts also cogently illustrate the necessity of math literacy, one of the frames of mind or "intelligences" Horne describes in her more encompassing look at literacy.

Finally, Horne's article poses an interesting and challenging perspective from which to view the other articles contained here, since she questions commonly accepted definitions of literacy and the overwhelming importance our society attaches to literacy as it is thus defined.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles and discovering your own connections.

As a means of promoting multi-cultural awareness as well as student involvement in the community and the school, the students and staff of the Jamaica Plain Adult Learning Program each year organize a Cultural Fair. Shown here are Honduran students in the program setting up their booth at this year's fair, held on May 2nd at the Jamaica Plain Community School. (Photo: Carey Reid)

Notes on the Authors

JEAN CHAMBERS is Senior Instructor in Jobs for Youth's Educational Services Program and teaches one of the G.E.D. classes. She graduated from a competency-based B.A. program, the College of Public and Community Service at U.Mass./Boston, and she has worked in a variety of competency-based instructional settings since 1972.

JOHN CROES has taught, supervised or provided resources for ESL since 1969 when he worked in the Fiji Islands as a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher. As a supervisor in the Consortium's initial ESL training program at the Phanat Nikhom Refugee Processing Center in Thailand, he helped plan and write a tape lab series and trained refugees to teach it. A year later in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, he developed listening discrimination exercises which became a book widely used in the camp. He has revised these materials, and they will be available from Heinemann Educational Books later this year. John is now the ESL Resource Consultant at Boston's Adult Literacy Resource Institute. "Listening Discrimination" and a second article, "Listening Comprehension," first appeared in The Journal, a publication of the Center for Applied Linguistics, Southeast Asia Regional Service Center.

MARILYN FRANKENSTEIN has taught at a variety of alternative high schools and colleges, including the Group School in Cambridge, MA. She is a member of the editorial board of Radical Teacher, a socialist feminist journal concerned with the theory and practise of teaching and from which permission was granted to reprint "A Different Third R: Radical Math." Other articles she has written include "Overcoming Math Anxiety by Learning About Learning" (Math and Computer Education, Fall 1984), "Using Mathematical Magic to Reinforce Problem Solving Methods" (Mathematics Teacher, Feb. 1984), and "Critical Mathematics Education: An Application of Paulo Freire's Epistimology" (Boston University Journal of Education, Fall 1983). Ms. Frankenstein is currently Associate Professor in the Applied Language and Mathematics Center of the College of Public and Community Service, U.Mass./Boston.

STU GEDAL is the ESL Coordinator and an ESL Teacher/Counselor at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA, which serves some 650 ESL students each year. He is also the Project Manager for the Community-Based ESL Program, which serves 160 adults at 5 community sites in Cambridge. Stu has an Ed.M. in Reading and Language from Harvard Graduate School of Education, was a cum laude graduate of the University of Massachusetts/Boston Harbor Campus and was trained in assessing learning disabilities at Children's Hospital Medical Center. He has done staff training in ESL and reading instruction for Roxbury Community College and the Cambridge Public Schools. He enjoys running, skating, outdoor carpentry and his family.

SYLVIA LOTSPEICH GREENE is a Reading Teacher and Learning Disabilities Specialist at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA. In addition to teaching 0-4th level reading classes for eight years, she has been doing consulting for other adult learning centers in the greater Boston area and has written articles for the Boston Indian Council and the Scott-Foresman Adult Reading Comprehension program. She has a B.A. from Oberlin

College in Ohio and a Masters in the Psychology of Reading from Temple University in Philadelphia.

LYNEL HORNE began her social service career in a West African village called Kcugnohou, literally translated as "death is better," but she has spent the past several years focusing on Southeast Asian refugees' health, literacy and resettlement. As a United Nations Volunteer, she supervised ESL teachers in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, but she became especially interested in literacy issues when she was a public health worker and tutor in the Ban Vinai refugee camp for the Hmong in Thailand. Since then she has designed literacy programs in San Francisco and Boston, where she was the co-founder and former coordinator of the Jamaica Plain Community School's Adult Learning Program. She is now doing doctoral research in education and anthropology at Stanford University and is doing an ethnography of the Lao community in San Francisco.

ADELE MacGOWAN holds degrees in Spanish and TESOL and is about to complete a doctorate in Bilingual Education and Reading at Boston University. She is currently the director of the "Teaching from Strengths" project at Roxbury Community College, an urban institution serving primarily minority students. The project is funded by FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) and involves college-wide ethnographic research on ways of communicating, valuing, believing, teaching and learning and on innovations to improve academic achievement, retention and student success in obtaining employment or transfering to 4-year institutions. For further information on the project, write to her at 625 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA, 02115, or call (617)-734-1960, ext. 312.

DAVID O. RUSSELL visited and wrote about community education projects in six states in 1982. He then worked as a literacy teacher in Nicaragua and as a community organizer in Maine before teaching adults at the Cardinal Cushing Center for the Spanish Speaking. Now living in Washington, D.C., he is a production assistant for the public television series, "Smithsonian World" and writes fiction.

ELAINE SCHEAR began teaching seventeen years ago in the Syracuse, N.Y., and Boston-area public schools. Her interest in teaching/counseling and women's issues led to her current position at Women Inc./WEAVE, where she has taught basic literacy classes to adult learners and where she is currently coordinator of the External Diploma Program. She has been a photographer for the past 7 years and likes to combine these interests as much as possible.

A Different Third "R"— Radical Math

MARILYN FRANKENSTEIN
University of Massachusetts/Boston

Mathematical literacy is more than the ability to calculate. It is the ability to reason quantitatively, the ability to use numbers to clarify issues and to support or refute opinions. Yet the proliferation of arithmetic courses at the college level is evidence that people are not learning even basic computation skills in school. Too many adults cannot use numbers effectively in their daily lives. This article will briefly examine the causes of this situation and will outline a basic arithmetic course that not only teaches adults math effectively, but raises their political consciousness and empowers them to analyze and question the status quo, and to fight back.

The reasons why people aren't learning math involve the scandals of education in our society: too many teachers babysit instead of helping students learn; too many teachers convey their own hatred or fear of math to their students; the math curriculum is irrelevant to students' lives; the math curriculum is boring. More complex reasons involve the scandals of our society: sexual stereotyping leads many women to believe that learning math undermines their femininity; intellectual stereotyping leads many people to believe that learning math is too hard for them; meaningless, boring school work serves to prepare people for meaningless, boring jobs.

Underlying all these scandals is the fact that the ruling class can more effectively keep people oppressed when these people cannot break through the numerical lies and obfuscations thrown at them daily. A mathematically illiterate populace can be lulled by the media into believing, for example, that racism is disappearing, for it will not think to answer back that median black income was 61 percent of median white income in 1969 and only 57 percent in 1977, that official black youth unemployment was 45 percent in 1979 compared to 16 percent for white youth, or that nonwhite infant mortality rates were 21.7 per 1,000 births in 1977 compared to 12.3 per 1,000 births for whites. When promoters of nuclear energy argue that nuclear power plants provide 12 percent of our electricity, only a mathematically sophisticated populace could

counter that nuclear energy provides just 3 percent of our total energy needs.(1)

Most college arithmetic courses emphasize rote computation drills and word problems whose solutions fit a few simple patterns. They are based on what Paulo Freire calls "banking" methods: "expert" teachers deposit knowledge in the presumably blank minds of their students; students memorize the required rules and expect future dividends.(2) At best, such courses make people minimally proficient in basic math and able to get somewhat better paying jobs than those who can't pass math skills competence tests. But they do not help people learn to think critically or to use numbers in their daily lives. At worst, they train people to follow rules obediently, without understanding, and to take their proper place in society, without questioning..

"The aim of the course is to educate people to want radical social change while giving them both the math literacy tools necessary to challenge ruling ideas and the cooperative learning experiences necessary to create and live in a new society."

The radical math literacy course which I will describe is based on the idea, expressed by Freire, that illiterates "are not marginal to the structure (of society), but oppressed ... within it. Alienated ... 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." (3) The content of this course teaches arithmetic while simultaneously raising political consciousness. Its methods try to break down traditional authoritarian teacher-student relationships by giving students meaningful control over their learning process. The aim of the course is to educate people to want radical social change while giving them both the math literacy tools necessary to challenge ruling ideas and the cooperative learning experiences necessary to create and live in a new society.

Education is never neutral. Traditional education and daily life bombard students with oppressive pro-capitalist ideology. A trivial application like totaling a grocery bill carries the non-neutral message that paying for food is natural. Even traditional math courses which provide no real-life data carry the hidden message that learning math has nothing to do with learning to understand and control the world. Radical courses such as this try to show that there is another point of view. I believe the best we can do as teachers is to tell students our own biases and encourage them to use numbers to support whatever opposing views they hold. (4) By having students examine issues quantitatively and by providing data that most students would not otherwise obtain, we are not feeding students propaganda, but helping them to think critically and to ask incisive questions about the conditions of society.

CONTENT

In this radical math course, arithmetic skills are learned through political application. (5) In addition to raising students' political consciousness by using numbers to expose the inequalities and insanities in our

society, the content of this course provides many other political benefits.

First, class discussions which use math to analyze complex, adult issues increase students' intellectual self-image. Touching on a wide variety of topics adds to the students' background knowledge and therefore improves their ability to argue effectively. As students gain confidence in their own intelligence, they become more willing to voice their opinions and challenge what they have been taught.

Second, radical math is an ideal subject for practicing the slow, careful thinking that people need to examine critically the structure of our society. Because a math text must be read slowly, by filling in steps between the lines, students are forced to slow down their intake of information. Because small visual changes in the symbols can totally change the meaning of a mathematical expression, students are forced to slow down their perceptions. Because the political application problems in this course either contain more information than needed; or require finding additional information, students get practice examining and searching for data, rather than immediately spitting out an answer. And because this course asks students to formulate their own math problems, they get practice examining the consequences of many possible situations before determining what questions they can ask and answer.

Third, since the applications come from a wide variety of areas, it is more than likely that students will raise subject matter questions that the teacher cannot answer. This provides students with an important experience: realizing that the teacher is not an "expert" with all the answers. It encourages students to become skilled at searching for information to answer their own questions. Thus, students become what Freire calls "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher."(6)

Finally, radical math challenges the fragmented view of society presented by a traditional curriculum which breaks knowledge into separate, unrelated issues, to be discussed only by specialists. When math is taught as a necessary part of a careful analysis of the conditions of society, students have a clear example of how knowledge of specific subjects can be integrated to give a critical understanding of the world.

"I believe the best we can do as teachers is to tell students our own biases and encourage them to use numbers to support whatever opposing views they hold."

The following sample problems illustrate how to integrate the teaching of basic mathematics with the raising of political consciousness, and how to foster critical thinking by expanding traditional problem-solving techniques to include definition of problems and a gathering of required information. (7)

APPLICATIONS OF OPERATIONS WITH DECIMALS

According to the Boston Globe (12/27/80), an unpublished Department of Energy study states that since its beginning nuclear power has benefited from federal aid in five major areas: $23.6 billion for research and development, $237.4 million to promote foreign reactor sales, $2.5 billion for

uranium market promotion, $7.1 billion in fuel enrichment pricing aid, and $6.5 billion for management of wastes, mining spoils cleanup, and unpaid decommissioning costs.

1) Find the total federal subsidy to the nuclear power industry.

(This additional problem requires understanding how decimals are used with the words million and billion. It can also help improve students' intuitions about large numbers. A powerful way of describing the gigantic amount, $40 billion, is to have the class compute that, spending at the rate of $1,000 per hour, it would take over 100 years to spend just $1 billion! There are many good charts, put out by organizations like SANE (514 C Street, Washington, DC 20002), that give specifics on how much in human services our nuclear power and nuclear armament spending costs us.)

2) a) Write a brief statement of your opinion about nuclear power. b) Work in a group with three or four others who have similar opinions. List the kinds of numerical data that would support your opinion. c) Find at least one of the facts that you feel would support your opinion and describe how you would find the others.

(The goal of this exercise is to make students aware of how people find and use numbers to support their arguments. For example, this study reported that without these subsidies nuclear power would be twice as costly (4.7¢ per kwh) and unable to compete with oil-fired electricity, currently the most expensive power (3.75¢ per kwh). A pamphlet, "Nuclear Economics: An Invitation to Ruin," can be obtained from the Clamshell Alliance, 595 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139.)

APPLICATIONS OF PERCENT

According to "Eating Better for Less" by Lucille Sandwith (Food Monitor, Sept.-Oct., 1980, pp. 8-12), fifty out of the 32,000 U.S. food manufacturing firms make 75 percent of the net profits. Of these top fifty corporations, thirty-one bought 63 percent of the national media advertising, or roughly $5 billion in 1977. Of the top twenty-five advertisers from all industries, eighteen were food companies.

1) What percent of the U.S. food manufacturing firms make 75 percent of the net profits?

(This question requires careful reading since the many given percents might be confused with the percent asked for. And its solution serves a purpose: changing 50/32,000 to 0.2 percent highlights the fact that only a tiny percent of the firms make most of the profits. The information in the question can lead to a political discussion of agribusiness and corporate monopoly in general, as well as to a math-related discussion of the advertising industry [70 percent of television food advertising, for example, promotes low-nutrient, high-calorie foods, whereas only 0.7 percent promotes fresh fruits and vegetables].)

2) Based on the information given, create and solve a math problem whose solution involves using percents.

(Students will fully understand percents when they understand which percent problems can be created from given information. For example, here students must realize that you cannot find out how much profit the top fifty firms make, but you can find out how much money is spent on national media adver-

tising. Also, it is unclear whether the national media advertising figure refers to the total spent by food manufacturing firms or by all industries. Students must find more information in order to clarify this.)

3) Read the entire article (on reserve at the library). Discuss at least three points in the article that are supported by the use of percents.

(For more facts, contact Lucille Sandwith, Director, Center for Farm and Food Research, Box 88, Falls Village, CT 06031.)

APPLICATIONS OF SIGNED NUMBERS

According to research done by the Coalition for Basic Human Needs (10 West Street, Boston, MA 02111) in April, 1980, the AFDC welfare grant provides $140 per month for shelter costs: $96.20 for rent, $26.30 for fuel, and $17.50 for gas and electricity. Actual shelter costs in every major Massachusetts city exceed that allowance. This means that to live on the welfare budget you must go into debt. Fill in the following chart, which compares the AFDC debts in various cities in Massachusetts:

This can lead to a political discussion of poverty in this country and the role of welfare in band-aiding the problems of our economic system. Statistics which show the disproportionate percent of non-white and female heads of poverty families can broaden the discussion to include the economics of racism and sexism. Also, using research done by local political action groups can broaden students' ideas about how to collect information outside libraries, and may even encourage students to get involved working with a particular group.)

METHODS

Because, as Freire says, "a project's methods cannot be dichotomized from its content and objectives, as if methods were neutral and equally appropriate for liberation or domination," (8) new methods, as well as content, are important in teaching a radical math course.

Traditional teaching methods convince students that they are stupid and inferior because they can't do arithmetic, that they have no knowledge to share with others, and that they are cheating

City	Actual Average Rent(a)	AFDC Rent Debt	Actual Utility(b)	AFDC Utility Debt	Actual Fuel(c)	AFDC Fuel Debt	Total Monthly AFDC Debt
Boston	$143.13	-46.93	47.79		64.08		
Brockton	95.99		43.93		64.08		
Cambridge	192.43		40.49		64.08		
Fitchburg	76.23		45.69		64.08		
Lawrence	78.91		41.01		64.08		
New Bedford	74.90	+21.30	38.02		64.08		
Pittsfield	108.05		36.87		64.08		
Springfield	87.58		39.34		64.08		

(a) Based on 1970 U.S. Census Bureau data for poverty families
(b) Based on rates for 355 kwh electricity and w.5 mcf gas usage
(c) Based on actual degree days in Massachusetts

if they do their school work with others. Such methods effectively prepare students to compete for work at boring jobs over which they have no control.

The methods that follow are intended to begin to undo the training students have received from traditional schooling, to give students a positive self-image, and to encourage them to work together to accomplish the task at hand. The techniques are effective when the reasons behind them are discussed in class.

ANALYZING ERROR PATTERNS

All wrong answers (except those guessed wildly from pure anxiety) involve some correct, logical reasoning. For example, there is logical thinking behind these incorrect subtractions:

$$\begin{array}{rrr} 95 & 64 & 82 \\ -48 & -29 & -36 \\ \hline 53 & 45 & 54 \end{array}$$

This person realized that you subtract each place-value column separately and that you must subtract smaller numbers from larger numbers. However, he didn't know how to "borrow," so he guessed by subtracting the only way he could imagine. The class not only analyzes this student's reasoning, but also discusses how to convince him that the method was wrong and how to teach him correct methods. (9) Analyzing error patterns provides non-rote reinforcement of computation skills and shows students that you respect their intelligence and will not think they are stupid when they make errors. This, in turn, encourages students to respect their own and each other's intelligence.

KEEPING A MATH JOURNAL

Journals are an effective means of reducing students' math anxiety. They serve as vents for feelings and act as concrete records of progress for students who, too often, belittle their own successes and focus on what they cannot do. The journal helps students realize that they can now accomplish what one month ago they thought was impossible and helps them clarify which learning techniques worked best. Students are expected to write in their journals for five to ten minutes, three to four times a week. Topics vary: how they feel in class, how they attempt to do the homework, how they use math outside school, how they feel about their progress, and so on. I collect the journals frequently and comment on them. My comments offer encouragement, alternative solutions or perspectives, and explanations of how students' remarks on learning math often apply to learning in general. Students' comments on the class are very helpful for my lesson planning. I find time to read and comment on journals when I don't collect homework assignments but instead give students the answers to homework problems and encourage them to work on them in class and evaluate their learning together.

QUIZZES

I start most lessons with a review and a one- or two- question quiz. I correct the quiz in class while students solve classwork problems, return the quiz, and review it immediately. The quizzes tell me which topics the students understand and which topics confuse them. They give the students a clear message about what they

were expected to learn from the previous lesson. Also, giving students many quizzes and then discussing feelings about taking tests, the fairness of the questions, and techniques for working under pressure gradually diminishes their test anxieties. In addition, when end-term grades are required, an abundance of quiz grades can be helpful to students.

STUDENTS TEACHING

In order to teach a math problem to someone, you must be able to recognize all the correct methods of solving it as well as the logic behind incorrect methods. At the beginning of the term, I have students explain problems at the board and then, after discussing the difference between explaining and teaching, I gradually train them to teach. As various students practice teaching, they begin to involve many other students and to ask them to justify their answers. I remain quiet; the class checks itself and rarely lets a mistake go by. The students get very involved, arguing constructively and thinking creatively about solutions to the problems. The student teachers effectively involve even the quiet students, who are more willing to participate when it helps a classmate. A feeling of solidarity develops in the class as students, learning from each other, come to respect one another. After many students have had a chance to teach problems at the board, the class attitude begins to reflect their greater understanding of my role as teacher. Students realize how difficult it is to think on one's feet, to write at the board, and to talk to people who aren't paying attention. Having students teach helps break down the authoritarian image of the teacher and simultaneously builds true respect for the hard job good teachers do.

STUDENTS WORKING IN GROUPS

In order for the class to work in groups, certain understandings need to be developed: that people learn at different rates, that they learn by asking questions and analyzing their mistakes, and that every problem can be solved in several correct ways. While the class works in small groups, I circulate among them to facilitate cooperation and to help students who are ahead realize that they can learn by sharing their knowledge.

I suggest a structure for group tasks by writing the task breakdown, with times, on the board, and having the class evaluate how the groups worked after each assignment. The following are sample group tasks:

1) Group Evaluation of Homework (5 min.) a. Working in groups of three or four, determine which homework problem was easiest. (5 min.) b. Determine which homework problem was hardest. (Evaluating homework questions is a good lead into having students create their own math problems. Also, this task shows students that because people learn in different ways, they find different problems easy or hard.

2) Group Creation of Quizzes (15 min.) Working in groups of three or four, create two quiz questions based on the previous lesson. I will then choose from your questions to create today's quiz. (Once students learn to create fair, comprehensive test questions, they will be able to anticipate the test questions teachers will ask and therefore be able to study effectively for tests. Hopefully, the

more practice students have in creating questions, the more they will become used to asking questions in school and in their daily lives.)

FINAL NOTE

I must stress that although I have been developing this curriculum for six years, it is still far from finished. I want this course to be more than just a respectful alternative to the traditional, condescending arithmetic courses taught to adults. I want this course to radicalize students and move them to action. There are two potential underlying problems with which I am currently grappling: that, as with any "reform," there is the danger the course goals might lose their radical focus and become blended into traditional, liberal educational innovation; and that the course curriculum might create overwhelming pessimism in students.

In the future, I would like to add to the course quantitative data showing victories that have been won. I would like students to complete an action project arising from quantitative data they collect on an issue that concerns them. The project must be small enough in scope to have a real chance of success, so it does not wind up reinforcing the childhood message of inherent impotence which, as Jonathan Kozol points out, is so effectively learned in school.(10)

"The journal helps students realize that they can now accomplish what one month ago they thought was impossible and helps them clarify which learning techniques worked best."

A radical math course can help students focus and document their criticisms of life under capitalism. But, I am now convinced that it is vitally important for radical educators to offer more than just a critical analysis of society. I welcome suggestions about how we can also help give students the hope and the energy to act.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dollars and Sense (July-Aug., 1979), p.7 (their source: Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P-60 series); Dick Cluster, Nancy Rutter, and the staff of Dollars and Sense, Shrinking Dollars, Vanishing Jobs (Boston: Beacon, 1980), p.28; "Infant, Maternal and Neonatal Death Rates, and Fetal Death Ratios, by Race: 1940 to 1977," Statistical Abstracts of the United States, No.108, p.75; Information Please Almanac, 1979, pp.345, 347.

2. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), chapter 2.

3. Paulo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1970), p.71.

4. As William Profriedt points out, just the opposite happens in most classrooms, where there exists "a silly neutralism in which teachers believe they are just presenting facts and avoiding opinions or value statements. They avoid value statements because...they do not believe that such statements are susceptible to rational inquiry and verification. Of course in practice they are transmitting a set of values, but one which is not identified as such, and hence is not open to critical inquiry." "Social-

ist Criticisms of Education in the United States: Problems and Possibilities," Harvard Educational Review (November, 1980), p.477.

5. I also use pure math patterns, puzzles, mathematical magic, and mathematical art to add some recreational interest to the course.

6. Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.68.

7. These examples are not all current. I chose them to illustrate the range of political applications and the types of critical, creative thinking involved in the curriculum. Also, the examples are not in order of difficulty, and they are longer and seem somewhat harder to solve than when presented as part of a gradual build-up over a whole semester. Questions about the course may be addressed to me c/o Radical Teacher.

8. Cultural Action for Freedom, p.44.

9. Other examples of error patterns can be culled from your teaching experiences or found in Robert B. Ashlock's Error Patterns in Computation (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1976).

10. Kozol summarizes this message of powerlessness: "Ask, and you may rest assured that you will be refused, but you will have done as much as you should, or as much as anybody has the right to ask, by the very fact of making the request." The Night Is Dark and I Am Far From Home (New York: Bantam, 1975), p.98.

SOURCES FOR RADICAL MATH EXAMPLES

In addition to daily newspapers and The Statistical Abstracts of the United States, a number of progressive newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books are excellent sources of numerical data, tables and graphs.

Newspapers

The Guardian, 33 W. 17th St., New York, N.Y. 10011
In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622

Magazines

Dollars and Sense (monthly popular socialist economic news and analysis), 38 Union Square, Rm. 14, Somerville, MA 02143

The Nation, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305

Environmental Action, Suite 731, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036

The Progressive, 409 East Main St., Madison, WI 53703

Pamphlets

"Portrait of Inequality: Black and White Children in America," by Edelman. Children's Defense Fund, 1520 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036

"Fact Sheets on Institutional Racism" and "Fact Sheets on Institutional Sexism," Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023

"Women, Taxes and Federal Spending," by Robinson. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1213 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19107

"Military Budget Manual: How to Cut Arms Spending Without Harming National Security," SANE Education Fund, 514 C St., N.E., Washington, DC 20002

"World Military and Social Expenditures," Swaid. World Priorities, Box 1003, Leesburg, VA 20075

"The Empty Pork Barrel: Unemployment and The Pentagon Budget," (a number of related pamphlets can also be obtained) Employment Research Associates, 105 East Washtenaw, Lansing, MI 48933

"Why Do We Spend So Much Money?" and "What's Happening To Our Jobs?" by Babson and Brigham. Popular Economics Press, Box 221, Somerville, MA 02143

"How to Research a Corporation" by Rose, Hoffman, Greenhouse. Union for Radical Political Economics, 41 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003

"Ford Anti-Report," (and other anti-reports which reconceptualize the information in official corporate reports), Counter-Information Services, 9 Poland St., London W1, England

Books

Demystifying Social Statistics, Irvine, Miles, Evans, eds. Pluto Press, Unit 10 Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd., London NW 1 8LH

A People's History of the United States (has a number of facts and figures of people's successes) by Zinn. Harper and Row, New York

Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity by Lappe and Collin. Ballantine Books, Division of Random House, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022

The Big Business Reader, Green and Massie, eds. The Pilgrim Press, 132 W. 31st St., New York, N.Y. 10010

The Rich and The Super Rich, Lundberg. Bantam Books, 666 5th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019

Labor and Monopoly Capital, Braverman. Monthly Review Press, 155 W.23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10011

The Capitalist System, Edwards, Reich and Weisshopf, eds. (analysis which shows how all the numerical facts located in these sources are linked together) Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

Holistic Teaching and Learning Methods— Why They Work So Well and How To Use Them in Your Classes

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In recent years there have been startling success stories by educators using methods that I will call "holistic." Some of them are: the language experience approach (LEA); dialogue journal writing; conference-centered writing; and teachers and learners using ethnographic techniques. They have all been used with great success for literacy development, for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), and some, for content areas, too. This article will describe the the four methods mentioned and discuss their commonalities, so that you will see the principles behind the methods which make for high levels of learning success. Knowing these principles can help you feel secure about using the methods and/or devising other equally successful techniques and activities for your students.

My use of the term "holistic" here refers to educational approaches that strive to capitalize on what students bring to the learning situation, i. e., their strengths. They enable students to learn not only through instruction, but through the equally valid and powerful avenues of discovery and inquiry. Furthermore, holistic approaches do not fragment learning into disjointed, boring, artificial pieces. They allow students to grapple with whole, real, and important learning situations, in active and creative ways, bringing all their skills to bear upon the task at hand. They also make learning relevant, challenging, pleasurable, and rewarding. Students need not suffer through tedious and needlessly repetitive tasks which invariably lead to small pay-offs anyway.

Holistic approaches provide for learning in ways similar to those in which children learn their first language: in natural, supportive, interesting, important, spontaneous, low-anxiety situations, where the learner is surrounded with lots of context and talk, and in which the learner can both initiate and respond in the discovery-inquiry process, as s/he creatively seeks to learn. In these situations, no one is instructing the child in any structured way; all instruction is reactive. The child has inter-

actions with caretakers and older children, and is allowed to choose what's to be learned or discussed next, thereby building on his/her knowledge, interests, needs, and the immediate context. In addition, no one is correcting the child's mistakes, and the flow of learning is smooth, cumulative, and continuous.

The objective of this analogy is to help us see implications for teaching and learning in the classrooms. If the one great accomplishment of all normally developing people is the acquisition of a language and all its complexities, and if this is largely done at a very early age with the learner leading the learning, what would the implications be for learning in the classrooms? Let's look at the "how's" of the methods mentioned, and some success stories; then we can begin to see why they work so well. The methods are written in a sequence in which you might use them in your classes.

THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) has been used for years to develop initial literacy and ESL skills. A typical LEA approach may start with the teacher eliciting stories or accounts from students' knowledge and experience. As the students speak, the teacher writes their account on the board. When there is a sufficient "story" or account, the teacher points to the words in the story as she reads it aloud to the group. Then students "read" along as the teacher re-reads the story, pointing again to each word as it is read. This may be repeated. Following this, individual students may read the story, which by now they have almost memorized. The teacher then points to certain words to see if students can identify them. The key content words and sight words of high frequency are chosen for this practice. Then the teacher types up copies of the story and gives one to each student. Students may then make index cards with the new target words on them and practice reading them in sight word games. Students' stories become their textbooks, and the sight words from their stories become their phonics programs.

"[Holistic approaches] allow students to grapple with whole, real, and important learning situations, in active and creative ways, bringing all their skills to bear upon the task at hand."

In ESL, the approach is similar. Students strive to say those things they have some notion of saying, because those things are important for them to say. Thus they build from their strengths -- what they already have knowledge of -- and their needs or interests, and from these they add new knowledge. The LEA serves as a literacy and general language builder in the case of ESL. This approach is powerful in that it is much more successful in developing initial literacy than are published basal and phonics programs, because LEA harnesses students' strengths, including their ways of using language, their experiences, their knowledge, their interests. Utilizing those strengths not only promotes more learning of a lasting kind, but also gives students more confidence because they have more success and control in their efforts. Furthermore, they tend

to persist in their goals because they are not failing or missing what's being taught. As students progress in their control of the written language or ESL, you can stimulate their interests by helping them transcribe and read tapes of their own stories, favorite songs, poems, jokes, or speeches, and other interesting material. Since there has been a great deal written on LEA, I will leave it to the reader to pursue it further, and progress to the newer method of Dialogue Journal Writing.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING

Several years ago, a sixth-grade teacher, named Mrs. Reed, who was assigned the lowest-achieving (and worst-behaving) students, decided to have them write to her every day as soon as they got to school. They could write about anything: the class, what had happened at home, what they thought about anything. Each day after school, she responded to each student's entries of the day, and thus a continual written dialogue with each student took shape. This activity was done in addition to the traditional curriculum, which included math, social science, phys. ed., science, English, and art. Ever since Mrs. Reed has been doing Dialogue Journals, her students have achieved better academically than ever before, sometimes going up several reading levels in the course of the year. Not only do her students' reading, writing, and other academic skills improve, but their affective problems straightened out considerably.

Researchers Joy Kreeft, Roger Shuy, and Jana Staton, from the Center for Applied Linguistics, have done several studies on the development of sense of audience, content density, syntax development, spelling improvement, punctuation improvement, rhetorical development, language complexity, and so on from data derived from a full year's worth of journal entries in Mrs. Reed's class. They found steady, strong growth in all those areas. Now Mrs. Reed is working with a sixth-grade ESL group and having similar successes. Not only are their literate skills improving, but they are learning ESL at a very fast rate. The act of really communicating makes language demands on the students that make them learn English. The more the students attempt to communicate meaning, the more language demands they put on themselves, and the more language they really learn.

Due to Mrs. Reed's successes, many educators have started using Dialogue Journals themselves with students from first grade through university level, and with native and second language learners. Students' perceptions of them are that they promote understanding, allow them to express their feelings and assert their rights, help them learn academic material, and enable them to know and be known by the teacher. In the journals, students can talk about anything. Entries include complaints, jokes, discussions or questions about class material, requests for help or advice, worries, reports, disagreements, and so on. This type of communication constitutes a literacy event of the most important kind: literacy as communication between author and reader. It has been suggested that this is the missing link in our attempts to develop students' literate skills. Kreeft calls Dialogue Journal Writing the bridge between speaking and essayist writing.

We generally don't work on the stages between speaking and

DIALOGUE JOURNALS

1. Tell students that:
   (a) their dialogue journal is a place where they and the teacher will talk about anything they want to talk about;
   (b) the journals will not be evaluated or graded in any way;
   (c) the journals are private and no one else will read them.

2. Have each student buy a notebook which is to be used exclusively for his/her dialogue journal.

3. If you wish, give a brief handout to clarify concepts and requirements. For example:

> "A dialogue journal is a very special kind of writing. It helps you to communicate by writing and to learn a lot more. Every _____, you will write in your journals for _____minutes. I will take your journals at the end of class, write back to you, and give you your journal at the beginning of the next day's class. Here are some things to remember:
>
> 1. Include the date each time you write.
> 2. Write at least _____lines/pages a day.
> 3. Write as much as you like, and always keep in mind that you are communicating with me.
> 4. Be assured that your journal is confidential. I will not show or tell anyone what you write."

4. If teaching a group for a long period daily (e. g., half-day), allow them to return to the journal to write additional entries as they occur to them.

5. Encourage students to write to you about real issues that are important to them; to seek or give information; to solve or discuss real problems; to be honest and frank.

6. Do not attempt to dominate or control the interaction with directives or questions. Be as involved in the content of the interaction as your students are.

7. Do not assign topics for students to write on in the journals.

8. Write in the journals on a regular, frequent basis for at least a semester; the whole academic year is better.

9. Focus on meaning, not form. Do not correct anything. Seek only to clarify meaning and keep the communication going.

10. Teach by using their misspellings and other errors correctly in your responses, but not by overt correction.

formal writing, which would include informal writing and formal speech. Thus formal writing is difficult for most people. But in the journals, students proceed from written-down speech, a lengthy, chatty discourse which is weak in coordination, subordination, sentence variety, and other characteristics which make formal written prose so readable, to written literate speech, and eventually to written formal prose. Some reasons why the journals allow for the continual and cumulative development include: (1) there is real communication, as in native language development, with no attempt to correct and therefore inhibit the student's production; (2) structure takes a back seat to communication, which research shows to be the best way to acquire structure anyway; (3) there is a steady stream of feedback from an interested audience, so that students learn to write for their readers eventually, and not to assume that the readers will supply what is missing or be able to read through reams to get the desired message.

Students begin to trust you, the reader, and then start really trying to communicate with you, writing more, thinking more, generating more questions, and so on. The technique must be used regularly and the journals must be confidential. The chart here will help you get started with the journals. Be assured that students will profit from them.

CONFERENCE-CENTERED WRITING

A considerable amount of research on conference-centered writing for children has shown that it is the best way to proceed if we are to develop students' authoring skills, and not just their editing skills. We have traditionally emphasized the structures and skills of rhetoric and grammar, with examples of good literature for students to imitate. We have also traditionally concentrated on the product, rather than the process, of writing. And in this tradition, we have assumed that students would learn to compose not only expository pieces and narratives, but other genres as well. But we have only really concentrated on two levels of writing: mechanics and rhetoric. Indeed, we spend most writing instruction on those two aspects and never really get to communicating and authoring, which are the heart of writing.

Donald Graves and his colleagues from the University of New Hampshire have detailed over several years and in several grades how the skills of authoring and editing develop when the student is in charge of the writing and develops it in a conference-centered approach. Those students learn both authoring and editing better than students in traditional approaches based on structure, mechanics, and rhetoric. Following is a synopsis of the steps in developing a conference-centered writing approach. And again we can see that similar principles are at work: the student has a lot of control and can use prior knowledge, experience, interests; there is a high level of interaction with readers of the pieces; the focus is on communication of ideas and not on mistakes; there are no limits or rules placed on what or how a student must write; students generate their own questions; students discover many rules for the rhetoric, structures, and mechanics of writing. The synopsis was written for teaching writing to children or adolescents, but you will readily be able to adapt it to teaching adults.

CONFERENCE-CENTERED WRITING

1. Students choose topics and write as much or as little as they wish on them.

2. You and peers read, but don't correct, what the writer has written, and you comment on the content, but not the form.

3. The writer has plenty of time to write, and can either keep writing in the case of "dam overflow" or go to another activity or simply sit and think during dry periods.

4. You might stimulate writing by having brainstorming of general topics and discussion of them. After this the student may choose his favorite 15 or 20 topics, and write these down. Then have the student write as much as he wants to write on the one topic he is interested most in discussing or learning about.

5. After the student has written all he knows or wishes to say about his chosen topic, he gives it to a peer to read; then he and the peer discuss it. At this time he may make additions or deletions to it.

6. When a student is ready, she brings the piece to you for you to read. You read it and react to meaning with sincere comments and with any suggestions you might have.

7. Once a student is used to getting thoughts on paper with an audience in mind and can use basic mechanics, you may start working on organization, but only as the step <u>after</u> those mentioned above.

8. To work on structure, suggest a framework for dividing up the piece into logical chunks, and then into logical order.

9. Once the piece is structurally in order, work on the mechanics.

10. Do not insist on formulas like "5 paragraphs" for a good essay. Let the student decide the length of the piece.

11. Let them write narratives, expository pieces, poems, jokebooks, songs, or anything they <u>wish</u> to work on. Just promote the communication of meaning in literate language.

12. Publish students' pieces, books, etc., so that other students may profit from them.

A way to begin with adults is to have them write collaboratively, in dyads or triads. They choose a topic they're interested in, brainstorm on paper, read each other's ideas, seek more information, write it into their piece, then put it in the best order and edit it. You can teach them other techniques, like comparing, describing, making analogies, relating the ideas in the piece to the readers' experience and others. And in editing stages, you can help them with subordination, coordination, organizational matters, and mechanics. But the authoring has been done by the writers. And in that process, the editing will also have been learned and internalized, so that it may be applied in other writing. Writing also becomes pleasurable: students using this approach actually come to love writing and to think of themselves as writers. And doing collaborative writing first is good psychology because solo writing is a lonely process; and solo writing when one hasn't really done good writing with others first is a detestable chore. Ask a class not experienced with conference writing: "Who here loves to write?" You'll see few hands go up. But if you ask them after a good solid experience with conference-centered writing, many will claim to love writing.

ETHNOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, renowned linguist and cultural anthropologist from Stanford University, has worked with many educators to use ethnography to learn about students' communication and thinking, and then to enable students to be ethnographers to find out the different ways in which we communicate in our primary groups and in secondary groups like school. This work has yielded a broad understanding both of the ways in which culturally different groups of English-speaking Americans socialize their children in the uses of language, and of how teachers have been able to promote high levels of academic achievement by simply utilizing students' primary ways of communicating to eventually get them to be able to bridge to the mainstream ways, and to be at ease with learning in school via both routes.

In her book, Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms, Dr. Heath details how three communities socialize their children into using language and learning; how teachers learned those differences and utilized them in helping typically underachieving groups to achieve as well as the rest; and how ethnography has helped both students and teachers in facilitating and improving communication and learning in the classrooms.

"Maintown children are socialized into using language in exactly the way the school (and textbooks) use it; the other children are socialized into using language so differently that it virtually precludes their effective participation and success in schooling."

The three communities were fictitiously named Maintown, Trackton, and Roadville, all in the Piedmont Carolinas. Maintown is comprised of white and black middle-class, educated families; Trackton, of black mill workers' families, mostly with grade-school educations and a little high school; and Roadville, of white rural farmers, mostly with grade-school educations and

some high school. The children of the Maintown community typically do well in school, but those of Trackton and Roadville do not. Ten years of ethnographic fieldwork explained why. Maintown children are socialized into using language in exactly the way the school (and textbooks) use it; the other children are socialized into using language so differently that it virtually precludes their effective participation and success in schooling. It is as if the children were hearing a new language, along with being challenged by the normal rigors of school subjects, in their elementary and secondary educations.

An ethnography is a detailed description about people, and an ethnography of communication (like Ways with Words) is about how people communicate. The technique used by most ethnographers is to become participant-observers and to take extensive fieldnotes on the populations and situations of interest. As fieldnotes accrue, ethnographers begin to see patterns in the ways in which people communicate and thus come to insights which inform them about those people's ways of learning and thinking--both of which are facilitated by communicating. Such areas as how we use language to teach children, how we tell stories, how we use questioning, how we take conversational turns, what we say non-verbally, and many more types of data are produced in an ethnography. In this way, Dr. Heath and her colleagues, all teacher-researchers, came up with their ethnography and proceeded to use it to help students learn better. They not only utilized students's ways of learning, speaking, and interacting, but went a step further and had students use ethnographic techniques themselves to learn how both their native communicative ways and those of the school could be compatibly used.

In one class of the lowest-achieving fifth graders, the teacher had them learn their science curriculum by going out first and interviewing farmers, storekeepers that sold farm products, and others on agricultural matters. The students returned with their data, discussed it, replayed their taped interviews, taped their own discussions, transcribed what they decided was the most important material, and analyzed their findings in light of what textbooks had to say about the same agricultural matters. They found that information could be gathered or gained in two equally valid ways: through their primary dialect and real, first-hand resources, as well as through academic sources. At the end of one academic year, the reading scores and overall academic achievement of those fifth-graders--which before had been low, in the 2nd grade range -- were all up to grade level or above.

Another success story is of a ninth-grade basic (reading and writing) skills group, all formerly special education students and none reading above the 3rd grade level. Their teacher allowed them, in the second semester, to engage in letter-writing to an anthropologist and to 11th grade pen-pals, and in collaborative writing for publication. She also had them work on, reflect on, and talk about the many ways of communicating that they were exposed to through these activities. Again, by semester's end, all were reading at the 10th grade level or above; and six were good enough to be assigned to English honors classes.

In these and many other cases, including the teaching of adults, teachers have challenged even the lowest-achieving students to become ethnographers of their own communication, and then that of the school. Teachers have given them preliminary training on the work of anthropologists, which students were about to become, on ethnographic techniques like taking fieldnotes, and on how to be participant observers in order to collect data on how people communicate, behave, value, and believe. And in every case where the work has been carried out for an intensive period of time, students learned not only the differences in communication, but the skills needed for academic survival as well.

In ESL classes, students are asked to go out into communicative situations and tape, take fieldnotes, write down questions, etc., like anthropologists. They make notes on what language people use and how they use it. Students keep records of objective and subjective insights, both on the spot and later, i.e., after the interaction. They then come to class prepared to discuss with a partner (or a small group) the fieldnotes and other notes. In class they tape their discussions, and transcribe the parts of the original tapes that they wish to. They then write up some or all of these: a description of what happened, including information on the participants, setting, and language used; an exploratory account of the communicative event; a summary of it; an analysis of it. This works very well in ESL because the students choose the communicative event, and then they discuss it, analyze it, (i.e., work on it) and write it up. There is a high level of involvement, low anxiety, and real language use -- not practice. Again, students' work becomes their textbook.

IN YOUR CLASS

The steps that you can take to use ethnography in your teaching are to first become an ethnographer yourself, and then to have your students become ethnographers. All of you can take fieldnotes, first on communication in your primary groups or families, and then on communication in secondary group settings or situations like school, work, church, and so on. As participant-observers, you will take some on-the-spot fieldnotes and other reflective ones. Taping the situations and replaying them again and again will help you to get the most data possible. When you replay the tapes, you can transcribe them, discuss them, and really begin to analyze them for answers to questions or dilemmas, and for patterns and understandings.

Students find this fascinating and satisfying because they are working from strengths, not weaknesses; from interests, not boring material; from chosen situations, not pre-selected ones; and from authentic, not artificial content. These and other elements give students a sense of ownership, shared knowledge, and control: all of these attributes are empowering and thus give positive affective consequences as well. They question each other and the data (inquiry), and they unveil patterns and understanding in the process (discovery). The learning is derived from rich contexts and is surrounded by meaningful, important talk. Moreover, the levels of student engagement and interest are high.

As students proceed from data collection to descriptions of the data, to recounts, to summaries, and to analyses, they begin to

value their own "ways with words" as valid means of learning other things; they also begin to add the mainstream or standard ways with much more success than is possible with traditional approaches. Literacy and/or ESL skills develop quickly as students grapple with real-life demands like writing accounts of job-related communication; writing questions for interviews of various personnel; reporting the content of such interviews; deciphering job-required reading; transcribing tapes from interviews and discussions; and writing analyses of the above. As students attempt all of this, they not only ask a lot of questions, but they form and test their own hypotheses about oral and written language. They bring whatever knowledge they have to bear on the tasks at hand. Students' data comprise their textbook - one with content that is interesting and critical to their lives.

What then would be your role as a teacher? To simply react to everything that's happening? You will do a lot of reactive teaching-- and that's the best kind anyway. (Remember first language learning; it's all reactive instruction.) But the reality is that you will do more planning and teaching than before, but not of the scope-and-sequence type. Your agenda will be the same, but you will accomplish your goals in real, important, and natural activities, and in non-sequenced ways. To "psych" yourself to do that, it is important first to trust students' abilities to learn, and second, to dispel the notion that certain subject matter can only or best be learned in a particular sequence. That simply isn't true. The best way for a person to learn is in relaxed, natural contexts, characterized by lots of interaction, and at one's own pace. When you allow your students to interact with each other and with you in ethnographic activities, you are maximizing the circumstances for optimal learning. So it is best to use your curriculum as a check list, and not a roadmap. That way you can incorporate holistic methods and accomplish more than ever before.

Suppose, for example, that your agenda is literacy development for students' real and critical objective of coping with the literate demands of their jobs. Some of the skills they may include are: understanding instructions of a technical nature; indicating lack of understanding and asking the questions they need to ask; writing up questions or suggestions or requests for help; reading technical material on procedures; reporting problems properly; coping with changes on the job; understanding work evaluations; filling out forms right; understanding training or re-training. If your students become ethnographers of communication at the work site (or use tapes, video or audio on site) and work on job-related materials or produce actual simulations of situations, they are tackling literacy for the real and critical purposes for which they need it. They are grappling not just with the mechanical skills of reading, but with the literate skills themselves. The literate skills include oral and written language that is needed in academic and work settings.

PRINCIPLES BEHIND HOLISTIC METHODS

Traditional instruction prevalent today has largely been derived from the theories of learning proposed by behavioral and cognitive psychologists. Behaviorists see learning as taking root when there is suf-

ficient repetition of stimuli in the environment of the learner, who is relatively passive in the process. From this view comes the notion that if students repeat things, copy them, and practice tasks to learn skills, eventually they will learn them. Cognitivists see learning as progressing through a series of sequential steps or tasks, each more challenging than the one before. Thus a person learns when things are in order of ascending difficulty. Yet when students are surrounded by lots of interaction and are creatively, actively seeking to learn in holistic ways, they can accomplish things that Piaget and Skinner never dreamed of.

There is a new school of thought about how we learn. Jerome Harste, Carolyn Burke, and others have suggested that we take a Transactionalist view of learning. This view sees the learner as actively, creatively attempting to learn what is at hand. Thus unlike the behaviorists and cognitivists, who reduce learning to its pieces and sequence it ad nauseam, transactionalists propose more holistic approaches like some of those that have been outlined here. Others that would fall into the same category are individualized reading programs, collaborative learning projects, writing to learn (i.e., writing content area matter in a conversational style, writing what we know and think, and other techniques), the Problem-Posing approach and many more. These approaches are characterized by certain principles, some of which have already been alluded to.

A basic principle implicit in these approaches is the expectation that all students will be able to learn the material and skills at hand. This principle alone is empowering. A second principle is that of reality, and therefore relevance. Using student-chosen topics and/or contexts that are real to them not only helps them learn from a more involved, engaged attitude, but it helps them acquire the skills that are on your agenda even better than they would if they proceed via your roadmap. It's because ESL and literacy skills,or the language and its rhetoric and mechanics, are naturally redundant; you cannot work in the oral or literate mediums and not cover the most critical structures, semantics, and mechanics. This follows the basic tenet of learning that real learning proceeds from function to form, and not the opposite. In doing ESL, or in writing/reading for real purposes, the learner, who is a natural rule-maker anyway, forms hypotheses, tests them out, confirms or rejects them, and goes ahead with the learning process as it should occur: with the learner directing it, and with the teacher there providing instructional scaffolding and semantic contingency, helping to negotiate meaning, and answering real questions.

"There is a new school of thought about how we learn...Unlike the behaviorists and cognitivists, who reduce learning to its pieces and sequence it ad nauseam, transactionalists propose more holistic approaches..."

This is not to say that some "bottom-up" activities are not helpful. Being eclectic is probably the best approach. But holistic approaches can cover most of what has to be learned

in school, and unlike more bottom-up approaches, they are characterized by the next principle of importance, the pleasure principle. Students enjoy using these approaches, which, again, is a powerful plus: there is no need to worry about motivation. Among the reasons why they do enjoy them is that they are not hung-up about being corrected, or worried about making mistakes. Mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning, not for labeling the learner or grading him or her. In fact, productive guesses and errors in learning are essential to it. Another important principle is that with these methods learning is surrounded by talk. Talk actually makes learning "take" because if we can talk and negotiate meaning, we can use our prior knowledge and our language skills to learn new things and new skills. Talking contributes to the affective principle involved in holistic learning: that of collaboration, and such collaboration leads to other important principles like providing shared knowledge, ownership of learning product and choice in the learning process.

SUMMARY

This article has outlined the how-to's of four holistic approaches that can be used in teaching literate skills, ESL, and content-area material: the Language Experience Approach, Conference-Centered Writing, Dialogue Journal Writing, and Using Ethnographic Techniques in Learning and Teaching. Such approaches have been shown to promote higher academic success rates, higher student engagement and satisfaction, and learning of a more lasting kind than have the traditional, structural approaches. These successes can be attributed to the principles at work in holistic approaches, including: authenticity; relevance; low anxiety; emphasis on communicating meaning and not on errors; high expectations for all students; a high degree of collaboration, choice, and creativity; reactive, rather than scope-and-sequence, types of teaching; much interaction among students and between students and teacher; few restraints on time or pacing; a Transactionalist view of learning; the pleasure principle; and learning that is allowed to proceed from function to form.

Other equally powerful approaches of this type exist, including writing to learn, writing across the curriculum, the problem-posing approach, individualized reading programs, and more. What's important is that teachers begin using them or devising other approaches that incorporate the principles that lead students, and especially underachieving students -- too many of whom happen to be minority students as well -- to the levels of academic success of which we are all capable.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Heath, S.B. Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

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Organizing a Language Arts Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults in a Classroom Setting

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Of the sixty or so million Americans who are functionally illiterate, only two to four million are enrolled in some kind of remedial basic skills program. (1) This discrepancy is staggering. It is clear that every one of these sixty million people needs as much individualized instruction as possible. And indeed, much of the best literacy work in the country is being done by programs which recruit, train and supervise volunteer tutors to work one-on-one with adult students (most notably Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy International). In order to close the gap, however, more and more basic literacy teaching must be done in small groups, for several reasons.

First, though the present administration has looked fairly kindly on the field of adult literacy, the mood of the country will probably continue to favor cuts in social programs for a long time to come. Adult learning centers need to demonstrate that they can provide services to functionally illiterate adults as inexpensively as possible. Second, most volunteer tutors can only meet once or twice a week with their students, and at the 0-4th grade level, adult learners really need at least four sessions a week to make adequate progress; this can realistically be provided best in a classroom setting with a salaried teacher. And last, good things happen in groups besides the instructional program. The peer support system that develops among the students helps maintain morale and cut down on absenteeism and attrition--two persistent problems in adult education--and provides an ongoing support system beyond the classroom. Also, the growing awareness among groups of students of some of the political aspects of illiteracy can be a powerful long-term factor in social change.

CLASS ORGANIZATION

How does one set up these classes then? Following is a description of one literacy program developed over a number of years at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA. Ideally, no more than ten people should be in each class. Students reading 0-2nd grade level should be grouped together in one class (referred to from here on in as "Reading 1"), and people reading 3rd-4th

in another (called "Reading 2"). Placing 0-4th grade level all in one class results in a span of skills so wide that very little can be done together as a group except oral discussions to develop comprehension skills.

"My experience has been that of my basic literacy students, at least half are dyslexic."

In the average group of ten basic literacy students, there are several major reasons for the skill deficits. While the incidence of dyslexia in the general population is somewhere between one out of ten and one out of 25, depending on what research one reads, my experience has been that of my basic literacy students, at least half are dyslexic. (The others are mostly educationally disadvantaged, having suffered either a lack of education, a discontinuous education, or a poor education. Then there might be a few who could be described as mildly retarded.) The trick, then, is to design a program which covers the needs of all these students. I have found that some of the special techniques designed for individual work with dyslexic students can be adapted to a classroom setting and can be helpful as well to the non-learning-disabled students. These will be discussed at various points following description of the curriculum.

Each class meets four times a week for an hour and a half each session. One way to divide up the curriculum is to do word analysis and spelling on two of those days and comprehension and survival skills on the other two. This way, it is easy for two teachers to share the class if it is not possible for one teacher to do all four sessions. Hiring two hourly teachers may be less expensive than one salaried teacher, and the students often enjoy the change of face. These classes are then supplemented by individual tutoring for those students who most need it. Traditionally, volunteers are college students and retired people, but G.E.D. students from the same adult learning center may leap at a chance to demonstrate their gratitude in a concrete way.

DIAGNOSIS AND PLACEMENT

Each student has been previously diagnosed and placed in the appropriate class, using the following testing instruments:

1. an Informal Reading Inventory which yields an instructional level and information about specific strengths and needs in the areas of word analysis and comprehension;
2. if the I.R.I. is too hard, the Literacy Volunteers of America READ test,(2) which tests knowledge of the alphabet and readiness for phonics;
3. the Gillingham-Childs Phonics Scale, which tests knowledge of sound-symbol associations and the ability to read words in different phonic patterns;
4. a writing sample, including writing the alphabet, spelling the numbers one to ten and the days of the week,(4) some spontaneous writing if the students can handle it, and a spelling test that includes phonetically-regular one-syllable words, unphonetic sight words, and words that follow spelling rules. Diagnosis continues as the class proceeds, when necessary.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is divided into four areas: word analysis (including phonics, sight words, syllabication and structural analysis,

spelling (including spelling of phonetically regular words, unphonetic sight words, and words that follow spelling rules), comprehension (including vocabulary, literal comprehension and inferential comprehension), and survival skills (such as filling out checks and reading medicine labels). For each of these areas, we have developed a scope and sequence chart of skills, each skill phrased as a behavioral objective, e.g., "Knows that ph can sound like /f/" (in this article, underlining a letter refers to the written letter; diagonal slashes refer to the sound), or "Can find the main idea if it is stated in the topic sentence." These charts serve as a curriculum guide to the teacher and also appear in each student's folder as progress checklists. We have found that for students who will not soon see a tangible sign of progress, such as a diploma or even promotion to the next higher class, checklists like these are very important.

The remainder of this article describes some highlights of our curriculum.

WORD ANALYSIS: PHONETICS

From the previously described diagnostic testing, we know that many of the students don't know the sounds of many of the letters and letter combinations, especially the short vowels. To develop this sound-symbol relationship, we have for each letter or combination a card of 8" by 11" oak tag:

front back

For the whole class, the teacher picks those sound-symbol associations that have given the most people the most trouble, like y, w, qu, ch and sh, and the short vowels. The teacher shows the picture side and says, "F, fish, /f/" as s/he points to each. Then s/he asks the students to do the same in unison with teacher as s/he points. This eventually becomes so automatic that when the teacher silently flashes f the students say "/f/." Conversely, eventually the teacher will say "/f/" and the class will respond "F," and then write F as they say "F." The first operation relates to reading, the second to spelling. This drill sequence is the core of the Orton-Gillingham approach, a highly effective method for teaching phonics to dyslexic students.(5) Even if an extended phonics lesson with board work and worksheets is not done each day of instruction, it is extremely important to set aside five minutes of every class for this drill so that the associations become automatic.

If one is teaching total non-readers or backing up and filling in gaps, the first consonants taught are the ones that can be sustained--f, l, s, n and so on--so that later when a vowel is added, the process of blending will be easier. (It is easier to sing and glide together the sounds /l/-/a/-/d/ into /lad/ than /b/-/a/-/d/ into /bad/, for example.) The first vowel we teach is short a, which enables the blending of a number of words. Each new short vowel sound is added gradually with plenty of practice discriminating between it and the previous one(s), e.g., fan, fin, fun. Exercises can include reading from the board, doing teacher-made or commercially published worksheets, and using index card games, Scrabble letters, prepared bingo games or word wheels and flippers. One technique that is fun in a group situation is for the teacher to write words on the board that illustrate whatever phonic principle is being

studied, but to make some deliberate mistakes here and there for the students to catch and correct. When the students need to stay with one element of phonics for quite a while, it is good to have a variety of materials for practise.

When one moves on to the next step, the previous steps are pulled along and incorporated. Everything is overtaught, then continually reviewed. Nothing is dropped until it has been thoroughly overlearned.

As soon as the students are blending short vowel words, they can begin reading sentences made with these words and focusing on the meaning. For example, after reading "Dan sat on the mat," the teacher can ask, "Who is this sentence about? What was he doing?" There are many published materials that fit into this kind of carefully structured, cumulative phonics program.

WORD ANALYSIS: SIGHT WORDS

Sight words are treated differently. Though eighty per cent of English is reputed to phonetically regular, the remaining twenty per cent include many of our highest-frequency words. Each one of these needs to be learned for reading or spelling as a gestalt, like a picture. Sources of these words are:

1. lists, like the Dolch list(6) or the first hundred of Edward Fry's list of 3,000 "instant words,"(7)
2. words from the students' own dictated language experience stories which they want to learn (see later section on comprehension), and
3. words from their free writing that they have misspelled and that are common enough to be worth learning.

It is useful to have a core of sight words that everyone in a class should learn--perhaps fifty for Reading 1 and fifty for Reading 2. Good sources of these are again the Dolch or Fry lists. Each week five or ten can be given as a diagnostic test for reading and spelling. (Typically, a student can read many sight words s/he can't spell.) Each student, then, has his or her own list of missed reading or spelling words that s/he needs to learn. Also each student will have additional words s/he wants to learn from dictated language experience stories or from free writing if s/he is in the Reading 2 class and has some rudimentary writing skills.

"Everything is overtaught, then continually reviewed. Nothing is dropped until it has been thoroughly overlearned."

The students who are not learning disabled can be given a list of their missed words (no more than five per session) to learn for the next day by whatever means they like. For the learning disabled students, the Fernald V.A.K.T. (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile) tracing method can be effective.(8) The teacher folds a piece of 8" x 11" paper in half lengthwise and prints a word large with a black crayon (to give it some grit and texture). If it is a multi-syllabic word, s/he puts a light scoop under each syllable. It is helpful to write lightly a simple sentence using the word in context at the bottom of the sheet, in case the student gets home and forgets what the word is.

The student should hold the word as far away as possible (so s/he

can "swing" a straight arm to the word), take the first two fingers of the dominant hand and trace in the following three-step sequence:

1. trace a line left to right under the word, looking at the word and saying it as s/he traces;
2. go back and trace over each letter, saying not the name of each letter but the whole word at the beginning of the tracing or the whole syllable at the beginning of the tracing of the syllable;
3. repeat the first step.

The student repeats this process until s/he feels s/he knows the word, then turns the sheet over and writes the word on a piece of scrap paper, saying it aloud as s/he writes it. Then the student checks his/her spelling with the master, and if it is correct writes the word five or six times saying the word as s/he writes it.

The teacher should eventually ask each student in the class to demonstrate the method, either to the teacher or to the rest of the class to make sure s/he knows it. Again, the learning-disabled student should be given three to five new words to learn each session.

WORD ANALYSIS: SYLLABICATION AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Plenty of practice hearing syllables in a word should precede written work on syllabication. The difference between a syllable and a letter can be demonstrated by a short multi-syllabic word like idea and a long one-syllable word like through. The teacher can set the example by saying a word and emphasizing each syllable with a knock on the table, or by raising a finger for each syllable, or by drawing a dash on the board for each syllable. Then students can generate words from some easy, fertile category, such as foods or people's names, and for each word the teacher can help the student hear the syllables.

At this point it is helpful to teach the concept of a closed syllable (one where the syllable ends with a consonant which, like a gate, shuts off the vowel and makes it short, e.g., bev, ag, etc.), and an open syllable (one where there is no consonant at the end of the syllable to cut off the vowel, allowing it to continue as a long sound, e.g., pri, mu, etc.).

Then the students are ready to learn the following useful syllabication rules gradually:

1. v̆ccv: If a word has the pattern of vowel-two consonants-vowel, divide between the two vowels making the first syllable closed, e.g., bă̆sket, sĭgnal.
2. v̄cv or v̆cv: If a word has the pattern of vowel-one consonant-vowel, first try dividing before the consonant making the first syllable open, e.g., brū̆tal, crō̆cus; if that doesn't work, try dividing after the consonant making the first syllable closed, e.g., lĕmon, să̆lad.
3. ___cle: If a word ends in -le, divide right before the consonant that precedes the -le, e.g., crŭmble, bū̆gle. If there is a ck right before the -le, however, divide right before the -le, e.g., buckle, tickle.
4. The last rule leads into structural analysis, and it says that a prefix or suffix makes its own syllable, e.g., misjudgement.

In conjunction with this last rule, students can learn to sound out common prefixes, roots and suffixes and also learn their meanings to help with learning new vocabulary (examples: bi- meaning "two," manu- meaning "hand," and -ish meaning "like a....").

SPELLING

The spelling of phonetically-regular words is taught along with phonics, and the spelling of sight words is taught by the Fernald method while reading them. The reading and spelling reinforce one another. The key here is constant practice. The teacher makes up phrases and short sentences that use all the sight words that have been learned so far, plus words that illustrate whatever phonic principle the class is working on. For example, if the class has learned a, i, the consonant digraphs ch, sh, th, wh, and the sight words my, good, have, and work, then all sorts of phrases and sentences can be given for spelling dictation and for reading: a good wish, my dish, have a bash, a thick mush, etc. Again, nothing is left behind. Everything is pulled along, reviewed and reinforced.

Also, there are a few useful spelling rules to teach at this level:

1. For a one-syllable word which ends in f, l, s, or z, if it has only one short vowel before the final sound, double that final consonant (stiff, mass, doll and jazz, but not when, dog and bat, which end in different consonants).

2. If a one-syllable word ends in the sound /k/, and you wonder whether to use k or ck, use ck if there is only one short vowel sound right before the final /k/ (back, luck). This works too for spelling final /ch/ with a ch or tch (match) and spelling final /j/ with a ge or dge (bridge).

3. Doubling rule: if a one-syllable root word ends with only one vowel and one consonant, and if the suffix begins with a vowel, then double the final consonant of the root word (runner, planning).

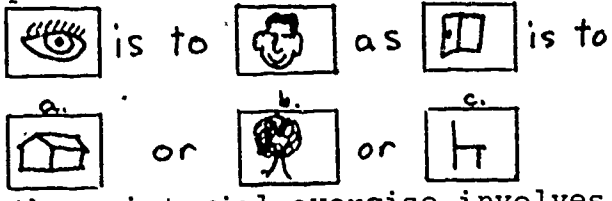
4. Plurals: a) Usually add s to a word. b) If the word ends in s, ss, x, z, ch or sh, add es. c) If the word ends in o, usually add s, but there are some words that add es (heroes, vetoes, tomatoes, potatoes). d) If the word ends in y add s if there is a vowel before the y (plays); if there is a consonant before the y change the y to i and add es (babies).

5. Silent e rule: If a root word ends in a silent e, drop the silent e before adding an ending that begins with a vowel (hope: hoping). Keep the silent e when adding an ending that begins with a consonant (wake: wakeful).

COMPREHENSION

At the literacy level, it is easy to spend the entire time on word recognition and spelling and assume that comprehension must come later; but reading comprehension is basically thinking skills, and work can begin on these right away. Exercising comprehension provides variety in a lesson and also prepares the students for eventual work at the A.B.E. and G.E.D. levels.

For beginning readers, there are non-reading, pictorial exercises that help develop some of the thinking skills underlying reading comprehension. One example is picture analogies:



Another pictorial exercise involves the ability to shift one's point of view in order to recognize that front views, side views, aerial views and cross sections are all referring to the same object. For example, the student could explain how the following diagrams.

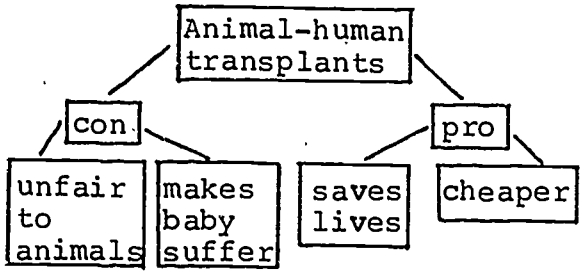
are all a human head:

Though this is a visual-perceptual exercise, it develops a student's ability to understand an author's point of view which may differ from the student's.

Other thinking skills are verbal but can be developed orally in a classroom discussion. For example, the skills of classifying and categorizing, which underlie the ability to recognize main ideas, can be strengthened with exercises requiring the student to identify categories: what is the category all of the following belong under--shoe, belt, glove, hat--or, more abstractly--honesty, generosity, thoughtfulness, patience. The specificity of language so many students lack can be developed by:

1. asking them to define with precision common objects like a chair or soap,
2. asking for as many substitutions as possible for the vague words in sentences like "She's a nice person," or "He went down the street," or
3. asking a student to give the teacher very clear, precise oral directions for how to do some mundane operation, like putting on a coat, and executing the directions exactly as given. (This can be hilarious.)

Another technique for helping students organize their thoughts is the "concept map," which is ideally suited to a group rather than a tutorial setting. As a discussion develops about a controversial, timely topic such as animal-human transplants, for example, the teacher records and organizes the students' ideas on the blackboard, not in classical outline form but in a more flexible flow-chart format:



A visual technique like this need not serve any other purpose than demonstrating to a group that their ideas can be organized; however, the technique does contribute to later efforts to organize their thoughts in preparation for writing.

For students who are total non-readers, many comprehension skills can be developed through the "language experience" method. The language experience approach involves soliciting oral material from an individual student or class. Following a discussion, perhaps, one student relates a pertinent experience or opinion and the teacher transcribes what the student says onto the blackboard or onto paper using the student's exact language and correcting only for gross grammatical errors. (A tape recorder can also be used and transcription done later.) Other students might add opinions, which are also transcribed. Then the teacher reads the transcription back, tracking the words with a finger as s/he reads and asking the student(s) to make any additions or changes if they wish at this point. Finally, the student who "wrote" each section is asked to read it. Having generated the words him/herself and heard them read back a second time, the student should have no trouble. It is then useful to print or type the passage on an 8" x 11" sheet for a student's notebook or onto a master for reproduction for the

whole class. These language experience stories can then be the basis of numerous reading and language exercises. The students can study high frequency sight words from the story or transcribed discussion by the Fernald VAKT method described above. The teacher can also illustrate whatever phonic principle that is being taught at the same time with words from the story and teach grammar using the individual sentences in the story.

Language experience stories also provide excellent material for comprehension exercises:

1. If the material is a narrative, write the events out of order with a box in front of each and have the class number the items in the proper order.
2. Write out certain words, place them at the bottom of the page and have the class put the right word in each blank, following the cloze procedure.
3. Ask questions that develop certain comprehension skills: Which happened first? What are the clues in the story that the person was feeling sad? What do you think could happen next? What would be a good title for this story? and so on.

For students who are able to read at second or third grade level there are many interesting published adult reading materials, with or without comprehension questions after each selection. Teachers can also simplify harder materials, which requires substituting one- or two-syllable words for longer words, making several short sentences out of a longer one, reducing the number of abstract words in a selection and maximizing illustrations. There is the risk of doing great injustice to the original (if it is literature rather than a newspaper article), but at least good adult material is made accessible to our students to read themselves.

VOCABULARY

The vehicles for teaching comprehension, then, are pictures, materials at any level read aloud by the teacher, oral discussions, language experience stories, and published materials easy enough for the students to read themselves. The first kind of comprehension is understanding meanings of single words, or vocabulary. The traditional ways to teach vocabulary are using the context, structural analysis, and the dictionary. Though these are more appropriate at the A.B.E. and G.E.D. levels, literacy level students can also begin learning to use them. The teacher can encourage students to use the context by listening for clues in the words around an unfamiliar word when the teacher reads material aloud. When there are no clues to meaning in the context, other vocabulary skills have to be used. Though discussion of common Greek and Latin roots can be left till higher-level classes, recalling decoding work on the effect a prefix or suffix has on the meaning of the word may provide clues.

Skills such as alphabetizing, which lead to using the dictionary are also important. Because many literacy-level students don't know the alphabet, especially the last third, the following sequence is useful:

1. Teach the alphabet orally first. There is no reason it can't be sung by a class to strengthen auditory memory.
2. Use oral exercises, e.g., say, "What is the letter that goes before g? After p? Before c?
3. Provide written work with cards or worksheets with items like these: [p q ___] [c d ___] [___ R ___]

4. Then divide the alphabet in fourths, a-d, e-l, m-r and s-z. Give the students letters on cards and ask which fourth each letter belongs in.

5. Provide practice on hearing the first syllable in a word and then spelling it, especially getting the vowel correct. This contributes to at least getting on the right page in the dictionary, after which the student can scan and usually locate the word.

New vocabulary may be drawn from materials read aloud to the class or from phonics lessons. When teaching the /ou/ sound of ow, for example, the teacher might want to teach the meaning of scowl and rowdy. Each Reading 2 student can keep a page in the back of his/her notebook headed VOCABULARY where s/he records each new word and a brief, easy definition or mnemonic picture.

Applicable also to the new reader are the excellent discussions of ways to develop the traditional comprehension skills at the level of the paragraph or longer reading selection, which can be found in many standard reading texts and in teacher's manuals of adult reading materials.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

A.. the previously discussed reading and writing skills can be applied to practical, real-life tasks such as reading food and medicine labels, poison ads, telephone books and coupons, and filling out tax forms, checks, insurance claim forms, census forms and job applications, among many others. Compensation and remediation happen concurrently. In other words, a learner can be studying the rules of syllabication so that s/he can independently divide up and sound out, for example, poison-related words like fatal, ventilate, and combustible; at the same time, the student can fill out a sample job application, have the teacher or tutor correct it, copy the information onto a clean form and carry it in the wallet for reference whenever applying for a job. Similarly, the student can keep an alphabetical listing of common foods in the supermarket so that if a friend offers to pick up some groceries, the student can copy what s/he wants from the list. Another useful sheet to give students is a list of the numbers and their spellings and a list of the spelling and the abbreviations of the days of the week and the months of the year, for filling out checks.

Materials for survival skills lessons are available free from many places, even in quantity--tax forms, menus, driver's license applications, fire safety pamphlets, farming information from the county extension agent, consumer information from the Food and Drug Administration, etc. Another advantage of teaching in a group situation is that students are an excellent source of these materials and also of opinions and experiences generated during discussions of these real-life tasks. The publishing companies have also put out many materials in this area, following the Adult Performance Level (APL) study in 1975.(9)

CONCLUSION

This spectrum of reading and writing skills that the functionally illiterate adult has missed out on and needs to learn can seem a bit overwhelming. The process of acquiring them can take an adult learner months or even years. The job of the teacher or tutor is to keep the whole span of skills in

mind, but to deal with one piece at a time, and to help the student set realistic short-term goals. The previously mentioned skills checklists, kept in each student's folder, help the teacher keep track of each student's progress on phonics, sight words, spelling, comprehension and survival skills and also give the student clear visual proof of accomplishment.

All of these skills can be taught effectively by a trained volunteer tutor, and this country needs every literacy volunteer who can lend a hand. In addition, however, more adult learning centers need to include instruction for adults at the 0-4 reading level in their class offerings. The continuity that an established learning center can provide--and the comfort and inspiration that the students offer each other in a group setting--are very important to a student who is beginning a long haul.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Rhonda Kadavy, Carlton Moore and Donna Hunzeker, Reducing Functional Illiteracy: A National Guide (Lincoln, Nebraska: Contact, Inc., 1983).

[2]Ruth J. Colvin and Jane H. Root, READ: Reading Evaluation Adult Diagnosis (Chicago, Ill.: Follett Publishing Co., 1960).

[3]Anna Gillingham, Bessie W. Stillman and Sally B. Childs, Gillingham-Childs Phonics Proficiency Scales (Cambridge, Mass.: Educators Publishing Service, 1967, 1970).

[4]These procedures borrowed from Laura Peltz Weisel, The London Procedure: A Screening, Diagnostic and Teaching Guide (London, Ohio: Bell and Howell Co., 1979).

[5]Anna Gillingham and Bessie W. Stillman, Remedial Training for Children With Specific Disability in Reading, Spelling and Penmanship, Seventh Ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1960), p. 41.

[6]Edward W. Dolch, Teaching Primary Reading, 3rd. ed. (Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Press, 1960), p. 390.

[7]Elizabeth Sakiey and Edward Fry, 3000 Instant Words (New Jersey: Dreier Educational Systems, 1979).

[8]Grace M. Fernald, Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects (New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1943), p. 35-44.

[9]Buddy Lyle and Kim C. Cates, Project Directors, Adult Performance Level Project (Austin, Texas: Division of Extension, University of Texas at Austin, 1976).

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Special Projects in ESL— One Class' Story

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If ESL classrooms can be thought of as two different kinds of places --a narrowly defined class for language skills, or an environment for sharing experiences, problems and cultural projects--then the classroom in this story is of the second type. This is the story of a class that undertook two projects--producing a magazine of writings for citywide distribution in Boston and making a video profile of a student that has been shown at adult learning centers in New York and Washington, as well as in Boston.

During 1984, I taught twelve students of the advanced ESL class at the Cardinal Cushing Center in Boston's South End. (I also taught the most basic level, and while we also undertook projects there, this story concerns only the advanced class.) The English language ability of the class can be described this way: they were capable of understanding a good deal of English but had trouble speaking it because they always spoke Spanish; as far as they were concerned they "could not write in English" and they had difficulty reading, also.

As always, I began by asking what their goals were. I asked such questions as, "Do you want to concentrate on speaking only, or do you also want to work on writing and reading?" and "Does anyone have plans for higher education in the United States?" The unanimous response was they wanted to work on conversation, reading and writing. There was a need for a comfortable place to try out English conversation on a regular basis. For some, there were plans to enroll in a community college or state university. Others wanted to understand newspapers or the documents they received. There were three students who could not read or write well in their native Spanish, and while they wanted to read and write English, the task seemed formidable to them.

Ricardo Calejas, a fellow teacher at the center, had suggested that a magazine of student writings, to be completed over the course of the four month semester, would provide motivation needed for the difficult endeavor of writing in a new language. But it was not until after a first writing assign-

ment ("Why did you come to this country?") that I actually made the suggestion to the class. I think only five students completed this first composition and I typed these up and had them copied. For everybody it was the first time their words had been typed and photocopied; there was a kind of buzz when the papers were passed out, both embarrassment and pride.

There were three primary purposes identified when we discussed the magazine: 1) the class could practice writing; 2) future classes could use the magazine as a reader and as inspiration to write their own stories; 3) the magazine could be distributed to native Bostonians who, the class felt, did not understand the experience of contemporary immigration.

I asked who wanted to edit the review, and two of the best writers in the class volunteered immediately. Their first task was to write a flyer to be distributed throughout the center, announcing the magazine's existence and inviting articles from all students. With this flyer, the writing had already begun. It turned out that no other class would be doing very much writing (they were very basic classes) and the editors' jobs proved to be more minimal than expected. We would produce only one issue by the end of the semester, but we didn't know this at the outset.

WRITING FOR THE MAGAZINE

Although it was agreed that one short essay per week would not be unreasonable, it became clear that everyone's reluctance to write was great, despite their stated goals. There were a couple of students who steadfastly claimed that they could not write, renewing the claim each week. It became evident that if we did not have a project such as the magazine it would have been much easier for people to give up on writing entirely.

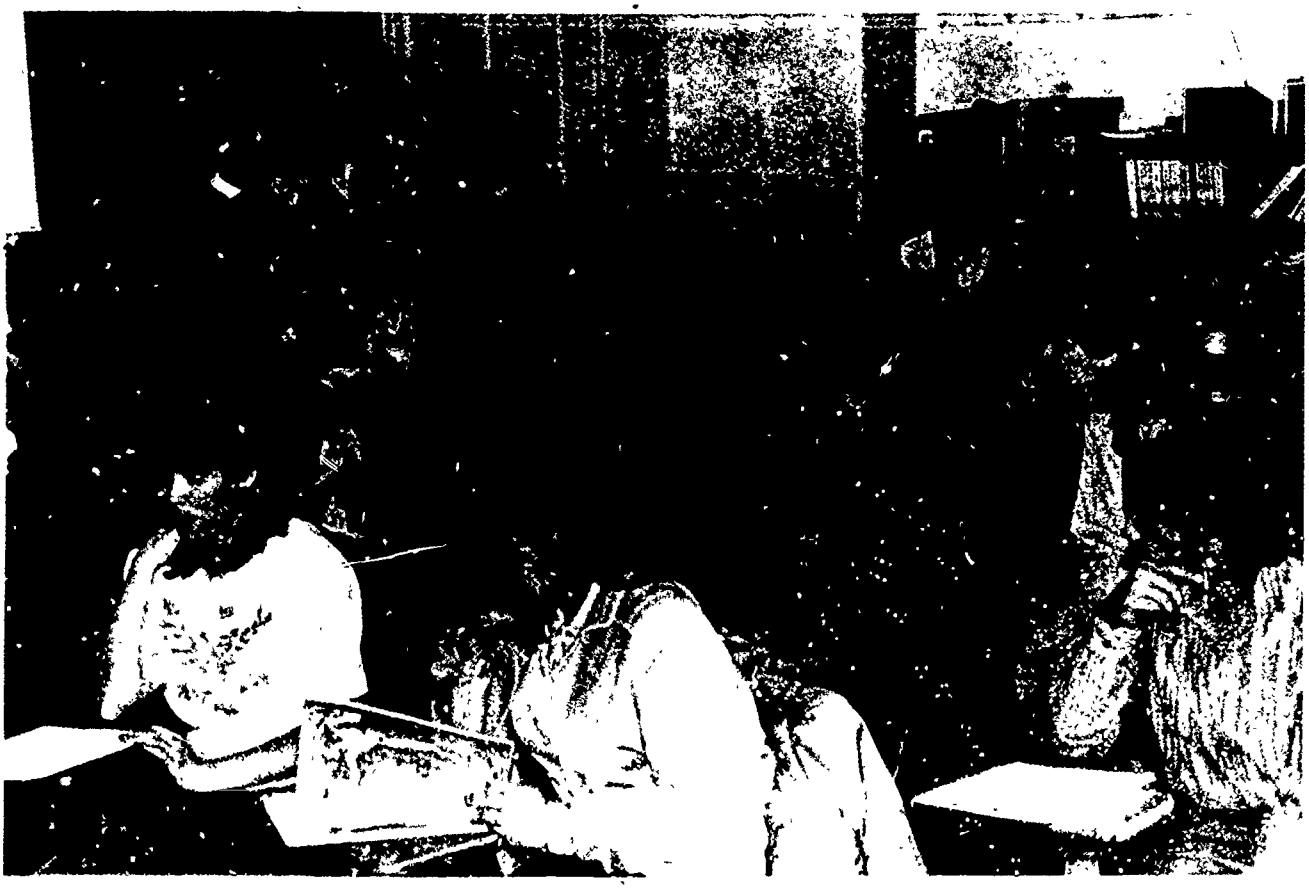
I often sat down with the people who were least able to write, for up to an entire class period. "Tell me, just tell me right now," I would say, "why you came to this country." A story gradually unfolded, the person relaxed, and we forgot about the pen and paper in front of us. After the story was finished, I'd say, "How did that story start?" We would begin with the first word of the first sentence. I was not concerned with proper spelling, but with conquering the fear at hand. The student wrote the words as he or she heard them, and we sometimes got up to three sentences down. The better writers in the class came to take my place in this process of helping those most afraid of trying. There was a student who was completely illiterate and, because it was not a literacy class, we couldn't systematically devote the time needed to teach him. But we were able to do two things: 1) He told us his stories and we transcribed them; from this he saw his words could indeed appear on paper, and he began to pick out and recognize words from the transcriptions; and 2) We painstakingly worked our way through short sentences as he wrote them, when time allowed for this in class.

Many of the assignments were to be done at home over the course of the week, the topic having been determined on Monday. But very often Friday arrived and more than half the class had written nothing. It became standard to use Friday's class, and sometimes Wednesday's or Thursday's, to write.

A rather typical teacher-student dynamic evolved around the writing assignments. I would, on Monday, bring up the week's composition, and it would be greeted by groans--from the most advanced students as well as the most basic--before a subject had been discussed. Yet, they would insist they wanted to complete the magazine. These groans would always be offset by the pride, humor and overall discussion generated when reading the typed versions of the week's compositions.

I found that the dread that greeted each week's composition meant that people wouldn't select their own topics. I always began by asking what we should write about. There were wonderful times when another aspect of the class (a particular news item, a biography, the subject of elections or taxes) naturally presented composition topics, or when our discussions were so good that people were eager to write about them. Such titles as these came up: "He Didn't Want to Dirty Hands with a Puerto Rican Girl"; "Snow When It Falls Like Cornflakes"; "I Was Arrested." But other times I had to say, "If you won't pick a topic, I will." I tried to choose from the many aspects of the students' lives that we had shared. People could accept my suggestion or devise their own topic. Some did neither, but simply said, "Let me come up with something at home -

An ESL class at Casa del Sol in Boston reacts to "Our Own Words" (photo: T. Mattie)



I'll write something for sure." There was always an open choice. Assigned topics produced compositions like: "Why I Will/Will Not Stay Here (in the U.S.)"; "If Life Here Is Better Than In My Country"; and "What Do Hispanic People Want From a President?" One student, Carmen Ruiz, who was always one of the most reluctant writers, turned out to be one of the most prolific.

Unfortunately, because of the usual problems encountered by the immigrant adult learner, attendance was not regular and people would fall behind in compositions. In these cases, we accomplished whatever was possible given the time we had.

The compositions generated a rhythm of discussions in which powerful personal experiences were shared. This naturally fed another goal chosen by the class, which was conversation in English, and we rarely had to fabricate a premise for talking. We also got to know each other quite well and this made the classroom a real place of friendship, humor and support. I made my own contributions in writing, about my own experiences, though these finally were not included in the magazine out of neglect and for no other conscious reason.

At first we thought the compositions would simply be photocopied and collated. We later learned that the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, established by the city at Roxbury Community College, would help us to get the issue printed at the University of Massachusetts/ Boston. Since I could type, I put the stories into columns on the word processor of a friend. Meanwhile, we voted on a title--'Our Own Words: First English Thoughts" --and collectively composed an introduction to the issue:

This Magazine

This magazine was written for the purpose of getting the opinion of each student about their own thoughts on some cases, about their own culture, or their own country, what does life mean in this country and the problems that we found learning a new language. As a second purpose, we want people to see how we struggle and see how the Hispanic community is trying to coexist with the people of the USA. We want people to know the Hispanic community itself is here to stay although many of us will not stay here forever. We hope this magazine will be read by many kinds of people, from the poor people to the rich people, black and white, old people, young people, etc.

"For everybody it was the first time their words had been typed and photocopied; there was a kind of buzz when the papers were passed out, both embarrassment and pride."

We also discussed ideas for illustrations. Only one student drew an illustration for his story; the others were generously contributed by a friend of mine, artist Deb Boardman. Layout was completed by me and the only student who did not have a job or family to take care of. Although problems developed with the printing, all of that was not tremendously important, given that the publication already exceeded our initial expectations.

"PANAMA TO BOSTON"

Distribution of the magazine accompanied (and introduced) the showings of our video all over the city. The video had grown out of

a story that unfolded over the course of the semester and that came to involve everyone in the class. Felix Pique had come to Boston from Panama in September of 1983. He had married a Filipino woman, something the class found interesting because the only shared language in the marriage was English. Felix was therefore the only student who had to speak English outside of class.

Felix wrote about his life in his compositions. He wrote about his wife and himself moving to the Charlestown Housing Project as part of the city's effort to integrate it. The Piques' mail was regularly destroyed, their car was repeatedly vandalized, and youths harassed them with racial insults. As Felix wrote: "A police woman came and I told her about the problem and she said, if you don't like to have a headache better move. But I don't know what to do because we are new and besides that is not easy to look an apartment so we still live there."

It became a topic of class discussion: what could we do about this problem? "Tell the mayor about it," everyone agreed. Ray Flynn was the newly elected mayor; he had pledged to rid the city apparatus of racism. A class period was devoted to writing a letter to Jose Rodriquez, an Hispanic community liaison person at the mayor's office. We invited him to our class to discuss the problem Felix had.

Jose came and talked to us. He arranged a meeting for Felix with the head of police for the Charlestown section of Boston. The meeting never came to pass because the chief failed to show up. We talked about this and everyone urged Felix to call Jose Rodriguez again, which he did, but to no avail.

While all of this developed, I had been trying to find video equipment for our class. I had previously used cable television to document housing conditions for a tenants' union, and I had several ideas, which we had already discussed, about how video might be used by our class. One idea was simply to film everybody speaking English and then play it back; another was to somehow record the friendships and stories that had evolved among students. The ideas met with real enthusiasm, which had gone dormant for lack of equipment.

Cable Access video was a possibility, but their eight-week required training course was too long for our needs. The Boston Film and Video Foundation made equipment available at rental rates, but only after paying a membership fee of over $200. It was at a MATSOL (Massachusetts Association for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference held at Bunker Hill Community College that I saw a student with a video camera taping the keynote address. Where was he from? Who owned the equipment? He said Bunker Hill had a well-equipped studio and if I had a project in mind I ought to contact Bob Matorin, the director of media services.

Bob Matorin was to become a friend and the mentor of "Panama to Boston", a fifteen minute video profile of Felix Pique. The Adult Literacy Resource Institute made initial contact with him and a meeting was arranged. At the meeting we discussed terms and ideas. Since the Resource Institute was connected to Roxbury Community College, which was a sister institution to Bunker Hill, Bob waived all rental fees on equipment and gave us complete access. But we had to employ two Bunker Hill media students at the rate of $10 per

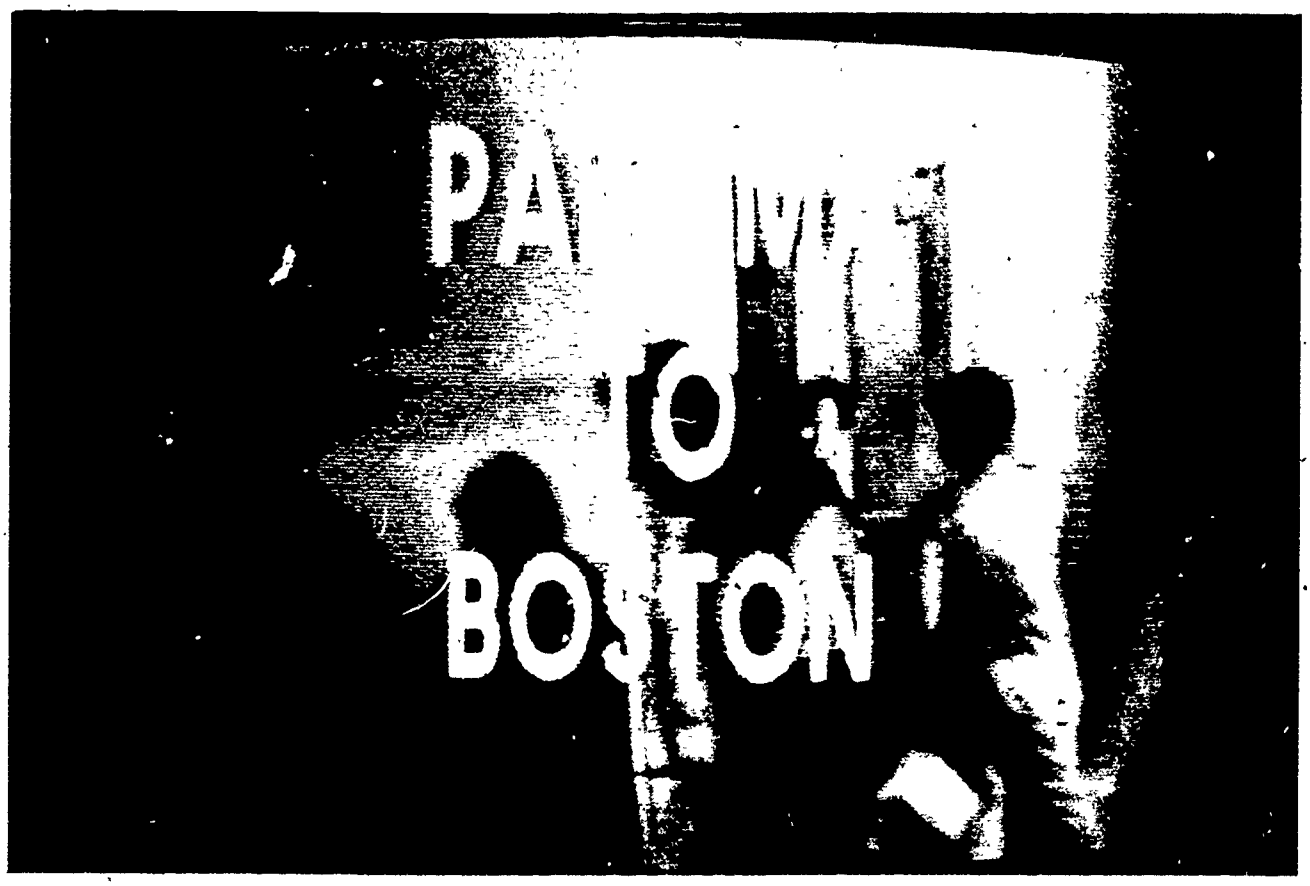
hour. We would need technical assistance anyway, so hiring the students made sense, and they each were paid for 20 hours, though they actually worked far more than that. We would use 20-minute long, 3/4 inch video tapes. (Home video uses 1/2 inch tapes, but 3/4 inch is closer to industrial quality.)

VIDEO DECISIONS

Our original idea was to do a collection of profiles that would include the diverse stories of class members: Carmen, a mother from Puerto Rico who lived in one of the newer tenant-controlled housing projects; Otto, a refugee from Guatamala who couldn't obtain legal status; Felix and the others. Bob was quick to point out the unmanageability of such a project, given our situation. It would take too long to get to know each person on tape in any significant way. We were talking about a series of several hours, not a brief segment. It was at first hard to accept this, for it meant that not everyone in the class could be a subject of the tape.

It was at this point--where resources and time limited us-- that the project became less participatory for the class as a whole. If we'd had the equipment on a regular basis, we could possibly have involved everyone. Yet most people had little or no time outside of school to devote to the project--

Scene from the "Panama to Boston" video (photo: T. Mattie)



classes were in themselves a stress on their work and home schedules. It became clear that this was to be a shorter, experimental project instead of one designed from the beginning of the semester to involve everyone in particular ways, as part of school. (By the end of the project, however, we would have been prepared for such a planned project. The Cultural Education Collaborative, a state funded project, is running just such a program with nine adult education centers in and around Boston. They will take students and educators through a systematic training that results in productions by and about these educational programs. Our tape served as an inspiration for other programs to participate in this project.)

Bob suggested we would get the most out of our tape if we focussed on one student. After much thought, I decided that Felix was perhaps the best subject because his English was the most understandable (the subject would narrate the tape) and his story had many interesting aspects, including his tri-lingual marriage, his change from teacher to factory worker in the course of immigration, and his problems at the housing project which had already involved the class.

I brought this idea to the class and people thought it sounded fine. The fact that any video at all would be made about our group was quite exciting. Felix was delighted at the prospect of putting his autobiographical compositions into a video tape. Wilmer Amador, a 19-year-old student from Honduras who had afternoons free, pledged to assist on all production work. Carlos Frontado was our assigned camera man from Bunker Hill; he was an ideal person because he had himself just immigrated from Venezuela and his rapport with the class was instantaneous. Bill Litchman came to work on sound.

We began by talking through the script I had sketched out based on Felix's compositions. We looked at the various locations, including school, the streets, Felix's home, and his workplace. We learned that it was crucial to visit each place before taping to know where we could plug in for power and what lighting was needed.

I would learn, too, that scripting is the most important aspect of developing an idea, because it requires you to be absolutely clear about what you want on tape. We knew we would cover Felix's story in a half hour and that the story would move somehow between his home, school, and work. Bob Matorin suggested I use a story board, in which one sketches, visually, what the tape will look like from beginning to end in a series of boxes or "frames". This was very helpful because I was forced to think about what shots, exactly, we would need in every situation.

TAPING THE SCENES

We shot four tapes in and around the classroom. We knew that the classroom segments were important, and we filmed them first, while the class was at its peak during the semester. I planned my lessons for these filming days to evoke the most conversation and animation possible -- we told and read stories about embarrassing experiences with English in public places. My story was about using Spanish in public.

It was disruptive and strange to have lights and sound equipment in the small classroom, but when everyone used the camera and watched themselves in the monitor, we all felt more comfortable. The group itself was so friendly and

relaxed that when we actually began class, people were pretty much themselves. Unfortunately, those who were usually more self-conscious about speaking in class hardly spoke at all. (Here again is an example of how a longer, planned video project could include more students. If we'd had the equipment all the time, we could have captured more of the spontaneous and surprising moments of the class.) One person who did speak was Julio Galvez, from El Salvador, who told a wonderful story that played a prominent part in the video tape.

We taped a layout session for the magazine, which was great because people were moving around and talking. Carlos and I had some idea of the need for closeups and group shots from the script. For the exit shots, we had everybody leave school three times, doing it over and over for a good variety of angles. The friendship and intimacy of the class made this kind of effort possible.

"So we found a loading dock, where Felix unloaded the truck, hardly keeping a straight face much of the time because we were in the middle of nowhere."

An interview with Felix and his wife, Adeleide, took place on a Saturday at the housing project. The interview would serve as a base for the entire story, and the tape would always return to Felix and Adeleide speaking between various parts of the story on school, work, etc. I had carefully composed a list of questions about their lives and reviewed these ahead of time with Felix. Overwhelmed at the vastness of the possibilities, I tried to confine the interview to topics taken from Felix's compositions.

Saturday at the project started with a large meal. I never went to Felix's house when they didn't feed me plenty of food, and this day was no different--they fed Carlos and Bill too. Felix's father was there, and a number of Adeleide's Filipino friends, which made for a relaxed atmosphere and a fine meal scene for the tape. By the time Felix and Adeleide sat on the couch to talk, we had sound trouble. We had to do the interview twice because of this. Sound is unbelievably important -- good, consistant, clear sound. Getting this sound is ensured by using the correct type of microphone for that situation and placing it just right. Important parts of our tape were unusable due to poor sound quality.

Sitting off camera, I asked the questions and learned a great deal from the interview, which wound up changing the script. Felix said he'd come to the U.S. to meet his father for the first time; that because he was born in the Canal Zone and was therefore a U.S. citizen, he was disparagingly called a "Zonian" in Panama. Adeleide said she had lived here for seven years and had worked three jobs before they were married; that she had helped Felix to get his job in the factory and now worked the same shift as Felix. There was, in fact, too much information to choose from, and this was the hardest problem of all. Which parts of the story could we most effectively tell? Carlos and I were continually going over the script and revising it.

After the interview, we taped Felix walking down the stairs of his home, two times; we taped him getting his mail and getting into the car and leaving; and we taped the exterior of the projects -- all of which was used in the segment

dealing with Charlestown. Felix and Adeleide's enthusiasm for the project mattered so much; otherwise they would never have gone through all of this. But the idea had grown out of Felix's compositions and the project interested him greatly. It was the trusting and intimate rapport of the classroom which enabled us to tell the story on video tape.

PROBLEM SHOTS

The greatest disappointment came when we were steadfastly refused permission to tape Felix and Adeleide at work in their Cambridge factory. For about two weeks I had been negotiating with Felix's boss at the large TRW plant that makes parts for the automobile industry. There was no union to ask. At first the man said it would not be a problem; then he said they were very worried about revealing their production processes to their competition, so we could only film in certain parts of the factory; then he said we could only tape Felix on the loading dock where he sometimes worked and could not tape Adeleide on the assembly line at all; finally he said we could not film anywhere on the factory premises. He would, however, loan us a loaded truck--one that Felix ordinarily unloaded--and have it driven to some other dock where we could tape. Strange as this arrangement seemed, we at least needed footage of Felix at work, even if taping Adeleide at work was regretably ruled out. So we found a loading dock, where Felix unloaded the truck, hardly keeping a straight face much of the time because we were in the middle of nowhere.

One of Felix's classmates, Otto Ovando, was a Guatamalan student, formerly a labor leader in his country who was forced to leave for political reasons. He'd been unable to obtain legal status in the States and was moving to Canada, much to everyone's sorrow. I had decided to throw a going away party for him at my apartment (the class had several parties throughout the semester) and it occurred to me at the last moment that this would be worth taping. It was a terrific party, the feeling of solidarity in the class could not have been better, and the opportunity to touch on another student's life was welcomed.

Finally, I had an idea to change the script for a more dramatic beginning: we would tape Felix and Adeleide leaving work at midnight, talking to their co-workers. This way, we could glean the view native Bostonians had of their immigrant co-workers. The results were very mixed.

To begin with, there was the problem of finding an electrical outlet, because the factory refused to help. MIT was directly across the street (a fact that made for interesting contrast in the narrative later), and after a good deal of asking, we secured permission to plug in. Secondly, a security officer from the factory almost stopped us from taping at all, even though we were on a public sidewalk, until I mentioned the right names of managers at the plant. Finally, and most importantly, standing around a factory gate at the end of a hard night-shift proved to be a bad time to initiate conversation. Two of the four co-workers (all friends of Felix and Adeleide) did respond amply to questions, but again bad sound left us with the voice of only one. We used the segment for the opening, but not as effectively as we had hoped.

It might have been better, though equally difficult to arrange, to have a relaxed conversation over coffee with Felix and Adeleide's coworkers, at the project, perhaps. But I was working

full-time as a teacher, and Felix and Adeleide worked long shifts in addition to overtime, and we simply did not have enough time to carefully obtain all the visuals we needed.

THE FINAL CUT

Over the course of the summer I took a class at Bunker Hill and learned to operate the editing system myself, which was far less frustrating than watching someone else do it. From May to August I went to Bunker Hill to use the editor almost every day after work, often with Wilmer Amador to help. But we only had the system for a couple of hours at a time, which was never enough to make real headway. Editing was the most arduous process of the entire project, but it's where the tape was ultimately made viewable.

There were points during the editing when I felt real despair. We had twelve 20-minute tapes which had to come down to one 30-minute tape. The sound was very uneven and I did not know how to make it smoother. The first rough cut of the tape was bad and I felt terrible. I finally learned how to mix sound on two channels, allowing us to put background to the narrative, which was a vast improvement. Then the narrative itself had to be entirely rewritten.

Felix's English was understandable to me but not to other viewers. We needed to consolidate all the things he'd said over the course of the hour interview and have him read it clearly. I had transcribed the taped interviews and from these wrote a script for Felix and Adeleide, using their words. I then took a microphone and tape recorder to their apartment one Saturday and had them read the script slowly and clearly. We obviously lost a good deal of the spontaneity of their voices, but it had to be done. It was a supreme lesson in pronunciation for Felix.

"Felix and Adeleide came to several showings of the tape and astounded me with their assertive discussion of issues in the tape, often sounding like leaders. They clearly were empowered by making the tape..."

I then cut the entire tape over again, in a fraction of the time it took to do the first. I used the new narrative as my guide and in the end we had a tape that was only 12 minutes long and which held together and conveyed what we wanted. An absence of certain images (such as the factory) kept the tape short; anything longer with our shortage of material would have been a very boring mistake.

The overall cost came to $700. Four hundred dollars for the two student-technicians from Bunker Hill, and $300 for the tapes. The reward has come in the months since completion, with over twenty showings at community and adult education centers.

As a postscript to this story, Felix and Adeleide came to several showings of the tape and astounded me with their assertive discussion of issues in the tape, often sounding like leaders. They clearly were empowered by making the tape and felt confident, for example, about voicing their problems with the city. During the first week that the tape was shown, Felix received a call from Jose Rodriquez, of the mayor's office. He'd heard about the tape and was very worried about how his name had been mentioned in the story of police in-

action at the Charlestown projects. He immediately arranged for another meeting between Felix and the police official in Charlestown. This meeting did take place, and the police made their first report on the case in its year-long history.

The Casa del Sol class views "Panama to Boston" (photo: T. Mattie)

Missing Pieces—A Proposal To Reappraise Adult Literacy Using Different Frames of Mind

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INTRODUCTION

Dope will get you through times of no money but money won't get you through times of no dope.

(Popular 1960's Saying)

Traditional definitions of literacy - reading and writing - are the money in this modern proverb, whereas the "smarts or intelligence" claimed to underlie literacy is the dope. Those who have the money often mistakenly believe that it necessarily buys the dope, but those who live without money know there are many different ways to obtain dope. The analogy is that literacy advocates 1) fail to consider the practices and social correlates behind their claims, and 2) narrowly define literate from their particular literacy frame of mind. Studies of the relation of literacy to cognition have made us wary of claiming that literacy necessarily, in and of itself, affects generalized changes in cognitive ability and metaliguistic knowledge (Scribner and Cole, 1980). Instead, investigations of literacy take into account the particular set of organized practices (Scribner and Cole, 1980), the specific cultural uses of language (Heath, 1983), and relevant social and historic conditions (Freire, 1970, Luria, 1976, and Kozol, 1980).

Definitions of literacy have become increasingly sophisticated over time. The conventional definition is reading and writing. Laubach and Literacy Volunteer's of America treat literacy in this sense. Many literacy campaigns lacking a political function (eg. Colombia) or the "Back to Basics" movement have a conventional perspective. Goody's (1977) description of preliterate vs. literate societies also presupposes a conventional definition. During the 1950's UNESCO got involved in promoting literacy in the Third World and Gray and others developed a notion of functional literacy (Levine p. 251). Since then, functional literacy has evolved from notions of a level of attainment allowing adults to function in their social environments (p. 253) to Levine's recent definition that "Functional literacy is taken to be the

possession of, or access to, the competences and information required to accomplish those transactions entailing reading or writing in which the individual wishes - or is compelled - to engage" (p. 264). Levine's definition, to some extent parallels the state of the art in research as seen in Scribner and Cole's (1980) study of the Vai. A third definition of literacy is found in Freire's (1980) work and the Cuban and Nicaraguan literacy campaigns. For Freire, literacy is a process of conscientization whose context is the concrete social reality in which man exits. The acquisition of literacy requires an authentic dialog between learners and educators. Proponents of this definition see literacy in relation to other social, cultural and historic changes. Thus, defining a community and a new set of social relations is important. And Vygotsky and Luria, for example, studied the role of literacy and collectivization on cognition during a period of social change. Although proponents argue that a total socialist revolution of society precedes universal literacy and conscientization, Freire (1984) adds that, in advanced western societies, the challenge is to overcome the culture of silence.

Literacy, regardless of its definition, is one of many symbolic technologies, as cross-cultural studies and modern notions of "literacies" suggest. Philosophers such as McLuhan (1964) have challenged the primacy of the written word, but not until Gardner's Frames of Mind has there been a theory elaborating the different symbolic systems. Gardner defines seven systems, or intelligences, and literacy, depending on the nature of the task, may employ several intelligences. Each "frame of mind" or intelligence also has its literacy. His notion also forces us to reevaluate our particular cultural bias towards conventional literacy, when we consider it is but one of several symbolic technologies.

"Programs' success stories...are those people who become aware of their particular frames of mind—intelligences—and whose self-awareness propels them to express their individual talents in larger social frameworks and settings."

In this paper I will argue for a frames of mind vs. a literacy perspective in terms of programs and research, because I believe "frames of mind" may elucidate a broader understanding of cognition.I begin by defining the characteristics of an adult population who are not conventionally literate and who reside in primarily oral culture. I then review relevant literature to show how concepts of literacy and its relation to cognition have evolved over time. I also discuss how the literature descibes the oral-literate transformation many adults in our society are undergoing. Finally, I explicate how a frames of mind perspective vs. simply a literacy one may provide a more appropriate model for adult educational programs. My hope is that such a perspective will enlarge our understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural and personal approaches to knowledge.

My particular interest in frames of mind is not wholly theoretical In developing literacy programs, I have observed a trend. When adults enroll in the program, they ask for conventional literacy --

to read and write better. As they become more involved in the program, they bring rental agreements, letters, applications, and other documents to the classroom, thus demanding a more functional literacy. Increased involvement also brings them in contact with a larger community and new social network. Programs' success stories, however, are those people who become aware of their particular frames of mind - intelligences - and whose self-awareness propels them to express their individual talents in larger social frameworks and settings.

TARGET POPULATION: PERCEIVING THE NEED FOR LITERACY

"There is, in short, no need or direct incentive in mill jobs to make Trackton and Roadville adults feel that they should read and write more than they already do."

Heath, Ways With Words, p. 234

Hunter and Harmen (1979) describe the illiterate adult population as a series of overlapping spheres of racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, those with less than a high school education, and those lacking conventional or functional literacy skills. The majority of illiterate adults fall into the intersection of several spheres. Hunter and Harmen also observe that more Blacks, particularly rural (45%); more Hispanics, particularly women; and more Native Americans than whites are illiterate. They add in a footnote that 130,000 Southeast Asian refugees are covered under the "Emergency Adult Education Program for Indo-Chinese Refugees." Finally, they observe that illiterate adults are more likely to be unemployed than literate adults but that employment "figures do not correlate directly to years of schooling" (p.41) Hunter and Harmen (1979) depict many of the characteristics which would allow us to predict which new immigrants from Central and South America, Southeast Asia, and Africa would be more likely to supplement the spheres of illiteracy. In assessing the literacy needs of new immigrants at the International Institute of Boston and Boston Community Schools, we (Horne and Spiegel, 1984) found that those in literacy programs generally had less than five years of formal schooling and many came from rural areas (many of the Southeast Asians had less than two years of school). While these immigrants could find low-paying, dead-end jobs they were also more likely to be on welfare than their literate fellow immigrants. In 1979 Hunter and Harmen could not have foreseen that the influx of refugees and immigrants would precipitate new literacy programs and initiatives throughout the US five years later. Over 130,000 Southeast Asians have immigrated to California alone (in contrast to their footnote). As a group, Southeast Asian refugees immigrating after 1979 are also less educated than the refugees who left between 1975 and 1979. Many recent immigrants from Central and South America, North Africa and the Caribbean, likewise come from rural areas and have limited educational backgrounds (five years or less).

Hunter and Harmen (1979), reflecting their perspective that illiteracy serves the class interest of the elite, focused more on socio-economic rather than cultural aspects of illiteracy. Thus, Hunter and Harmen observe, "Each time competing minorities reached the educational levels they had been told would lead to economic success and prestige, the game rules were changed." (p. 19). The problem with socio-economic analyses of literacy is

that while necessarily compelling, such analyses also reinforce the stereotyping of illiterate adults as lacking what the elites have. Even theorists such as Freire (1970) and Luria (1976), imply that illiterate adults are less critical because of their socio-economic and historical circumstances. However, from working with so called "illiterate" adults, I would argue that most come from cultures or subcultures with different literate traditions and that they function successfully within their particular social networks and cultural groups.

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In Ways with Words, Heath (1983) observes that the "oral-literate dichotomy does not capture the ways other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language." Heath found that while mill executives talked with and from written materials, the factory workers had few opportunities to use either written or oral language. Heath's work draws attention to the need to examine what literacy means within the context of the lives from which people labelled as illiterate come. If the contexts are not likely to change, there is no incentive for an adult who functions well enough within his/her context to become literate in the sense defined by another, usually more powerful, elite group. Hunter and Harmen (1979) also note "it is probable that literacy skills follow rather than precede development" (p.16)

Fingaret (1983) observes that "many illiterate adults view reading and writing as only two of many instrumental skills and knowledge resources that combined are required for daily work" (p. 134). Of the 43 adults in her study, she classified only four adults as dependent, i.e., those who "do not believe they are capable of intentional action, and they do not recognize their withdrawal as an action in its own right"(p.141). Fingaret's description of the "dependent" adult fits a small minority of adults who enroll in literacy programs and who are labelled illiterate, but whose illiteracy is more symptomatic of external factors; eg. depression, extreme economic hardship, or drug or alcohol dependency. Most illiterate adults, as Fingaret observes, actively participate in either a cosmopolitan or local social network. Adults with cosmopolitan networks devise strategies and use resources effectively to bypass their lack of literacy while other adults remain within their local network, where literacy is less relevant. Adults in both settings develop reciprocal relationships with other literate members of their network.

Fingarets' (1983) analysis also applies to the newest immigrants and cultural minorities, many of whom are semi- or non-literate in English. Tran, a Vietnamese, who was literate in Chinese and had a high rank in the Vietnamese army, got his first job as a custodian for a life insurance company. By 1982 he had risen to chief accountant in the same company. Tran reads and writes enough English to respond to a simple note but has only recently begun to develop

English reading and writing skills. Tran,however, has an extensive city-wide social network which includes professionals, leaders and colleagues outside his Vietnamese community. In contrast, Pimanny, a Lao woman, speaks enough English to work in an assembly plant. In Laos, Pimanny had only a few years of schooling and worked in the fields. Her English is limited to expressions she needs to function at work and to a few brief social greetings. Otherwise, Pimanny's social network is primarily the other Lao in her immediate neighborhood and Lao she sees occasionally at the Buddhist temple in a neighboring city. Both Pimanny and Tran have created social networks that include literates in English. Tran's network is more cosmopolitan, perhaps reflecting his more urban, educated background, whereas Pimanny's is local.

As my analysis has thus far suggested, most "illiterate" adults are functioning members of society. What, therefore, motivates them to become more literate in English? What gains or rewards do they expect? One motivation is clearly economic. Gough found in New Guinea that the Papuans believed that if they learned to read the Bible they could control the cargo cults (Goody, 1968). Many adults enroll in literacy programs with cargo cult illusions; that if they can learn to read and write better, they will get a better job. However, their sex or skin color is probably a better predictor of upward mobility than literacy level.

Employers do use illiteracy as a rationale to deny immigrants and other minorities employment even in those jobs that require minimal skills. Many immigrants respond to the pressure and enroll in programs. Weinstein (1984) observes that such exclusion on the part of employers is a gate keeping mechanism, screening Hmong and other minorities from the job market and other centers of social interaction. Weinstein has developed as an alternative a literacy program to meet the specific needs of Hmong women, who have established their own craft industry. Learning to write price tags and design their own brochures are meaningful skills for these women.

Adults are also motivated to learn to read to participate more fully in a religious or cultural tradition or to acquire a specialized knowledge. Willard Walker (1981) observes that many Cherokees did not become literate until they were adults and that most of the readers were over thirty. They were motivated to become literate to participate more fully in their church, to become more competent doctors, or some combination of these (p. 150-151). Walker also notes that within a few years after Sequoyah, an illiterate Cherokee, invented the Cherokee writing system, thousands of Cherokees became literate. In reviewing the different Native American writing systems, Walker observed that in all cases literacy preserved their forms of social organization and that they found one or more functions for their literacy. The Native Americans were also motivated by the desire to communicate with distant kin (Walker, 1981, p.171).

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Many immigrants see literacy as a means of preserving their culture. Hmong leaders in Ban Vinai Refugee Camp began native literacy programs in part to preserve the history and culture of Hmong. A Khmer group in the Philippines Refugee Processing Center established their own English literacy classes. They also published stories, biographies and histories of the Khmer. Tomas Kalmar reports that Mexican migrants in Southern Illinois were motivated to learn when they developed their own dictionaries (personal communication). Finally, many adults, immigrants and other minorities, are motivated by the need to maintain the relationship and ties to their more "Americanized" and/or literate children. As one black father told me, "I don't want my son to know that his father can't read and write," or as Vietnamese wrote in the Philippines Refugee Processing Center, "We are afraid of losing our children"(class project).

Whatever the motivations, literacy represents a change of direction in most adults' lives. Kozol (1980) has argued that our existing system precludes any real transformation and that universal literacy is only possible in a socialist revolution. Kozol's argument, however, overlooks the radical transformations that rural, uneducated immigrants necessarily undergo in coming to an advanced technological western society. Nor does it speak to the concerns of a black welfare mother who is consciously transforming her world. That these minorities may ultimately have a greater voice in our society will certainly require some profound social transformations of which they will be a part. Meanwhile, interesting and profound transformations are occuring in their private lives. To what extent literacy or schooling are required in this process remains to be seen.

CONSEQUENCES AND INCONSEQUENCES OF LITERACY

"My liberal arts education taught me how to write and think clearly, which is what you need to be successful. So many adults - even those with good educations, engineers and others, can't write. They'll never make it to the top. I didn't have all their technical training but I could write."

Barbara Brown, B.A.,
Stanford 1974, Former
Planning Director of MUNI

Brown's description reflects both the reality and illusion of cognitive claims for literacy. The research on the relation of literacy and cognition began with similar assumptions and perspectives. With more testing of these assumptions, researchers began to notice the social correlations framing that understanding. Ultimately, experiences and observations in communities outside of literate university settings forced researchers to notice specific literacy practices in the context of their social settings. Future research, I hope, will move beyond "literate" paradigms of formal schooling and conventional literacy to discover and elaborate frames of mind in a variety of cultural contexts and settings. Before exploring the new directions of such research, I begin by mapping the routes previous research has taken.

Ironically, Levi Strauss (1955), one of the first scholars of preliterate cultures, had little to say in literacy's favor. After observing a Nambikwara

chief of the Amazon pretend to be literate to gain power over his people, Levi Strauss inveighed against the "strange invention"(p. 337). Levi Strauss argues that one of the most creative periods of man, the early neolithic, was without literacy and that literacy had only facilitated mass exploitation. He also noted that literacy is concomitant with the creation of cities and empires and integrates large numbers of individuals into political systems. Nor did compulsory education or literacy campaigns escape Levi Strauss' sardonic gaze. He wrote, "the systematic development of compulsory education in the European countries goes hand in hand with the extension of military service and proletarianization. The fight against illiteracy is therefore connected with an increase in governmental authority over the citizens. Everyone must be able to read, so that the government can say: 'Ignorance of the law is no excuse.'"(Levi Strauss,p. 338). However, Levi Strauss' attack did not prevent future researchers from favoring the strange invention.

Goody (1977) ignored Levi Strauss' (1955) tirade but noticed his distinction between savage and primitive societies. Sceptical of the "Great Dichotomy", Goody argued that the difference might be related to changes in the mode of communication. Thus, Goody reformulated the distinction as one between literate and preliterate societies. He then argued that literacy changed the structure of knowledge. According to Goody, history replaced myth when man could reflect on and evaluate the past. Man also began to organize knowledge in lists, tables, and formula. Writing promoted hierarchical classification, decontextualization, and linear and reversible thinking - all forms of logical, abstract thinking. But Goody also defended pre-literate thinking. Although magical and unreflective, it was also more fluid and integrated. Pre-literates did not table or simplify reality, and their oral performances were generative, changing over time. Goody's observations of distinctions between oral and literate cultures spurred future research on the cognitive effects of literacy. Few researchers, however, noticed initially that most cultures were not simply oral or literate. Ultimately, Goody's (1968) earlier observations on the impact of restricted literacy in different cultural settings were more insightful than his dichotomy.

In the same period Luria (1976), a Russian psychologist, published in the West the results of his research in the remoter regions of Uzbekistan and Kirghizia during 1931-32. Luria, working under Vygotsky, looked at how changing social conditions brought about changes in methods of thinking. Luria compared three groups; ichkari women (illiterate peasants), peasants who had completed a literacy program, and young collectivist farmers with one or two years of schooling. He analyzed differences in their performance on Piaget-type cognitive tasks involving perception, abstract generalization, deduction and inference, and problem-solving. He also investigated the forms of imagination and self-analysis of the three groups. Luria found dramatic shifts in the nature of cognitive activity and the structure of mental processes brought about by the transition to collectivized labor and new forms of social relations and knowledge. The collectivized

farmers with some schooling employed more abstract, linguistic categories, categorical thinking and logical reasoning than the ichkari women and peasants. They were also more creatively imaginative and objectively self-aware than the others. In the various measures, Luria also found a continuum of performance on the cognitive measures from ichkari women to peasants, who had attended literacy programs, to collectivized farmers with schooling. Luria concludes, "as the basic forms of activity change, as literacy is mastered, and a new stage of social and historical practice is reached, major shifts occur in human mental activity" (p. 161).

The power of Luria's (1976) analysis was that he was able to study changes in human consciousness and cognition during a period of social and historical transformation. He did not focus specifically on literacy, except as a form of activity that developed under certain historical and social conditions. Luria's work places the oral-literate dichotomy in a larger social framework of analysis. Such a perspective allows us to predict the kinds of transformations one might expect in the Nicaraguan and Cuban literacy campaigns. However, Luria's developmental bias also presupposes that the rational and scientific forms of thinking of more advanced technological societies are necessarily superior.

Elsasser and John-Steiner, (1980), in the school of Luria and Freire, analyzed adult writing instruction. They argued that "mastery of written communication requires a difficult but critical shift in the consciousness of the learner" (p. 454). Thus, they designed specific writing tasks to promote cognitive processes of decontectualizing and elaborating one's thought. They argued that "only programs that build upon cognitive processes can help individuals meet the long-term objectives of using their literacy as a tool of personal growth" (p. 464). While Elasser and John-Steiner demonstrate the practical applications of Luria's and Freire's analyses, they do not elaborate what meaning such tasks have for the learners themselves in their own lives.

Down another road a group of researchers conducting cross-cultural studies of cognition observed that literacy linked with formal schooling promoted cognitive development. Greenfield (1966), in her study of Senagalese Wolof children's conservation of mass, found "wider gap between unschooled and schooled Wolof children from the same rural village than between rural and urban school children." (p. 253) In comparing the results of the same study done with American children, Greeenfield also observed that different modes of thought could lead to the same results. She noted that American children achieved conservation through an appearance-reality schema while Wolof children employed an identity by recapitulation schema. Researchers, however, have only begun to look at the different schema adults bring to literacy tasks. Meanwhile, Greenfield's and other cross-cultural Piagetians' observations on literacy, formal schooling, and cognition were tested and challenged by Scribner and Cole (1980).

Scribner and Cole's (1980) study of the Liberian Vai has provided one of the most comprehensive, cautionary notes on the effects of literacy on cognition. In their study of the Vai, Scribner and Cole were able to distinguish between schooling and

literacy effects. They found that formal schooling with instruction in English improves performance on certain cognitive tasks and increased the subject's ability to provide a verbal explanation of the principles involved in performing such tasks. Although Scribner and Cole found some evidence of schooling effects, they did not find that literacy promoted either generalized changes in cognitive ability or uniform changes in metalinguistic knowledge. Abandoning "grand and ancient speculations" of the cognitive consequences of literacy, Scribner and Cole then observed specific literacy practices and the functional uses of literacy. Specifically, they examined the skills involved in Vai, Arabic, and English literates' acquisition and uses of literacy. Scribner and Cole then devised cognitive tasks replicating such skills. They found that Vai literates, in giving directions, tended to use framing or contextualizing statements more than nonliterate or Arabic literates because the Vai had learned to do similar tasks in their letter writing. Vai literates also performed better than nonliterates in using language as a means of instruction, in talking about correct Vai speech, and in using graphic symbols to represent language. Qur'anic literates likewise performed well on tasks that mirrored their specific literacy practices and they out performed all groups on maximum perfect recall tasks. Scribner and Cole concluded that while literacy promoted specific skills it was not a surrogate for schooling.

By abandoning the theories that see literacy as bringing into existence entirely new mental structures, Scribner and Cole have done a great service to the field. They demonstrate persuasively and, I hope, conclusively that literacy is no more (or less) than a set of practices employing a particular technology, system of knowledge and set of skills. Scribner and Cole's work also leads researchers to look at particular contexts and practices of literacy in different settings before making claims about its effects.

FRAMES OF MIND PROGRAMS

"I always wondered, why has nobody discovered me? In school, didn't they see that I'm cleverer than anybody in this school? That the teachers are stupid, too? That all they had was information that I didn't need."

John Lennon (Gardner p. 115)

The discussion would conclude with Scribner and Cole (1977) were it not that I believe that we need a more adequate theory of knowledge for our work with adults of different cultures and subcultures, who come from different symbolic traditions than our own. In seeking ways to incorporate diverse cultural systems of knowledge, technologies, and sets of skills in adult literacy programs, I find that Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, in Frames of Mind (1983), provides the needed framework. Gardner outlines seven kinds of intelligences (or symbolic systems); 1) linguistic, 2) musical, 3) logical-mathematical, 4) spatial, 5) bodily-kinesthetic, 6) interpersonal, and 7) intra-personal. For each intelligence, he elaborates an end-state (the poet, mathematician, artist, etc.), a set of core abilities, stages, types of training, and its intersection with other intelligences. Gardner draws upon neurobiological, genetic, and brain research (including studies of aphasia,

prodigies, idiot savants, and normal populations, etc.) and cross-cultural research to identify the different frames. He does not, however, incorporate research on the subcultures of our own society, which might strengthen the application of his theory.

"Each symbolic system may be said to employ its own literacy; thus one can speak of mathematical, musical, or artistic literacies—the symbolic literacies. Alternatively, there are technological literacies, for example computer or film literacies. While Gardner observes that 'most contemporary schools in the developed world feature several literacies,' most adult programs offer only one literacy."

Gardner (1983) suggests that different intelligences might be elaborated and promoted in different cultural settings. He argues convincingly that our society (i.e., mainstream) promotes logical-mathematical intelligence whose stages were elaborated by Piaget. Gardner suggests why western cross-cultural psychologists spent so much time using Piaget type tasks to test concrete operations in other cultures and why our claims for literacy effects centered on to what extent literacy promotes rational and logical thinking. Cultures where musical intelligence is highly valued, for example, may have equally stressed forms of literacy that apply to the development of composition skills. Reading and writing, however, are but one of many literacies in Gardner's equation. Each symbolic system may be said to employ its own literacy; thus one can speak of mathematical, musical or artistic literacies - the symbolic literacies. Alternatively, there are technological literacies, for example, computer or film literacies. While Gardner observes that "most contemporary schools in the developed world feature several literacies" (p. 357), most adult programs offer only one literacy.

Gardner (1983) provides a useful distinction between know-how vs. know-that knowledge in studying different skills and abilities (Gardner p. 68). Know-how is tacit knowledge, shown by the doing of the activity, whereas know-that is propositional knowledge of activity, i.e.,being able to explain how to carry out the activity. Gardner adds that propositional knowledge seems to be an option followed in some cultures but is of little interest in others. I would argue that know-that knowledge of a particular intelligence is stressed at advanced levels of formal schooling in our culture, whereas many adults from other cultures and subcultures primarily value know-how knowledge in their daily lives. Gardner prefers to think of the various intelligences chiefly as sets of know-how knowledge, which cut across all cultures.

Gardner's "Framework for Analyzing Educational Processes Applied to Three Cultural Settings" (p. 339) provides a model for thinking about the kinds of learning that might be promoted in adult programs. Gardner identifies particular types of education having different intelligences, media of transmission, locus of learning, agents transmitting knowledge, and contexts (Gardner (p. 339). He adds that ways of learning differ in terms of being direct or unmediated, outside of the context, and observational or not. He also notes that the general context

in which learning occurs is a particular cultural context. While Gardner believes that his framework broadens our understanding of aspects of education that might otherwise remain invisible, he warns, "Naturally, any application of this framework must be preliminary and tentative, pending both close observation of the particular society in question and the development of means for applying the categories in unambiguous and reliable manner" (P. 338)

The shift in focus from conventional to functional to socio-economic conceptions of literacy to Gardner's (1983) symbolic framework is a radical redirection in an investigation of Adult literacy. However, Gardner's theoretical framework provides a more complex lens through which to observe the different intelligences and forms of knowledge required in an advanced technological societies. At the same time, his lens broadens our view of the forms of knowledge and intelligences of other cultures. Ideally, if we can interweave and intersect many different types of knowledge, our society and its different members will be the beneficiaries.

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Developing Listening Skills—Rationale and Discrimination Exercises

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This article identifies the need for listening exercises in daily ESL lessons and describes some useful formats for presenting them. A fan of Joan Morley's aural comprehension formats, I developed exercises and workshops in the Southeast Asia refugee camps to apply the formats to survival English competencies. The formats presented here have been used extensively in tape labs and classes in the camps as well as in adult ESL classes in the U.S.

Listening exercises expand a teacher's repertoire of techniques; complement speaking, reading, and writing activities; and help the teacher verify the students' understanding or need to practice more. More importantly, they focus the students' attention, giving them the opportunity to develop a skill that they can use outside the classroom. By listening activities, I am not referring to those minutes during our lessons when the teacher is explaining to, answering, eliciting from, joking with and in other ways talking to the students, partly under the impression that the students are becoming familiar with the sounds and patterns of English.[1]

Rather, the listening activities I am suggesting are focused, objective, short exercises that require not student talk, but student thought about what he or she hears in English. The student listens--no talk is needed. These activities check and exercise each student's comprehension and ability to discriminate, and both the student and teacher can observe progress and improvement and readily know what the student understands. They provide a useful alternative to "Do you understand?" because the students test and demonstrate their understanding.

LEARNING SKILLS

In my estimation, the most significant feature of listening exercises is the learning skill that the students develop. Our students, no matter what level, have used highly sophisticated learning skills in learning their first (and later) languages. Through age and disuse, these

skills may have atrophied, but they are within the students' grasp if developed through exercise and practice. What are these learning skills that the teacher can help the student develop? Although not a comprehensive list, I would include the following:

1) PAYING ATTENTION. Listening is not hearing. Listening involves paying attention to what is being said. Unless a student decides to concentrate on the language and the skill development, s/he will be unable to develop the following, more complex, skills. Indeed it is a skill to be able to focus and refocus attention, to keep the mind from wandering, to concentrate.

2) NOTICING. The phonemes, grammar patterns, intonation, rhythm and other aspects of language differ between languages, and the student msut begin to hear the differences. The first step is to simply notice that differences occur.

3) DISCRIMINATING. The next step is to be so aware of the differences that one listens for the differences, anticipates them, and attempts to hear precisely every aspect of the differences.

4) PRODUCING. In one recent class, a student tried to repeat next. What I heard him say seemed amazingly different: /spis/. I do not know if he had heard /spis/,or if the transfer process from ear to articulation had twisted and mutilated the word next, or if he just could not get his tongue to do what mine had done. It is fairly widely accepted that a language learner will not be able to produce what s/he does not hear. Students need practice articulating what the ear has received and monitoring their own utterances, i.e., listening to their own production, discriminating differences between what they and others say, and modifying their utterances.

5) REMEMBERING. Another skill is being able to retain what one hears. When students become dependent on written notes, their aural remembering skill often declines. The students need to relearn auditory remembering tricks and skills, and this can be done through exercises that require remembering what was heard and teaching remembering techniques.

"The listening activities I am suggesting are focused, objective, short exercises that require not student talk, but student thought..."

6) ANALYZING. Students should be encouraged and challenged to derive their own hypotheses about the language they are learning and about the differences they are hearing. Through the process of contemplating the differences they notice between their native language and the target language, they are becoming active self-teachers. Focused activities can help students notice differences and encourage hypothesizing by isolating and pointing out aspects to consider.

These are at least some of the listening skills that if exercised can be developed into powerful and effective learning tools. These tools can free the student

from the teacher, thereby enabling self-reliance, self-teaching and more efficient learning since the world becomes the classroom and every encounter becomes a lesson.

It is our responsibility as teachers to help the students develop these listening/learning skills. This can be done by providing daily practice through focused exercises. Exercises can be developed for most content and for all levels. There is a great deal of language that we can focus on to exercise our students' listening ability. In the phonological code are phonemes, rhythm, stress, intonation and emotion; the syntactic code includes word classes, affixes and word order; among the semantic aspects are word meanings, cultural aspects, idioms, expletives, colloquialisms, false starts and pauses.[2] Our students should have practice noticing, discriminating, analyzing, producing, remembering and checking their comprehension with all language aspects. And through the activities, we teachers will have feedback on what our students are understanding and what more they need.

TYPES OF LISTENING ACTIVITIES

The most common types of listening activities I have observed in classes are the comprehension activities and phoneme discrimination (minimal pair) exercises. The comprehension activities usually involve listening to a story or dialogue and answering questions about the content. The phoneme discrimination exercises are usually minimal pair drills in pronunciation lessons: fifteen/fifty or necks/next. The remainder of this article describes other formats for focusing the students' attention on more differences in language, thereby developing discriminating skills.

Any language aspect can be suitable for discrimination exercises. While some discrimination activities double-check comprehension, the main focus is on noticing differences between items, not on understanding meanings. Discrimination exercises can be used very easily and productively with the following language aspects and content:

--Numbers (digits, money, prices, time, dates, ages, ID numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, height/weight, sizes, periods of time, etc.)
--Gender (subject/possessive/object pronouns, titles, kinship, occupation)
--Singular/Plural
--Vocabulary (days, months, foods, rooms, etc.)
--Phonemes (including suffixes for plurality, 3rd person, tense)
--Letters of the alphabet and spelling
--Contracted forms
--Sight words
--Questions/Statements
--Tense
--Yes/No vs. Information questions vs. Or questions
--Similar sounding sentences
--Affirmative/Negative

Any class level can benefit from focusing on all these aspects of English, but the lower levels can probably benefit more from concentrating on various number activities, gender, phonemes, letters and sight words, while upper levels can focus additionally on contracted forms and tense. The items in an exercise would also differ according to level: lower levels might hear only one structure throughout an exercise while upper levels might hear mixed structures. Upper levels can

practice with more complex activities since their ability to understand more involved directions is greater; lower levels should work with simpler formats.

The exercise on this page exemplifies discrimination activities. Its purpose is to provide aural practice in discriminating the days of the week and recognizing sight word items. It does not check comprehension, only recognition and discrimination. It can be used at any level by varying its complexity. It is competency-based and communicative: it is useful language necessary for making appointments, and it is presented in a communicative context.

The student is instructed to listen to the teacher and to listen for the day of the week mentioned in the exchange, then to circle (or underline or mark an X on) the correct day on the worksheet.

Teacher Script	Student Worksheet (Student sees only this)
1. What's today? It's Thursday.	1. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
2. What's today? It's Monday.	2. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
3. What's today? It's Friday.	3. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
4. What's today? It's Saturday.	4. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
5. What's today? It's Tuesday.	5. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
6. What's today? It's Sunday.	6. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
7. What's today? It's Wednesday.	7. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.
8. What's today? It's Monday.	8. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri. Sat. Sun.

Some variations on this activity are:

1. Change each question: What's today? What was yesterday? What's tomorrow?

2. Vary the structures: Today's Monday. Yesterday was Thursday. Tomorrow is Friday.

3. Use more complex structures: I'd like to make an appointment. Can you come on Thursday?

4. Use only statements instead of exchanges: Was yesterday Monday? My appointment is for Tuesday, July 8th. Can you come on Saturday at 9:00?

Such an exercise would not be used to introduce or teach the meanings of the days of the week. Rather, it is used after the presentation as a check of what the students recognize and can hear and to give practice in recognizing the days of the week. However, depending on the level, it could be a step before oral drilling, a review exercise, or a diagnostic check to determine what the students already know. After doing the exercise, the teacher knows how each student performed over several items and which, if any, students need more practice. More importantly, the student is developing a listening skill and knows how accurately s/he hears the items.

Numerous other formats are very useful in discrimination activities. Among them are same-different exercises and variations on them, masculine-feminine exercises, timelines, completion/dictation, multiple choice and appropriate response checks. Examples appear in the Appendix. Some require a worksheet on which the students choose and mark answers. Some can be marked on paper or in the students' notebooks. Some require or make use of pictures in books, flash cards or classroom charts from which the students make choices and mark in notebooks or on worksheets. The only limit to the kind and use of these activities comes from the teacher's creativity and imagination.

GUIDELINES FOR LESSONS

Listening exercises can be quite simple to prepare, but they can be complex if necessary. A tape lab is not necessary, and I usually include several listening exercises that do not require a tape recorder in each day's lesson. A tape recorder does add the element of a different voice to listen to: after hearing several different voices, students may develop confidence in their ability to listen to and understand more than just the teacher. Whether using a tape recorder or not, there are several issues to consider in planning, preparing and presenting the lesson.

"As much as possible, I try to elicit correct answers from students...My giving the students the correct answer does not help them hear the difference."

1. At what rate of speed should the speaker speak? My preference is to speak naturally with normal speed and volume.

2. How many times should the speaker repeat an item? For the kinds of discrimination exercises presented in this article, I prefer to say/play each item only once. Students tend to concentrate only on the repetition if the items are repeatedly given twice. I would repeat the entire exercise two or more times if I found that many of the students had left many blank spaces, however.

3. How much time should be given for the students to respond to each item? I tend to allow about twice as much time as it takes me to answer it. With advanced classes, I lessen the time.

4. How should corrections be made? Whatever the method used, I believe that the students should be learning and developing their listening ability. As much as possible, I try to elicit correct answers from students. If there is disagreement among the students, I repeat the item several times, hoping that all

the students will note the difference. My giving the students the correct answer does not help them hear the difference.

There are also several suggestions and cautions I should mention.

1. As much as possible make the exercises practice real listening needs in a communicative context--exchanges rather than isolated sentences and words. Analyze the language being taught to distinguish between listening needs and speaking needs.

2. Make the directions clear and concise. Practice saying them before presenting the exercise to the class. Use the same directions for the same kinds of exercises, and the students will recognize the consistency.

3. Give examples of the exercise--several if necessary. Especially with beginning level students, examples may be more useful than oral directions. The format should not be so confusing that it interferes with the students' practicing the language skill.

4. Insist on quiet and complete attention. Focus the students' attention. There should be no mumbling or commenting that might disturb others.

5. Signal the students before each item by saying the number.

6. Keep the exercises short--five to ten minutes may be sufficient. A few exercises per lesson might well be called for. Make listening exercises a regular activity. The same content or topic can be exercised several times: numbers, dates, spelling, phoneme discrimination, and several other aspects of English need to be focused on regularly. They can serve as excellent warm-ups, reviews and diagnostic tools.

7. Because these are skills being developed, do not expect perfection. Be patient, kind, helpful and encouraging.

This article has focused on the needs for and benefits of listening exercises and has described some techniques for developing the ability to discriminate language aspects. Besides being pedagogically sound and useful, listening discrimination exercises have something else to recommend them: learners like them and quickly recognize their value. Combined with activities that encourage the learners to listen at work or in their community, listening exercises can help students become more efficient language learners capable of directing their own learning.

APPENDIX

In all the following examples, the teacher's script appears on the left and the student's worksheet--what the student should write in a notebook--appears on the right. Only a few items are used in each example, but an exercise would include about ten items.

Pronunciation

"You will hear two words (or sentences for more advanced lessons). If the words are the same, circle (or underline, mark an X, check, or write) S. If they are different, circle (etc.) D."

Teacher Script		Student Worksheet	
1. ice	yes	1. S	D
2. rice	rice	2. S	D
3. price	prize	3. S	D
4. Miss	Ms.	4. S	D

"You will hear three words. Two of them are the same, one is different. Circle the number of the word that is different (or write the number) on your worksheet(or paper)."

1.	chin	chin	shin	1.	1	2	3
2.	shoe	chew	chew	2.	1	2	3
3.	chop	shop	shop	3.	1	2	3

Survival Content/Grammar

"You will hear two sentences. If they are the same, circle (check, etc.) S. If they are different, circle (etc.) D."

1.	What's your name?	What's her name?	1. S	D
2.	What's your name?	What's your name?	2. S	D
3.	What's her name?	What's your name?	3. S	D
4.	What's her name?	What's her name	4. S	D

(This example uses only two different pronouns because it would be for Level 1. A more varied exercise could be used. Other useful phrases are "How are you/Who are you?" and "How are you/How old are you?")

"You will hear two numbers (or sentences with numbers). If the numbers (sentences) are the same, circle S. If they are different, circle D."

1.	7	11	1. S	D
2.	14	14	2. S	D
3.	16	60	3. S	D
4.	115	150	4. S	D

(The same kind of exercise can be done with telephone numbers, addresses, letters, dates, spelling of words, etc.)

"You will hear two words. If they are the same, circle S. If they are different, circle D."

1.	shoe	shoes	1. S	D
2.	shirts	shirts	2. S	D
3.	umbrella	umbrellas	3. S	D
4.	belts	belt	4. S	D

(While the exercise checks discrimination, it is really useful for singular-plural differentiation. Pairs of sentences rather than words could also be presented, e.g. Did you see my shoe? Did you see my shoes?)

Gender

"Listen to see if the sentence is about a man or a woman. If it is about a male, circle M. If it is about a female, circle F."

1.	What's his first name?	1. M	F
2.	Where is her house?	2. M	F
3.	Her name is Pam.	3. M	F

(Instead of M/F, pictures of a woman/man could appear on the worksheet for the students to circle. For lower levels, it might be better to use just one sentence pattern and vary the pronoun. Other gender excercises could use titles (Mr./Mrs./Miss), occupations--with M, F, and sometimes circling both--and other types of pronouns.)

Questions-Statements

"Listen to each sentence. If it is a question, circle the question mark. If it is a statement, circle the period."

1.	Where are you from?	1. ?	.
2.	Are you from Laos?	2. ?	.
3.	This isn't my pen.	3. ?	.
4.	What is this?	4. ?	.

(For some levels, it might be better to control this exercise by using only yes-no questions and statements or only certain information questions. It could also be controlled by limiting the content to one competency--nationality, object identification, housing, etc.)

Singular-Plural

"Listen to each sentence. If it is about one thing, circle S (singular). If it is about more than one thing, circle P (plural)."

1.	What is this?	1. S	P
2.	What are these?	2. S	P
3.	Are these yours?	3. S	P
4.	They aren't mine.	4. S	P

Affirmative-Negative

"Listen to the following exchanges. If the response is affirmative, circle YES. If it is negative, circle NO."

1. Is today Monday? Yes, it is.	1.	YES	NO
2. Is it 7:30 ? Not yet.	2.	YES	NO
3. Do you like this shirt? Not much.	3.	YES	NO

(This exercise can be simplified by making all the sentences one structure. Also, statements can be given rather than exchanges.)

Spelling/Letters

"Listen to the following exchanges. Circle the word that you hear spelled."

1. Name? Pratt. How do you spell that? P-R-A-T-T.	1.	PRAT	PARTT	PRATT
2. Address? Thirty-two Plunkett St. How do you spell that? P-L-U-N-K-E-T-T.	2.	PLUNKED	PLUNKETT	PLUNKET

(This exercise can be simplified by simply spelling words rather than using exchanges. Using just one competency area would be simpler, too.)

Sight Words

"Listen to the sentence/question. Circle the word that you hear."

1. What's your first name?	1.	NAME	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
2. Is this your last name?	2.	NAME	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
3. Please spell your name.	3.	NAME	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME

"Listen to the sentence/question. If you hear the word on the left, circle YES. If you do not hear the word on the left, circle NO."

1. His last name is Jones.	1.	LAST NAME	YES	NO
2. What's your occupation?	2.	NATIONALITY	YES	NO
3. What's your nationality?	3.	NATIONALITY	YES	NO

(These exercises can be simplified by using only one structure, or only questions or only statements. The latter exercise can be used with objects: a picture of an object on the left, YES and NO on the right, and a sentence or question that mentions or doesn't mention the object.)

Appropriate Responses

"Listen to the following exchanges. If the answer/reply is good, circle YES. If the answer/reply is not good, circle NO."

1. Goodbye. Bye.	1. YES	NO
2. Do you eat meat in Laos? Yes, please.	2. YES	NO
3. How are you? Twenty-eight.	3. YES	NO

Numbers

The following is a sequence of activities, from simplest to most complicated. "Circle the number of objects that you hear."

1. three	1. +++	++++
2. five	2. *****	****
3. seven	3. $$$$$	$$$$$$$

(This could be done with sentences.)

"Circle the number you hear."

1. three	1. 4	3
2. five	2. 5	4
3. seven	3. 5	7

(This could be done with sentences. It should next be done with larger numbers, perhaps teens, then - ty's.)

"Circle the number you hear."

1. One seven zero.	1. 710	170	
2. Eight three six.	2. 836	386	863
3. Four two nine.	3. 929	492	429

(Next it could be done as an address--one seventy, eight thirty-six--and then as hundreds.)

"Circle the number that comes after the number you hear."

1. 7	1. 6	8	9
2. 6	2. 7	5	10
3. 11	3. 12	10	20

"Write the number you hear."

1. John has 2 brothers.	1. _____
2. They have 4 children.	2. _____
3. He's 17 years old.	3. _____

"Write the number you hear."

1. How old are you? I'm 53 years old.	1. _____	or	1.	53	35
2. Age? I'm 22.	2. _____		2.	22	72
3. What's your age? I'm 60.	3. _____		3.	16	60

(Other content could be used--addresses, telephone numbers, zip codes, ID numbers, etc.).

Completion

"Listen to the sentence and circle the word you hear."

1. I eat lunch at noon.	1. I (eat/ate) lunch at noon.
2. She wants to be a dentist.	2. She (wanted/wants) to be a dentist.

(The same kind of exercise can be used with numbers, prepositions, singular -plural, time, addresses, question words, etc.)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Interestingly, Silent Way practitioners developed their students' listening/learning skills by minimizing teacher-talk and forcing the students to listen carefully to everything said, since it might be said only once.

[2]Suzanne Herschenhorn, "Teaching Listening Comprehension Using Live Language," in Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh, Newbury House Publishers, 1979, pp. 67-68.

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Jobs for Youth's Competency-Based G.E.D. Curriculum

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Jobs for Youth

Within "competency-based education" (CBE), there are a number of very different instructional models. A program which decides to "go competency-based" must choose or create the CBE model which can best meet the needs of its learners. Jobs for Youth in Boston has developed a competency-based G.E.D. preparation curriculum which we believe meets the needs of urban, out-of-school youth and young adults. This is a brief account of our curriculum development process and a description of this curriculum model in its current version. (A refined version will be available from Jobs for Youth in September, 1985.) First, however, it is necessary to clarify the differences between competency-based education (CBE) in general and competency-based adult education (CBAE).

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION?

While there is disagreement in the field, our program's definition of competency-based education includes the following three essential features:

1) A set of written, measurable objectives. These are specific statements of what is to be learned. They govern the choice or development of both learner progress assessments and learning activities. The objectives are used by both teachers and learners.

2) Variety of learning activities and instructional materials. Since the learning progress assessment is tied to the objective, the instruction may take any of a number of forms which produce the desired learning outcome. Different learning styles, needs, and resources may thus be accommodated by a wide range of learning activities.

3) Performance-based assessments. "Competency" suggests the ability to do something rather than just the knowledge about something. Assessing the learner's performance is the most direct method of measuring the learner's actual ability.

These three features of CBE should free learners and teachers from some of the constraints of traditional educational practice. In traditional education, the student often works to meet teacher expectations; in CBE, teacher and learner are partners in working to meet agreed-upon, stated objectives. The focus of authority is not the

teacher but the objectives and assessments in the curriculum. CBE is learner-centered education. Instead of following from teachers' activities and instruction, CBE is driven by agreed-upon learning objectives and energized by the learners' struggle to achieve them. Thus, CBE can empower learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

"A program which decides to 'go competency-based' must choose or create the CBE model which can best meet the needs of its learners."

In addition to these three essential features of CBE (written measurable objectives, a variety of learning activities, and performance-based assessments), there are several other important features:

4) Pre- and post-assessments for each curriculum unit (competency). Since a learner may already have mastered all or part of a given objective, a pre-assessment is usually given before new learning is begun. If a learner passes the pre-assessment, s/he is said to have "tested out" of the objective. Often, however, the learner does not pass the pre-assessment, and learning needs are revealed. CBE can thus be "diagnostic-prescriptive," with pre-assessments providing helpful information about what needs to be learned. Post-assessments are given after the learner has completed the agreed-upon learning activities, to determine whether the objective has been mastered.

5) No grades and no failure. In place of grades, there is only "mastery" or some degree of "progress" towards mastery. Failure is eliminated by the structure of CBE. If a learner does not pass a post-assessment, a new instructional approach may be used before the post-assessment is attempted again. The results of the original post-assessment are not recorded in the learner's or teacher's files. Only successes are recorded.

6) Individually paced instruction. Because learners master different objectives at different rates, and because they start with different levels of skill, they make faster progress when allowed to learn at their own pace.

7) Open-entry, open-exit program structure. Since learners begin at different points in the curriculum, some complete the curriculum earlier than others, creating spaces for other learners. Thus many CBE programs adopt an open-entry, open-exit policy. Learners may enter whenever there is an opening and leave when they complete their agreed-upon objectives.

8) Learner involvement in defining what, when, and how to learn. Depending upon the program, various aspects of a learner's plan may be optional or negotiable. Teachers and learners may use a learning contract or other device to record the objectives or competencies agreed upon at the outset. With some opportunity to contribute to the learning process, the learner may invest more responsibility, effort, and commitment to complete the program. If the learner's goals change, the learning contract can be revised appropriately.

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION?

In competency-based adult education, a focus on "life skills" has been added to CBE. Rising concern about the problem of adult illiteracy has prompted adult educators to push for "functional

literacy," that is, literacy associated with adults' social roles. The Adult Performance Level (APL) Project at the University of Texas at Austin and its associated curricula have led the way to an integration of basic academic skills and "life skills" such as budgeting, using transportation, and so on. This "life skills" orientation is apparent in the curriculum of the New York State External Diploma Program and the External Diploma Program in Boston. Because of the pervasiveness of this model, adult educators often believe that the "life skills" orientation is intrinsic to CBE, when in fact it represents only one model of CBE.

What difference does this distinction make for GED programs? Because of the predominantly academic content of the GED examination, GED instruction is quite compatible with CBE but is much less so with "life skills"-oriented CBAE. While some questions in the Reading and Mathematics section of the GED examinations are relevant to adult daily living, the vast majority of questions are purely academic multiple-choice and discrete items. To efficiently enable learners to pass the examination, instruction must address these skills. The question is whether or not they should be integrated with life skills.

WHY USE A CBE APPROACH FOR GED PREPARATION?

CBE offers GED preparation programs several advantages:

--Learners learn only what they need to learn, rather than "reviewing" everything. Those who are able to "test out of" many competencies finish quickly and take GED examination sooner.

--Standards are objective and "up front." They are the same for all learners, regardless of which teacher is working with them. This eliminates inconsistencies in assessment.

--CBE can simplify record-keeping within the program and can improve accountability to funders. Standardized assessments provide objective, measurable data on learner progress and achievement.

--Teachers can now use time which has been needed for routine lesson planning for goal-setting with learners, rewarding success, and doing creative lesson planning for the learners who need it most.

-- CBE is easy for teachers and learners to use. Once the curriculum is in place, teachers, tutors, volunteers, and learners can all quickly find what they need when they need it.

CBAE AND GED INSTRUCTION

One CBAE approach emphasizes integrating life skills into GED instruction. Elaine Shelton, formerly with the APL Project in Texas, has written an article entitled "A Framework for Integrating Functional Competencies into GED Preparation," which argues quite effectively for this position and provides general advice on how to achieve such an integration. Another approach, which Jobs for Youth has chosen, is to incorporate into its objectives only the skills actually tested by the GED examination. Life skills are viewed as important but largely outside the scope of GED preparation. This narrower focus hopefully provides more efficient, faster preparation for the examination, which is what many of our learners demand.

JOBS FOR YOUTH'S GED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Jobs for Youth serves young people 16 to 21 years old who have left school without graduating. When we decided to add GED instruction to our competency-

based , work-related and basic skills curriculum, we searched for an existing competency-based curriculum. When we couldn't find one, we decided to develop our own. We began with eight basic features of CBE:

1. Written, measurable objectives for the learners;
2. Variety of learning activities and instructional materials;
3. Performance-based assessments;
4. Pre- and post-assessments for each curriculum unit (competency);
5. No grades and no failure;
6. Individually paced instruction;
7. Open-entry, open-exit program structure; and
8. Learner involvement in defining what, when, and how to learn.

To these we added:

9. Commercially available pre- and post-assessments;
10. Commercially available instructional materials;
11. Identification of recommended and alternative instructional materials tied to each objective;
12. Complete learner access to all tests, recommended instructional materials, activity answer keys, recommended lesson plans, and procedures for using them; and
13. Clear, simple records.

We wanted our curriculum to be inexpensive, comprehensive, and easy to use. At the same time we wanted it to leave room for substitution of alternative learning activities and assessments by teachers. With teacher planning time at a premium, a high degree of organization was necessary. Our curriculum development process was designed to achieve these goals in the following steps:

1) Draft a list of plausible competency titles, with no more than fifty titles in all.
2) Draft specific learner-centered objective(s) for each competency.
3) Identify (and modify as needed) pre- and post-assessments for each competency from available commercial materials. List book titles and page and item numbers for each assessment.
4) Identify by book titles and page numbers all possible learning activities a learner could use to master each objective of each competency.
5) Get input on titles, objectives, and choice of materials from experienced GED preparation instructors.
6) Revise the curriculum using that input.
7) Develop a record-keeping system to keep track of learner progress and to guide the learner through the curriculum.
8) Field-test the curriculum and revise it as needed.

THE JOBS FOR YOUTH COMPETENCY-BASED GED CURRICULUM

To draft the competency titles, we used our knowledge of the GED Practice Tests and a booklet called "What Do the GED Tests Measure?" by Wayne Patience and Douglas Whitney, from the GED Testing Service (available from Cambridge Book Co.). We also studied how major publishers of GED instructional materials have designed their instruction. Our list of competencies (see Chart 1 at the end of this article) reflects influences from all these sources. In keeping with Jobs for Youth's growing commitment to teaching writing, and in view of the probability that a Writing Sample will be included in the 1988 revision of the GED examination, we included a competency called "Writing Paragraphs."

The heart of the curriculum is the Curriculum Guide (see

Chart 2). This indexes the objectives to commercially available pre- and post-assessments and instructional materials, in each case giving titles and page and item numbers. In developing the Guide, we decided to set an across-the-board standard of 70% as a passing score for all pre- and post-assessments. This may seem low for mastery learning, but it is higher than the approximately 60% passing score on the actual GED examination.

Two forms (see Charts 3 and 4) comprise the record-keeping system. The Competency Checklist (Chart 3) serves as the permanent record of learners' progress and achievement. The Competency Guide (Chart 4) provides the objective(s) of the competency to the learner and indicates which of them s/he needs to learn, based on an item analysis of the recommended pre-assessment. An item analysis of the recommended post-assessment is also included in case the learner does not pass the post-assessment on the first try.

FIELD-TEST RESULTS

The Jobs for Youth Competency-Based GED curriculum has been in use since September, 1984. After nine months of field testing, the following problems have emerged:

--Some competencies and individual assessments and activities are too long, too hard, or too easy.

--Some objectives are too broad.

--The Reading competencies need to place more emphasis on comprehension skill development.

--Some recommended assessments don't "match" the recommended instructional materials as well as they should.

--The curriculum as a whole may often take a student longer to get through than we (or s/he) would like.

Despite these problems, the curriculum has all the features we wanted, and it seems to be working well. Learners "test out of" whole competency areas (groups of competency areas such as Science or Writing Skills) by passing corresponding sections of the Official GED Practice Test with a core of 50 or higher. Learners negotiate with teachers and identify the competencies they plan to achieve in order to prepare for the GED examination. Teachers and learners agree on a "target date" for completion of the learning contract.

"Teachers do individually tailored lesson planning only as needed. Instead, they tutor, evaluate learner progress through the curriculum, and organize group work. Learners are in charge of getting their own pre- and post-assessments, instructional materials, and activity answer keys."

Teachers do individually tailored lesson planning only as needed. Instead, they tutor, evaluate learner progress through the curriculum, and organize group work. Learners are in charge of getting their own pre- and post-assessments, instructional materials, and activity answer keys. Since all assessments and instructional materials are non-consumable, we do not have the expense of replacing curriculum materials. Teachers and learners cooperate to keep the Competency Guides and Competency Checklists up to date and accurate.

Learners are motivated to "get" competencies. They can see their progress on the Competency Guides and Competency Checklist, and they can make decisions for themselves about which competency to tackle next. Each learner always has a copy of the objective(s) of any competency s/he is working on.

AVAILABILITY

After another revision, during which we will address the problems mentioned above, the curriculum will be available to interested programs in time for Fall 1985 implementation. The curriculum package will include the complete Curriculum Guide, all of the Competency Guides, the Competency Checklist, and a copy of each of the dozen pre- and post-assessments which are not commercially available elsewhere. The curriculum also comes with up to eight hours of technical assistance and an ordering guide for the instructional materials referenced by the Curriculum Guide. For further information, please contact David Rosen, the Director of Educational Services, at Jobs for Youth, 312 Stuart St., 3rd floor, Boston, MA 02116 (617-338-0815).

CHART 1

JOBS FOR YOUTH G.E.D. COMPETENCIES				© JFY
WRITING SKILLS	SOCIAL STUDIES	SCIENCE	READING	MATHEMATICS
Writing Paragraphs	Social Studies Vocabulary	Basic Biology	Comprehension I	Reading Word Problems
Grammar and Usage	Graphs	Basic Earth Science	Comprehension II	Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (+,-)
Sentence Structure and Punctuation	Political Cartoons	Basic Chemistry	Comprehension III	Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (x,÷)
Paragraph Logic and Organization	Tables and Charts	Basic Physics	Basic General Reading	Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (+,-,x,÷)
Spelling	Main Events in U.S. History		Basic Practical Reading	Using Proportions to Solve Word Problems
Capitalization	Basic Political Science		Basic Prose Literature	Percent Word Problems
*Diction and Style	Basic Economics		Basic Poetry	Measurement Problems
	Basic Geography and Maps		Basic Drama	Two-Step Word Problems
	Basic Behavioral Science			Using Algebra to Solve Word Problems
*=optional				
Test-Taking: Answering Questions on the G.E.D. Exam				
Life Beyond the G.E.D.				

CHART 2

TEST: WRITING SKILLS

COMPETENCY TITLE	• MAIN OBJECTIVE - SUB-OBJECTIVES	PRE/POST ASSESSMENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
(W2) Grammar and Usage	• Locate common errors in usage of the eight parts of speech and common grammar errors, with 70% accuracy.	Pre: Cambridge Program for the Writing Skills Test (CPWST), "Predictor Test: Grammar and Usage," p. 1-4 Post: CPWST, "Simulated Test: Grammar and Usage," p. 105-108	Contemporary's Writing Skills Workbook series Contemporary's Building Basic Skills in Writing (CBBSW) Contemporary's G.E.D. Writing Skills Test McGraw-Hill's Write and Read series and How to Prepare for the Writing Skills Test CPWST Kim Marshall Series, English, Parts A and B Steck-Vaughn's G.E.D. Scorebooster 1: Developing Writing Skills (SVS1)
	-Find errors in verb tense.	Pre: CPWST, "Predictor Test: Grammar and Usage," p. 1, items 1,9,14,21	x CPWST (A1) p. 19 36 ___ Contemporary's G.E.D. Writing Skil Test (B1), p. 40-55 ___ SVS1 (D1), Lessons 24, 26, 59 ___ CBBSW1 (B8), p. 75-135
			x=standard learning activity

This is a sample page from the curriculum guide. The curriculum guide is to be used by teachers (and tutors) initially to familiarize themselves with the curriculum, and later as a reference guide to possible instruction for specific objectives, in case the standard assignment is inappropriate.

CHART 3

JOBS FOR YOUTH G.E.D. COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Student_____ Teacher_____

		Need Identified	First Activity	Closed	Mastered
WRITING	1. Writing Paragraphs				
	2. Grammar and Usage				
	3. Sentence Structure and Punctuation				
	4. Paragraph Logic and Organization				
	5. Spelling				
	6. Capitalization				
	7. * Diction and Style				
SOCIAL STUDIES	1. Social Studies Vocabulary				
	2. Graphs				
	3. Political Cartoons				
	4. Tables and Charts				
	5. Main Events in U.S. History				
	6. Basic Political Science				
	7. Basic Economics				
	8. Basic Geography and Maps				
	9. Basic Behavioral Science				
SCIENCE	1. Basic Biology				
	2. Basic Earth Science				
	3. Basic Chemistry				
	4. Basic Physics				
READING	1. Comprehension I				
	2. Comprehension II				
	3. Comprehension III				
	4. Basic General Reading				
	5. Basic Practical Reading				
	6. Basic Prose Literature				
	7. Basic Poetry				
	8. Basic Drama				
MATHEMATICS	1. Reading Word Problems				
	2. Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (+,-)				
	3. Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (×,÷)				
	4. Fraction/Decimal Word Problems (+,-,×,÷)				
	5. Using Proportions to Solve Word Problems				
	6. Percent Word Problems				
	7. Measurement Word Problems				
	8. Two-Step Word Problems				
	9. * Using Algebra to Solve Word Problems				
Test-Taking: Answering Questions on G.E.D.					
* Beyond the G.E.D.					

This is a copy of the Competency Checklist, the teacher's and student's permanent record of the student's progress through the curriculum. If a student "tests out" of a competency, either by achieving a score of 50 or higher on that part of the G.E.D. Practice Test or by passing the individual competency pre-test, the teacher enters the date in the "Mastered" column. The teacher enters the date of a pre-test which is not passed in the "Need Identified" column, and the date the first activity is started in the "First Activity" column. The column marked "Competency Closed" is used only when a student and teacher agree not to include a competency in the student's curriculum, even if it has already been identified as needed.

CHART 4

NAME: DATE:

W2

COMPETENCY GUIDE TO:

GRAMMAR AND USAGE

PRE-TEST ITEMS	DO	I WILL BE ABLE TO:	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	DONE	POST-TEST ITEMS
1, 9, 14, 21	☐	Find errors in verb tense.	Book A1, p. 19-36	☐	5, 8, 15, 16
3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 18, 23	☐	Find errors in subject-verb agreement.	Book A1, p. 40-48	☐	1, 7, 13, 14, 17
4, 6, 12, 15, 19, 20, 24, 25	☐	Find errors in pronoun use.	Book A1, p. 56-70	☐	2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25
2, 16	☐	Find errors in noun plurals and possessives.	Book A1, p. 74-80	☐	10, 20
7, 11, 17, 22	☐	Find errors in modifier use.	Book A1, p. 83-96	☐	3, 9, 21, 24
	☐			☐	
	☐			☐	
	☐			☐	

This is a sample Competency Guide. It is to be used by both teachers and students as a ready-made lesson plan. It is first used by a teacher after scoring a pre-test which a student has not passed. In the left-hand column of the Guide, s/he circles the numbers of items which were missed on the pre-test. If fewer than 70% of the items are correct for a given objective, s/he checks the box marked "DO." This indicates which objective and which standard learning activities the student should work on. The student keeps the Competency Guide in his/her folder, checking the box marked "DONE" as each activity is completed. When all identified learning activities are completed, the student takes the post-test. If s/he does not pass the post-test, the missed items are circled in the right-hand column, to determine which objective(s) still need work. The teacher may then refer to the Curriculum Guide to identify alternative activities.

A Counseling Model for Adult ESL Students

STUART GEDAL
Cambridge Community Learning Center

Counseling has been an area of great need and equally great understaffing in adult basic education. As early as 1966 and 1967, an Acadia Parish (Louisiana) pilot study on adult education pointed out the effectiveness of adult education models with strong counseling components, yet counseling remains a rarity for many programs.

ESL Programs now constitute a major portion of all adult basic education programs in the US. Here in Massachusetts, the ESL population in our ABE system continues to skyrocket. ESL Counseling was never purposefully developed or designed, much like the growth of ESL programs themselves. In some ABE delivery systems, it doesn't even exist. While concerns for multicultural counseling have grown, and are increasingly integrated in the course preparation that MSW's and psychotherapists must undertake, the kind of ESL Counseling we do in ABE is unrecognized and all too invisible to our colleagues.

This article will try to reveal and develop some ideas about ESL Counseling. It is based on practice as an ESL Teacher, Counselor, and Program Coordinator, as well as on study of the issues involved. Some questions that need to be asked are:

- What kinds of counseling are necessary for an adult ESL program to succeed?
- Which student needs can an ESL counseling component really address?
- How much counseling do ESL students receive in ABE programs (versus that available to non-ESL students)?
- How do ESL counselors fit into ESL program design?
- How can ESL counselors affect ESL program design and the way an adult learning center relates to the community in which it exists?

ESL teachers, and especially the first teachers a student works with and gets to know, play a special role in the adult student's transition to a new culture and a new community. Students often become extremely attached to their teacher, in part because the teacher may well be the first North American or English-speaker the adult learner can enjoy as a friend. The student's trust of the teacher grows along with his or her ability to communicate. The student begins to share with this new-found friend many of the day-to-day problems she or he is experiencing.

Most ESL teachers are enthusiastic to begin with, and they become even more energized by the show of trust and faith from the students. Very often, the teacher begins to pick up some of the tasks that are suggested by conversations with students, tasks that in other settings would fall to social workers and advocates. The teacher may find that she or he is making two or three phone calls every day for one student or another. Small, seemingly concrete problems, such as eligibility for childcare, fuel assistance, or housing subsidies, require obtaining the response of complex bureaucracies or the knowledge of some pretty obscure bits of information.

As the next cycle of classes approaches, the teacher may resolve to be more detached from the students. Teachers know there should be some place for students to go with their real needs for help, information, and friendship. Teachers with a full load of classes and curriculum responsibilities may not be able to devote the kind of time that is needed to "deliver the goods" for this kind of adult problem-solving.

ESL Counseling is a response to this need for a division of labor in the adult learning center. It also responds to the built-in inadequacies in program design. ESL may have grown by leaps and bounds over the last decade, but total resources devoted to it have not always grown in proportion. A full-time ABE/GED counselor may serve 100 students, for example, while a half-time ESL counselor may be serving 200 students.

ESL STUDENT NEEDS

ESL students approach the ABE/ESL program with a wide variety of needs and expectations. The needs reflect different lifeskill levels, the circumstances of immigration, and the nature of their language-group community as it is developing here in the US. Age, educational level in the native language, family obligations, and immigration status are just some of the many factors that may also vary widely from student to student. We can begin, though, by looking at some common needs often expressed by ESL students who approach teachers or counselors for help:

·Housing -- Finding apartments, particularly for families, is especially hard in the Boston-area's tight housing market. Racial barriers complicate language problems for Third World immigrants, and high rents increase the burden on poorly-paid newcomers. Housing conditions may be poor, with the immigrant individual or family

lacking even the few effective tools to obtain repairs (such as withholding rent) that are more available to native English speakers.

·Childcare -- Family based or center-based care is expensive and difficult to find. In addition, traditional family values often state that children should be cared for within an extended family and women should not work outside of the home. Traditional values about work and daycare may thus delay a woman's entry into the labor market, even when low wages make a second family income a financial necessity. Personal counseling and advocacy to find affordable, quality childcare may be helpful here.

·Job Search Skills -- The needs here are obvious, both for full-time and part-time jobs.

·Job Related Problems -- Students need help with the translation and interpretation of job-related situations concerning accidents, safety or health hazards, pay issues, etc. They need to hear, perhaps in class, the kinds of conversations that are used in on-the-job disputes ("What did the boss really want?" "What did my words really mean?")

·Immigration Issues -- Updates in rules and eligibilities, getting documents for family members who want to come to the US, translation of documents, and knowing when to get good legal counsel are some of the tasks involved here.

·Effective Schooling -- Confusing grade levels, poor English-language assessments, failure to diagnose learning disabilities, and lack of awareness of particular problems that children are having in the family or in school all combine to influence children's classroom performance. A parent's well-founded confusion and concern for his or her child may well be affecting the parent's performance in an ABE/ESL program.

·Health Services -- Students need to know the types of services that are available from clinics rather than through expensive emergency rooms, which clinics have bilingual staffs and which places provide dental, hearing, and eye exams. They need to know about generic drugs and to be aware of the dangers of medications during pregnancy.

·Further Education -- This would include access to more intensive English instruction and vocational or post-secondary level training.

·Family Issues -- This particularly concerns the tensions created by role changes as parents become dependent on children (since children learn English more quickly) and as men become interdependent with women for family income (and in some cases, for help with their English).

QUALITIES OF AN ESL COUNSELOR

If the Counselor's job description is largely generated by this list of student needs, the ESL Counsleor more closely resembles an advocate and paralegal than a traditional counselor in a school setting. Individual counseling skills, such as the kind developed

in preparing for a career in school counseling, can be important here, but the title "Counselor" shouldn't throw us off in looking for someone who is a real hybrid and a somewhat energetic one at that. The adult learning center's needs should not be overlooked here either; for example, teachers are often not given the time to develop or do assessments or to look at how grouping and regrouping students needs to be done.

The ESL Program needs someone who can communicate directly with the students about the purpose and goals of the learning center and the ESL program in particular. It also needs someone who can accurately assess each student's ability in English and place that person in a good spot in the program where his/her learning will be maximized. The program also needs someone who can begin to deal with the overload of both survival needs and friendship that may be directed at the classroom teachers. There is a need, too, for someone to be an "eye", to see when student needs and issues outside of school are interfering with the student's progress toward his or her goals.

One crucial factor in ESL Counseling will be language. The Counselor has to have competency/fluency in at least one of the major language groups in the program. The ESL Counselor will also have to be able to take a "case work" approach to many of the problems he or she faces -- they'll have to stay with a problem over weeks, possibly months, before the problem is resolved.

"Adult ESL students are coming from cultures or parts of societies in which the kind of institutionalized 'helping' function served by social workers, advocates, or counselors is fairly limited or non-existent. One of the aspects of American life that ESL students are learning about...is that it's acceptable to seek help from relative strangers in certain situations."

This kind of work will also require the person to develop a personal network of contacts in related social and community-based organizations, as well as a sense of how an ABE program fits into this backdrop of government and private agencies. This network of contacts would hopefully be institutionalized, so that eventually it comes to belong to the ABE center as a whole and to the students the center serves.

The Counselor position also requires someone who is willing to work at becoming visible in the ABE center and in the immigrant community. Adult ESL students are coming from cultures or parts of societies in which the kind of institutionalized "helping" function served by social workers, advocates, or counselors is fairly limited or non-existant. One of the aspects of American life that ESL students are learning about by functioning as part of an ESL program is that it's acceptable

to seek help from relative strangers in certain situations. Counselor visibility helps students to make the leap of asking for help. A teacher's suggestion to "Go see the counselor" may not be enough.

Some potential sources of a counselor such as this might include:

-ESL teachers with whom immigrants seem comfortable.

-Community organizers/ activists who see the social aspects of the students' problems and who are aware of the need to persist in trying to get services to students.

-Prevocational-skills teachers who may not have strong ESL backgroungs, but who may be very aware of the relationship between language skills and placement in training or job opportunities. Previous work with outside agencies may provide a personal network of referrals for students. Work in job training may provide a basis for important input into the ESL program, as well as good reality counseling for students with unrealistic expectations of what the ESL program can do for them.

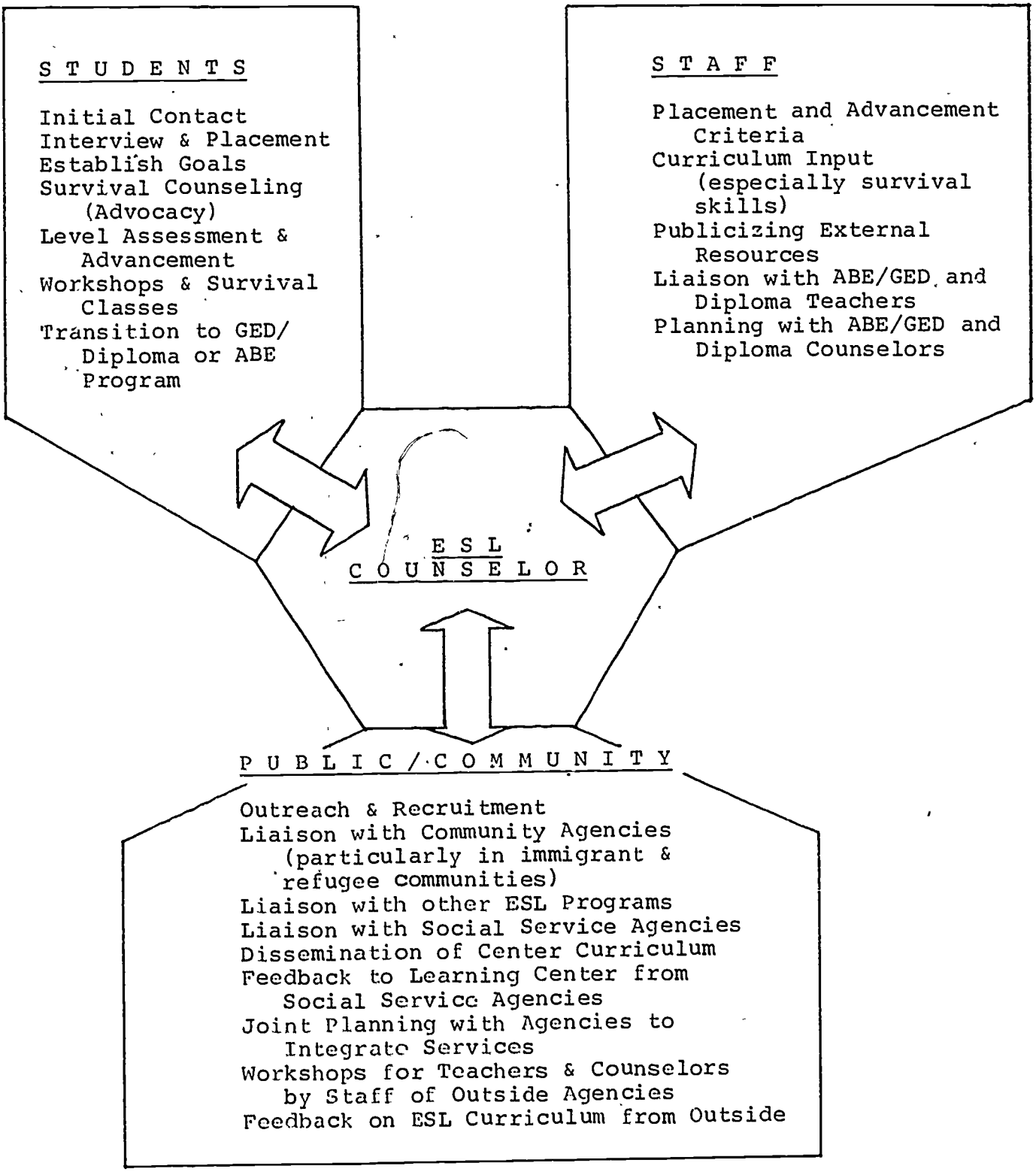
There are certainly also other pools of people in and around ABE/ESL programs who could be recruited for counseling tasks. One realistic way for programs to think about creating a counselor postion is by shifting teaching loads around so as to free-up some time for someone already working in the adult learning center's program. Creating the time and the role and then picking the right person to fill that role may allow the center to see how students respond to the presence of a counselor and will give teachers an opportunity to think about how counseling can make instruction more effective.

ASPECTS OF THE COUNSELING ROLE

One role played by the counselor in some centers is that of "broker" between an approach to language learning based on grammar skill competencies and an approach based on survival skill competencies.

One tendency for those of us with strong teaching backgrounds in ESL is to define and refine skill levels according to the student's ability to use particular grammatical structures. While survival skills are integrated into the topics we might choose in teaching grammar, vocabulary, and other traditional ESL skills, we rarely place students at a given level or define their role in terms of competency in adult survival skills. The counselor may be familiar with the traditional measures of ESL ability, since he or she administers the intake and placement system for the learning center, but this person should definitely possess a keen sense of the kinds of everyday skills that students need to know to get along outside the environment of the ABE/ESL program. The counselor is thus in a good position to act as a resource for the teaching staff regarding survival skills and to help work out a balance between grammar and survival skill needs.

A COUNSELING MODEL FOR ADULT ESL STUDENTS



(One attempt has been made to correlate ESL program levels in ABE learning centers with adult survival skills that students in each level have the linguistic ability to master. This particular matrix in grammar/vocabulary skills and adult competencies is a reflection of teaching goals for six ABE/ESL programs here in Massachusetts. See: Gedal, Tsapatsaris, La Prade, et al, "Minimal Teaching Points-Adult ESL". Massachusetts Department of Education. Quincy, MA. 1982.)

The existence of this kind of role for the counselor presupposes a relatively democratic teaching and planning environment in the learning center. The counselor and the teachers need a setting where the kind of interplay for mapping out levels, doing good intakes, and solving curriculum issues (such as the survival skills/grammar level match) can take place on a regular basis.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A second set of relationships that can evolve from ESL counseling involves the public and community face of the adult learning center and its ESL program. The counselor is constantly in touch with a group of agencies whose specialized job is to provide the services that ESL learners need. Tenants' organizations, public housing agencies, WIC intake workers, community clinics, and multipurpose agencies that serve particular language groups will probably be hearing again and again from ESL counselors. Much as ABE counselors get to know the admissions and financial aid workers at nearby community colleges and training programs and soon begin to receive mail and phone calls when those institutions are recruiting, the ESL counselor makes the adult learning center visible to the agencies in which he or she advocates for students.

An intangible sense that the immigrant population is growing is widespread in this state's network of social service and community-based agencies. A learning center staffer who is plugged into this network gives this sense a place to "land" and crystalize. One result can be that more community organizations begin to think about how to respond to the needs of the growing proportion of their own clients who are non-English speakers. For example, some agencies may decide they'll be turning to ABE/ESL programs for technical assistance and collaboration arrangements to provide these classes. (An ESL counselor, experienced in making different levels mesh inside an adult learning center, may be especially helpful to community-based classes trying to maximize the number of levels offered and the degree of continuity between them). Training programs, such as those related to Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agencies, have also begun to recognize the need for low-level ESL. Vocational and prevocational programs are increasingly providing lower levels of language teaching than those which lead directly into vocational preparation.

The ESL counselor doesn't exactly create this awareness, of course. For the most part he or she provides a channel for information to flow in both

directions, letting the community know that adult learning centers exist and care about the problems that their ESL students face and letting the learning center staff hear about the world the students must survive in and the services available to them.

"Cultural differences between language groups are matched by differences within language groups. These are characterized by styles and behaviors that differ between countryside and city, between social classes, between generations, and between traditional and modern sectors of a given country."

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS

Thirdly, the ESL counselor can be a "window" on the students for the rest of the teaching staff. The range of needs and learning styles among students is enormous. Cultural differences between language groups are matched by differences within language groups. These are characterized by styles and behaviors that differ between countryside and city, between social classes, between generations, and between traditional and modern sectors of a given country. The counselor needs to develop and share differing expectations (or perhaps no expectations) of the behavior of students from particular countries or language groups. Differing class and educational backgrounds, for example, may create in two people from the same country some very different views of American culture, very different reasons why students are here in the US, and very different ideas on how long they think they'll stay.

The counselor, as the person with the most "out of class" time with the adult learner, can be a valuable resource for teachers and the program as a whole in identifying and defining some behavioral and learning styles of adult ESL learners. These may include:

- Students with enthusiasm and high expectations who may burn out quickly because class hours are too few or learning the language proves more difficult than they thought it would be.

- Students who are distant and "cool" toward the ABE/ESL program because their class background, years of schooling and belief in traditional education have given them a very hierarchical value system; ABE/ESL isn't perceived as offering enough for them.

- Students with few years of schooling and low-level learning skills who have very traditional learning styles in class (copying, repetition, and other passive activities) and who need special support both in and out of the class to become involved enough in the relatively democratic style of the ESL classroom to make meaningful break-throughs in language learning.

- Students who have been in the US for any number of years, are basically self-taught in English, and may even have slipped through the learning center's intake process and be signed up for GED classes;

their informal English is superb, if not always "correct", but more formal skills are needed, particularly in writing and spelling, to begin GED or diploma preparation or to gain admission to a training program.

- Students who are older -- the majority of whom are female -- for whom ESL classes are of great importance, as are social relationships with their teachers; coming to the learning center is an important touchstone for other daily routines and for affirming a personal sense of purpose.

The counselor has to spot these kinds of styles and somehow be sure that teachers see them, too. The counselor needs to be sensitive to these different styles in making specific class assignments (Which of two possible classes in a given level should a student be assigned to?) or in proposing changes in program design (How many classes to offer? Which levels? What skills to cover in each level?). Creating a counseling position helps to make sure these issues get raised when teachers and/or program administrators meet to make planning and program design decisions.

AN OPTION WORTH CONSIDERING

ESL Counseling involves an investment of resources that are most likely now being used to provide direct classroom teaching hours to adult ESL students. The trade-offs for clearing some hours for a counselor or investing the "development time" to fund a new counseling position are well worth it. Better assessment and placement, better student goal-setting and monitoring or progress and attendance, and hopefully an improved sensitivity to teaching adult lifeskills will result. The ESL program will be much stronger, and filled-up seats in existing classes may replace slots lost when some teaching hours are cut down. Increased recognition in the immigrant community and greater visibility, understanding, and support from the social service world are also potential benefits for the adult learning center that invests in an ESL counselor. More needs to be said and thought about this important function in ABE/ESL, and we need to hear from teachers, administrators, and aides, as well as from the immigrant communities, including our students.

Making Things Clear— A Program Handbook Really Written for Students

ELAINE SCHEAR
Women, Inc./WEAVE

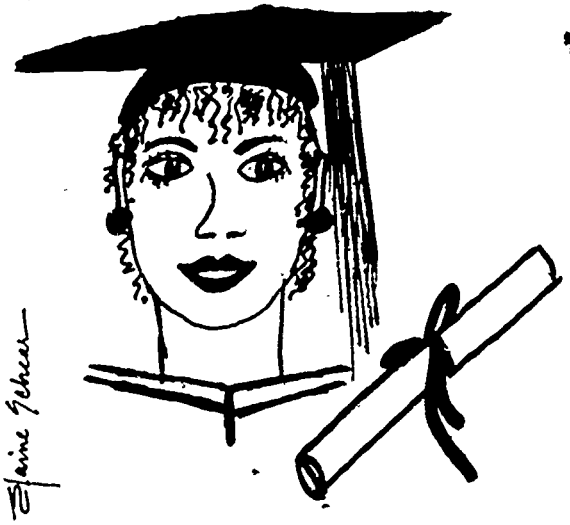
Although I began writing the WEAVE External Diploma Program Handbook presented on the following pages with the goal of demystifying the EDP process for the students, it has helped staff members to unravel the procedures and requirements, as well. The format is an outgrowth of the questions most frequently asked by students in trying to understand how the EDP works and in making decisions about whether or not the EDP was appropriate for them. (Formerly there had been no description of the EDP for student use. Students had to gather information orally from program assessors, who themselves often worked without comprehensive guidelines from the Boston Public Schools.)

Due to the complexity of some of the procedures, I had to decide how much detail to provide. I chose to write fairly simply and to supplement the handbook with workshops. At WEAVE these workshops, at which the handbook is given to each prospective EDP student, are presented by myself together with one or more EDP graduates or prospective graduates and are devoted entirely to the External Diploma Program. Each student keeps the handbook for reference. It is meant to be a tool and is never presented to a prospective EDP student without further counseling, question-answering, and elaboration about the diploma program. The content, of course, changes as the EDP evolves, and I have already had to alter a few points in what I originally wrote.

I believe that this format is transferable to other program needs, such as describing a particular program component or overall program structure to incoming students. I am interested in working on other handbook-like projects that serve to make life inside a literacy program more comfortable and less threatening for students. I would be interested in working with anyone or any program with these same goals.

Women Inc./W.E.A.V.E.

The External Diploma Program



Elaine Fetner

* What is the External Diploma Program? *

The External Diploma Program, or E.D.P., is a high school diploma for adults offered by the Boston Public Schools.

* How is this diploma different from a traditional high school diploma? *

External means that this program is outside of, or separate from the public school system. The E.D.P. is offered at various community schools and agencies in the Boston area. Women Inc./W.E.A.V.E. is one of the sites offering the E.D.P. W.E.A.V.E. offers a S.T.A.R.T. and Job Readiness program, which help you to develope the reading, writing, and math skills that will help you in the E.D.P.

Another difference between a traditional high school program and the E.D.P. is that the skills being tested are taken from situations of real life that are more familiar and meaningful to adults.

* How long does it take to complete the E.D.P.? *

You can complete this diploma program in 5-6 months if you work consistently and make a committment to working at W.E.A.V.E. on a regular basis.

* How do I qualify for the External Diploma Program? *

When you and your teacher agree that you're ready you'll start a series of three DIAGNOSTIC TESTS. These tests, in reading, math, and writing, will show whether you're ready to begin the E.D.P. One test will be given by our E.D.P. advisor each week for three weeks.

(continued) →

After taking all three DIAGNOSTICS, you'll receive your LEARNING RECOMMENDATIONS, a computer print-out showing the skill areas tested and how you did in each area.

*** Are there any age requirements? ***

Yes. You must be at least 19 years old to begin the diagnostics,

*** Do I get a chance to re-take the diagnostic tests? ***

Yes. If you do not meet the requirements for each test you will have two chances to re-take what you missed.
At this point you will be encouraged to use the tutors at W.E.A.V.E. to help you improve in whatever skill area you need.

*** Should I study for the diagnostics? ***

No. The best preparation is to get a good night's sleep before the day of your test and be as alert and relaxed as possible!

The information on the next page explains the diagnostic tests in more detail

→

The Diagnostics

Reading

You will read a series of paragraphs with missing words. You'll be asked to fill in the blanks from the list of words given. For example:

As of February 17, 1985 20-cent stamps won't carry a nonbusiness letter anywhere. The U.S. Postal Service will _____1._____ the price to 22 cents. This is the first _____2._____ in three years.

1.	2.
a. lower	a. income tax
b. raise	b. decrease
c. deliver	c. law
d. discount	d. increase

There are 98 blanks. You need a score of 64 to pass. There is no time limit on this test.

Math

This diagnostic tests your abilities in all basic math concepts:

addition
subtraction
multiplication
division
using decimals, fractions, percent
finding area
rounding to the nearest cent
averaging
using all the above with money figures
applying all the above to word problems

If any section of the test is done incorrectly, you will be asked to re-take only that section.

the Diagnostics - continued

WRITING

You will be asked to write two paragraphs of at least 5 sentences each on a topic of your choice.

This short "essay" will be assessed for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Your paragraphs should have an opening sentence, supporting ideas, and a closing sentence.

You can plan ahead for the writing diagnostic, but you cannot bring anything written ahead of time to the test. You can use a dictionary during the diagnostic.

This is not a timed test.

To pass this diagnostic you must have no more than 5 % errors.

x x x x x x x x

* Are there any other requirements? the INDIVIDUAL SKILL *

Yes. Each candidate of the External Diploma Program must demonstrate that she has some special individual skill that she has developed over a period of time. This is a way of looking at those skills or habits that the regular public school system would measure by your daily attendance, ability to meet deadlines, and your interaction with classmates and teachers. These are the same skills that are in demand by employers.

This individual skill can be demonstrated by any one of the following:

* one year full-time or two years part time at a single job
* volunteer work for at least 350 hours
* Completion of a certified skill-training program of 375 hours
* six college credits
* parenting - one year of involvement with your child

* What happens now? The TASKS *

After successfully completing the diagnostics and making sure you meet (or will meet, by the completion of the E.D.P.) the individual skill requirement, you are ready to begin working on the five TASKS.

Each task has two parts: one part is a "take-home" portion that you will work on at W.E.A.V.E. and at home. You can use family, friends, classmates, books, and community resources to help you. The other part is called a "spot check." This is done at W.E.A.V.E. with your assessor. You will be informed ahead of time the skills you'll be demonstrating. These skills will be similar to those you've just completed in the take-home part of the task.

Here are a few of the skills (competencies) covered by each task:

TASK I - Community & Home Awareness -
Planning a family's budget, locating community resources on a city map, writing a set of directions

TASK II - Health & Nutrition -
Demonstrating your understanding of a balanced diet, first-aide procedures, the use and abuse of drugs

TASK III - Occupational Awareness -
Solving problems related to work situations, resume writing, reading a paycheck stub

TASK IV - Government and Law -
Showing an understanding of the U.S. system of checks and balances, the responsibilies of the various branches of government, how Supreme Court decisions influence your life

TASK V - Consumer Awareness -
Demonstrating an understanding of credit sources, advertising tactics, decision-making in making a purchase

Please Note: This is only a brief sample of skills on each task and not meant to represent the many and varied competencies measured by each.

*How often do I come to W.E.A.V.E. to work on my tasks? *

Beginning January '85 WEAVE will hold daily sessions

Monday
Thesday
Thursday } 3:00 - 5:00
Friday

All these times all diploma students will have a chance to network with each other and with the W.E.A.V.E. E.D.P. assessors, Elaine Schear and Elaine Sutherland Brown. There will be special "prep" sessions to orientate you for each task. Working together on a regular basis gives you support from staff and classmates. You will experience less confusion and more success on the tasks, and a speedier graduation.

*What are the "literacy standards" for the tasks? *

The LITERACY STANDARDS apply to all written responses on the tasks. This means that all responses to questions must be written in complete sentences and/or paragraphs. Your spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors may not be more than 10% of the total number of words used in that response. to be considered acceptable.

*When will I graduate? *

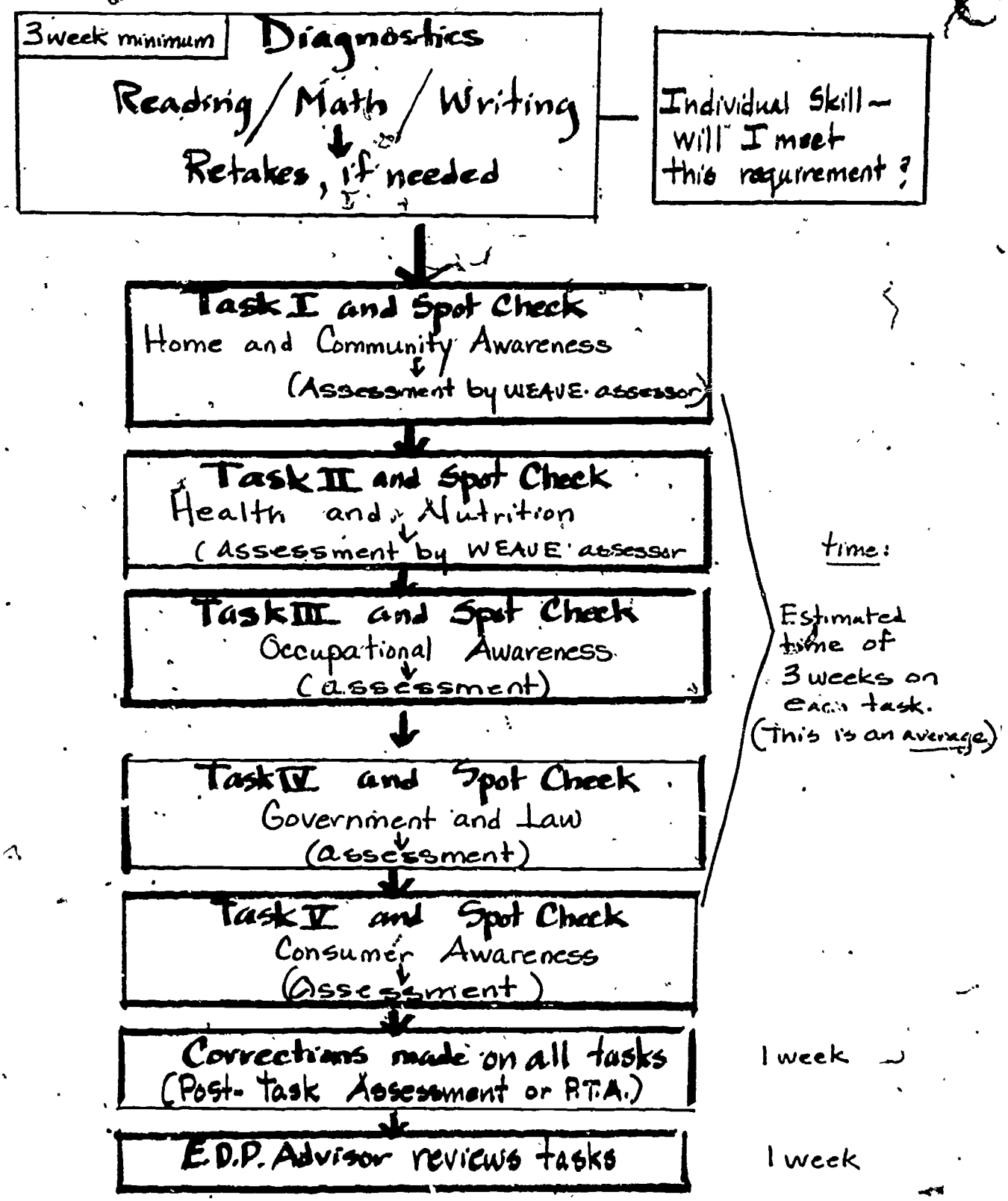
You will graduate after the E.D.P. Coordinator approves your diploma "portfolio."

At present there are two graduation ceremonies during the year, in February and June. This is a city-wide graduation of all adult students who have completed the External Diploma Program.

*How do I prove to a school or employer that I have a high school diploma? *

the E.D.P. offers you a valid high school diploma recognized by schools, training programs, and employers. You can obtain a transcript of the skills you have mastered through the Boston Public Schools Adult Education Services, 515 Hyde Pk. Ave, Roslindale MA. →

This chart will show you the format of the E.D.P, step-by-step



Boston Public Schools E.D.P. Coordinator reviews your portfolio, including diagnostics, tasks, and proof of your individual skill

·GRADUATION·
Diploma awarded
!!

On the next pages you will find a glossary of terms used in the External Diploma Program. As you go along you'll become more and more familiar with these. For now, use this as a reference.

Ann Corbin (l) and Audrey Hendrick (r) of Women, Inc./WEAVE enjoy a moment at the June 11, 1985 city-wide Boston Public School graduation of adult literacy students. (photo: Elaine Schear)

Glossary

Words you'll be hearing a lot in the External Diploma Program (in alphabetical order)

Advisor - An employee of the Boston Public Schools who gives the diagnostic tests and checks the WEAVE assessors evaluation of your work. The advisor is at WEAVE once each week on a regular basis.

Assessment - a check of your understanding of a concept or skill

Assessor - the person on the W.E.A.V.E. staff who will check your progress on all phases of the E.D.P, provide you with materials, explain the process and do the assessment.

Competency - a skill, ability, or understanding of a concept. The External Diploma Program is designed to measure your "competencies" in many areas.

C.P.R. - Competency Progress Report - A form used by the assessor to record the results of your work on each task. After you complete a task this CPR form goes to the EDP coordinator, who uses it to prepare the items you'll need to correct later on.

E.D.P. Coordinator - the person who manages and oversees all E.D.P. programs for the Boston Public Schools.

Individual Skill Requirement - Proof of experience over a designated period of time in one of the following: paid work experience, volunteer service, college courses, job training, parenting. You must demonstrate accomplishment in one of these areas to receive an E.D.P. diploma.

Glossary
~ Continued ~

Portfolio - the complete collection of work that you have done for your diploma, which is submitted to the E.D.P Coordinator for review

P.T.A. - Post Task Assessment - the part of the E.D.P. during which you re-do or correct the portions of a task you may have done incorrectly

Spot Check - the part of a task that is done with the assessor. You will know ahead of time the skills on which you'll be checked. The material on the spot check always relates to the "take home" portion of the task that you've already worked on

Take-home - the portion of the task that you do independently. You can ask friends, family, and teachers for help, and use community resources.

Tasks - the collection of questions and assignments in particular life-skills areas that make up the body of the E.D.P.

Transcript - a statement of the skills you have mastered in order to obtain the E.D.P. Diploma. Copies of your transcript are available to you, prospective employers, and schools once you have earned your diploma. It is available through the Boston Public Schools Adult Education Services at 515 Hyde Park Ave. 323-4166
Roslindale, MA.