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ABSTRACT

As Mississippi approaches the 21st century and an increasingly more competitive business climate, the state should be prepared to develop its most precious business asset--its work force. According to 1990 data, Mississippi contributes only 8.5 percent of funding for adult education (the remaining 91.5 percent comes from federal sources) to serve less than 2.3 percent of the eligible population. Furthermore, Mississippi loses up to one-third of its potential high school graduates between grades 9 and 12. Mississippians in households that receive public assistance function at appreciably lower levels of proficiency than those which receive no public assistance. Mississippi must develop a curriculum for the education of those individuals who have not received a public school education. Historically, three approaches have been used to instruct adults: coding and decoding, competency-based instruction, and "portable skills." However, if the question is not one of methodology but rather one of instructional technique to enhance learning in adults, perhaps computer-assisted instruction (CAI) is the innovation that adult education requires. CAI is not a substitute for individual facilitator and learner interaction. The human relationship aspect of the adult basic education program is fundamental to the use of its techniques, methods, and materials. Teachers must also have the flexibility to try different methods with different people. (Contains 24 references and an appendix detailing years of formal schooling completed, by county.) (YLB)

Adult Basic Education Methodology and Curriculum

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Adult Education in Mississippi

As Mississippi rapidly approaches the twenty-first century, she should be prepared to enter the most competitive business climate within the last fifty years. She should further be prepared to develop her most precious business asset--her workforce. As rapidly as technology and new economic opportunities develop and change, so too does the training necessary for the workforce to remain abreast of these innovations. To ignore or to remain steadfast in the belief that education and learning cease at the tender age of 18 is ludicrous. Eduard Lindeman, often referred to as the father of modern adult education, as early as 1926 espoused the philosophy that learning is not coterminous with completion of a high school education; instead, it is a lifelong process (The Meaning of Adult Education, 1926).

We are throwing away our most precious commodity--our workers--by denying them an opportunity to compete in the workforce merely because they lack the fundamental skills so vital to accessing the job market. If Mississippi is to grow and thrive and prosper, she cannot ignore her sacred obligation to educate her citizens--regardless of age, race, and sex--for every individual is an integral part of the whole, a micro Mississippi.

Statistics and Demographics for Mississippi

William Freund, chief economist emeritus, New York Stock Exchange, in a speech before the thirtieth annual Deposit Guaranty Symposium on January 13, 1993, in Jackson, Mississippi, made several predictions concerning the future of the economy. Among those predictions was the unlikelihood that President Clinton's campaign pledge of a middle-class tax break will become a reality. The post-recession recovery will produce economic growth in the three percent to four percent range; that is lower than the average six percent following every recession since World War II. He further stated that the United States can maintain a first-rate economy only so long as we have a first-rate education system. This position was buttressed by David M. Ratcliffe, CEO of the Gulfport-based Mississippi Power Company. Mr. Ratcliffe posited that "the most basic ingredient in any economy is educated, productive people." Ratcliffe further stated inequity in school district funding must be addressed because "you are not likely to find excellent schools in an impoverished community." A logical extension of this statement is that you are not likely to find excellent economic growth in an educationally impoverished state. According to Ratcliffe, school

districts spending more money per pupil have far greater graduation rates and fewer drop-outs, surveys show ("Economy Tied," 1993).

According to the 1990 edition of The Adult Education Program Annual Report compiled by the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC), Mississippi's entire allotment from both federal and state sources totaled $2.1 million, of which the state contributed $179,725 or 8.5%. This funding was utilized to serve 18,957 persons out of a total eligible population of 823,726. This represents less than 2.3% of the eligible population being served at a cost of $111.15 per pupil. To place this in perspective, the state of California services 19% of its eligible population at a cost of $212.25. The message sent to those people ili-fated enough not to have acquired literacy skills between the ages of 5 and 18 is that the timeframe for society's obligation to educate its populous is past, and they unfortunately have missed their window of opportunity. How do Mississippi and the other southeastern states compare to the example set by California?

STATE	ELIGIBLE POPULATION	COST PER ELIGIBLE POPULATION	POPULATION SERVED	COST PER POPULATION SERVED	FEDERAL ALLOTMENTS	STATE/ LOCAL ALLOTMENTS	TOTAL ALLOTMENTS
Alabama	1,259,800	$4.42	40,177 (3.2%)	$138.73	$2,802,200	$2,771,481	$5,573,681
California	5,359,094	$40.45	1,021,227 (19%)	$212.25	11,953,705	204,798,040	216,751,745
Florida	2,682,496	$20.89	419,429 (15.6%)	$133.62	5,873,650	50,171,357	56,045,007
Georgia	1,766,608	$3.63	69,580 (3.9%)	$92.27	3,818,874	2,601,314	6,420,188
Louisiana	1,290,389	$6.88	40,039 (3.0%)	$221.84	2,896,133	5,986,224	8,882,357
Mississippi	***823,726***	***$2.56***	***18,957 (2.3%)***	***$111.15***	***1,927,422***	***179,725***	***2,107,147***
South Carolina	1,047,480	$8.07	81,200 (7.8%)	$104.08	2,376,279	6,075,276	8,451,555
Tennessee	1,516,661	$2.49	41,721 (2.8%)	$90.56	3,317,472	460,853	3,778,325

Drop-out Rates and Literacy

Mississippi loses up to one-third of its potential high school graduates between the ninth and twelfth grades, thereby forcing them into lives of poverty and underemployment. Nationally, 1991 statistics reveal a 12.5 percent drop-out rate among all races. In 1990-91, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Mississippi had 23,433 public high school graduates (refer to table in Appendix A). In 1991-92, they estimated 22,751 which shows a decline of 18.4 percent. This percentage may be even greater since "adult literacy efforts in the South are hamstrung by a lack of reliable data with which to establish goals or hold individual programs accountable for the progress--or lack of it--made by their adult students. Well constructed, in-depth literacy surveys have never been administered to measure the functional literacy of adults on a state-by-state basis . . . (Southern Regional Literacy Commission, 1990)" (Cosby, et al., 1991, p. 1.2). Traditionally literacy has been construed as "an essential aim of education in the modern world." However, it "is no autonomous, empty skill but depends upon literate culture. . . . Literacy requires the early and continued transmission of specific information" (Cosby, et al., 1991, p. 1.8).

As its primary focus, the federal adult education and literacy program is targeting those participants who a lack high school diploma or its equivalent. This has been selected as the criteria for achievement, since literacy is not a matter of simply being able to read.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (April 1992), 75.6 percent of the national population of 17-year-olds are high school graduates. As research and practice have suggested, "a high school credential serves not only as a benchmark in the educational process but as the vital link to lifelong learning" (p. 1). "There is no doubt that the less schooling people have, the more likely they are to be functionally illiterate. All the surveys agree on this point, even though they differ substantially in their assessments of the overall rate of illiteracy. The recent (1986) Bureau of the Census study, for example, found that fully seventy percent of those classified as illiterate had not completed high school" (Harman, 1987, p. 41). As high school completion is the main focus of the Adult Secondary Education (ASE) program, "dropouts" aged 16 or older who, according to the 1989 Bureau of Census statistics number more than 38 million, are the prime potential beneficiaries of lifelong learning (U.S. Dept. of Education, April 1992).

Public Assistance Demographics

Mississippians in households that receive public assistance function at appreciably lower levels of proficiency than those households which receive no public assistance. Of those households previously mentioned, 49,485 adults are eligible for money payment and Medicaid benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children according to the 1990 Mississippi Statistical Abstract. Not only was the state of Mississippi supporting those adults, but it also financed 127,349 children. In order to support this massive load upon the state of Mississippi, the total expenditure for public welfare from July 1, 1988, to June 30, 1989, cost the state $170,367,000.

It is interesting to note that according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in October 1990, approximately 63 percent of high school graduates not enrolled in college were employed; 20 percent were unemployed; and 17 percent were not in the labor force. Only 47 percent of dropouts were employed; 20 percent were unemployed; and 33 percent were not in the labor force. A demographic profile of Mississippians active in the work force shows 29 percent are involved in professional and technical areas; 26 percent are foreman/skilled; 21 percent are unskilled

workers; 17 percent of the labor force is in clerical/sales; and 7 percent in the labor force is listed as "other".

Definitions of Literacy Data

"Demographically, the state is not projected to change significantly through the year 2015. In 2015 Mississippi is expected to have one of the highest concentrations of people under the age of 19 of any state in the nation" (Woods & Poole, 1990, p. A12). Nationally, the highest level or greatest percentage of unemployment is all persons with eight years or less of education in the 16- to 19-year-old age bracket. In Mississippi, according to the 1990 census, 59.7 percent of persons 16 years of age and over will be in the labor force. What is to become of the remaining 40.3 percent of those individuals in this age bracket with neither employment skills nor with adequate literacy skills?

According to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Young Adult Study, there are five levels of reading proficiency:

a. "Rudimentary (150)--readers who have acquired rudimentary reading skills and strategies can follow brief written directions . . . . Performance at this level suggests ability to carry out simple, discreet reading tasks.

b. Basic (200)--readers who have learned basic reading comprehension skills and strategies can locate and identify facts from simple informational paragraphs, stories, and news articles . . . . Performance at this level suggests the ability to understand specific or sequentially related information.

c. Intermediate (250)--readers with the ability to use intermediate skills and strategies can search for, locate, and organize the information they find in relatively lengthy passages and can recognize paraphrase of what they have read . . . . Performance at this level suggests the ability to search for specific information, interrelate ideas, and make generalizations.

d. Adept (300) -readers with adept reading comprehension skills and strategies can understand complicated literacy and informational passages including materials about topics they study at school . . . . Performance at this level suggests the ability to find, understand, summarize, and explain relatively complicated information.

e. Advanced (350)--readers who use advanced reading skills and strategies can extend and restructure the ideas presented in

> specialized and complex texts. Examples include scientific materials, literary essays, historical documents, and materials similar to those found in professional and technical working environments . . . . Performance at this level suggests the ability to synthesize and learn from specialized reading materials" (Cosby, et al., 1991, p. 2.3).

"In the NAEP Young Adult Study, subjects were from Mississippi, Oregon, and a national sample of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) clients as well as persons using the Employment Service. This will enable Mississippi to compare its results with Oregon and those of the national JTPA survey. Since all of these surveys and the 1985 study of young adults use the same scale scoring system, it is possible for Mississippi to compare the relative performance of adults in the state with those of national studies past and future" (Cosby, et al., 1991, p. x).

According to the Mississippi Literacy Assessment (1991), 97.3 percent of whites responded correctly at the most basic 150 level; 80.5 percent of blacks successfully performed the same types of tasks. Tasks breaking the 150 level of proficiency include signing one's name on the social security card, locating the expiration date on a driver's license, and identifying the

correct time of a meeting from a form. At the 250 document level, tasks involve matching information on the basis of two features from documents containing several distractors or plausible answers.

NAEP (READING) SCALE SCORES	SURVEY AVERAGE (%)	MISSISSIPPI AVERAGE (%)
Advanced (350 and above)	20.9	7.3
Intermediate (250 and above)	84.1	65.1
Basic (200 and above)	96.8	90.8
Rudimentary (150 and above)	99.6	98.4

One such task involves locating in a table how soon an employee will be eligible for a particular type of fringe benefit. Another task at about this level involves locating a particular intersection on a street map. At the 250 level where respondents were asked to complete a check given information on a bill, there was a 38.8 percent greater success rate among whites (Cosby, et al., 1991).

"Adults with eight or fewer years of schooling scored considerably lower than those with more schooling. Individuals with 0-8 years of education scored an average of 81 points less on all three scales than high school graduates. Those who had some high school education also scored an average of 36 points lower than high school graduates. . . . There is a

significant variation between the white and black population in Mississippi even when their educational attainment levels are similar. The white population scored consistently higher than the black population. White adults with eight or fewer years of schooling scored 54 points higher than blacks with the same educational level. This pattern continues at the other educational levels. In the categories of those with some high school, those with high school diplomas and those with some college, whites scored 32 to 39 points higher than blacks (Cosby, et al., 1991, pp. 4.8-4.10).

"By 2015, 38.8 percent of the population is expected to be Black, up from 35.6 percent in 1990, remaining the second highest percentage of any state" (Woods & Poole, p. A12). With the fall of the Berlin wall and the congressional commitment to downsizing the military, a substantial portion of these individuals will remain in the civilian sector with little possibility of employment.

Where is Mississippi Going?

In order to compete in the 21st century, Mississippi needs to look to her strengths. Traditionally, Mississippi has relied upon agriculture and, later, manufacturing to support her constituents. According to Woods & Poole, economic consultants retained for purposes of composing the 1991

State Profile, the Mississippi economy has a relatively strong manufacturing sector which provides the underpinning for stable job growth. Manufacturing employment in Mississippi increased by 63,000 jobs between 1970 and 1990. The diversity of the Mississippi manufacturing base is a large part of its strength. Mississippi manufacturing employment is forecast to increase by 57,000 jobs between 1990 and 2015. However, the "non-basic" sectors of the Mississippi economy are expected to generate the most employment growth over the next quarter century; these include jobs in finance, insurance, and real estate. Similarly, service employment is projected to rise a net gain of 21,800 service jobs statewide. Retail and wholesale trade sectors are also forecast to create 31,500 new jobs in the state by 2015. This shift in employment necessitates an increase in basic education skills as well as laying a platform for future growth and training in all areas.

According to Woods & Poole, 1991 State Profile, "The population of Mississippi is expected to grow slowly but steadily over the next 25 years. The total population of the state is projected to rise from 2.58 million in 1990 to 2.83 million in 2015. This growth reflects a population increase of 0.37 percent a year on the average, well below expected U.S. population growth of 0.89 percent a year." Therefore, it is in the best interests of the

state of Mississippi to provide a platform for this controlled population growth and limited economic expansion opportunity. This may be, by necessity, most readily addressed by an educated workforce. It is a matter of economic survival that dictates "the biggest bang for the buck." In other words, a well-trained workforce draws the attention of a variety of business and manufacturing interests.

It is imperative that Mississippi develop a curriculum for the education of those misplaced individuals who were unfortunate enough not to have received a public school education. Not only is this a moral imperative, but it is also an economic necessity. If Mississippi is to survive and prosper in the new century, the onus of responsibility lies not only with her professional education staff to develop the guidelines but also with her legislators to provide the funding so vital for the implementation of these guidelines.

Curriculum

A vast quantity of research has been conducted on factors which facilitate adult learning. The motivation of adult learners, the physical environment in which instruction takes place, and the matters of recruitment and retention are all substantive issues and necessitate a great deal of study. However, while great strides are being made in these areas, the fundamental issue of instructional methods and the subsequent issue of instructional materials appears to have received substantially less attention. This may lie in the fact that many instructors are firmly entrenched in pedagogical methodology since their certification is either in elementary or secondary education, and they are quite comfortable with this approach. Furthermore, this lack of study may result from the inability of researchers to design a clear and concise experimental model from which a causal relationship may be extracted. It is, however, more likely that this lack of research is caused by a combination of factors involving not only instructional problems, but those "everyday" problems so frequently encountered by adults.

Historically, three approaches have been utilized to instruct adults: coding and decoding, competency-based instruction and a recent innovation referred to "portable skills". This final method of instruction has no specific

design, but rather is defined in terms of an assessment technique described in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). At this point it is necessary to mention computer-assisted instruction (CAI) since it is not designated as a distinct methodology but rather a means of facilitating the delivery of the three previously mentioned instructional approaches.

The earliest design, and the one most utilized by those who favor the pedagogical approach, is coding and decoding. The method of coding and decoding is built upon the formation of a "mental lexicon" (Harris & Coltheart, 1986). This mental lexicon consists of various subdirectories containing information on orthography (spelling), phonology (pronunciation), and semantics (meaning). In order to read and write, these subdirectories must be filled with the basic data necessary to form decisions about inputting, processing and finally selecting an appropriate response. This is analogous to "pigeon holing" information and only extracting it when the learner is attempting to formulate an answer or response. This approach to learning is very isolated and extremely subject-centered. It has generally been discarded as a means of instruction for adults:

> ". . . work done by Stitch with the military shows that even when gains are made using this approach, within six weeks 80

> percent of the gains are lost unless the skills taught were applied to regular life situations. Finally, the assumption that the skills acquired by this approach will then be generalized appears to be incorrect in light of the National Assessment for Educational Progress study of young adults. This study showed that there was only about a 25 percent ability to generalize knowledge from one skill to another related skill area" (Foster, 1988, p. 16).

In an attempt to increase the ability to generalize knowledge from a specific subject area to the area of problem resolution, competency-based instruction became popular. As the name suggests, competency-based instruction is formulated upon the principle of listing a specific set of competencies or goals which the learner strives to achieve. The primary criticism dealing with competency-based instruction is the determination of what competencies signify skill acquisition. This controversy over the necessary skills required to determine whether an adult can read or write diminishes the value of the overall goal, which is the integration of acquired subject skills and the application of those skills in resolving the life problems of adult learners.

Foster (1988) citing Kirsch and Jungeblut states, "The portable skills approach is based on the assumption that being literate in today's society is not just a function of ability to encode and decode or perform separate and discreet tasks, but is rather a function of problem solving or information-processing skills" (p. 16). Foster does not specifically cite nor does she design an instructional methodology centered upon portable skills; however, in order to buttress her position, she refers to the NAEP study of literacy.

Realizing that the concept of integration is vital to problem-centered adult learners, the NAEP conducted a study utilizing "three types of adult skills that are more consistent with the concept of functional literacy--prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy" (Cosby, Howell, Carr, & Miller, 1991, p. 2.6). The following examples demonstrate or exhibit the process of integration which is so vital to the continuing success of adult learners and their subsequent survival in the real world.

> An example of prose literacy at the most basic level involves "writing a simple description of the type of job one would like to have and accurately locating a single piece of information (single feature match) from a newspaper article of moderate length."

An example of document literacy at the most basic level involves "signing one's name on the social security card, locating the expiration date on a driver's license, and identifying the correct time of a meeting from a form."

An example of quantitative literacy at the most basic level "requires totalling two entries on a bank deposit slip and entering and calculating a checkbook balance" (Cosby, et al., 1991, pp. 2.9-2.18).

Having examined the three historical approaches to adult literacy, it is readily apparent, according to David Harmon in the Foster (1988) paper: ". . . if a century of debate has not produced a conclusive decision about the best teaching method, perhaps we are asking the wrong question" (p. 20). If it is not a matter of methodology but rather one of instructional technique that enhances learning in adults, perhaps computer assisted instruction (CAI) will be the innovation that adult education requires.

For years ABE personnel have struggled with recruitment and retention rates and matching learners' needs to types of instruction. Computers appear to have provided a segue for many in this arena. According to a study conducted by Wangberg, et al. (1985), those learners participating through

CAI "did show growth" (p. 17), and it was further noted that the CAI group showed marked a increase in motivation and self-esteem. Attrition rates for those students involved in CAI also appear to be lower than those in the traditional setting. The adult learner rather than focusing on the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills through traditional means concentrates upon the procurement of the "new age" computer literacy skills. Rather than having to admit that he/she is learning to read or write, the adult learner may proudly boast of a newly-acquired skill in computer literacy, thus enhancing an already fragile self concept.

Macmurdo (1988) and others have praised the privacy, feedback, and faster learning of CAI as opposed to traditional methods, in that students are free to make errors without embarrassment since the lesson is conducted in a value-free environment. Also, the computer's ability to respond immediately to the adult learner's queries provides an enhanced sense of security (Tobin, 1986). Robichaud (1986) stated that self-paced instruction via the computer appeared to be a benefit and thus encouraged several learners to increase the speed with which they learned, and subsequently allowed them to acquire a larger base of knowledge.

Through a plethora of conversations with ABE field instructors and supervisors, the implementation of CAI is highly favored. However, it is realized that CAI is not a substitute for individual facilitator and learner interaction. It is this type of one-to-one support that adults find reassuring and encouraging. Adults require consistent praise and assurance that mistakes are not fatal, and that the acquisition of any skill requires constant repetitious practice.

Methods and Teaching Materials

The discussion on which methods and techniques are the best to use in adult education programs in general, and ABE in particular, continues in every program. There is no conceivable answer that could be applied to all people and all programs. Programs differ in many aspects, such as target clientele, goals, facilities, etc. Within individual programs are divergent people, each of whom brings a unique history of personal experience, educational level, abilities, and professional and personal desires and goals. What is successful for one will not necessarily work for the other.

An assumption of this study is that if the appropriate methods, materials, and techniques are used in a given program, then the likelihood of success is more assured. But what is success and who defines success are

questions that continue to emerge from reports on levels of success. By whose definition is the program's level of success (or failure) determined--a program planner's definition, a teacher/facilitator's definition, the researcher's definition, or the learner's definition? The answer is probably to be found in all of the above; however, where the emphasis is placed may determine the real validity of the measure of success in a program.

Since most adult ABE students are attending sessions voluntarily, they can and do leave when they begin to believe that their time would be better spent elsewhere. When a particular student decides to leave without the completion of his/her goals, the program is at that point, for that individual, a failure.

Obviously not all such failures are caused by a program problem, but a large number are. In their report on student attrition in a Pittsburgh area literacy program, Bean, Partanen, Wright, and Aaronson (1989) were able to locate and survey 60 persons who had stopped coming to sessions. They found that 47% left for personal problems like work schedules, health, and family crises, which are areas that little can be done about. Another 13% of the survey left because some of the needs that the agency might be able to help with were not met (i.e., transportation, child care, and vision problems).

Significantly, the remaining 40% of the survey dropped out because of systemic factors within the program. The two major reasons cited for dropping out were tutor factors (18%), the client felt not to be learning or ill at ease, and tutorial time or place (3%) (p. 150).

The researchers suggested that there is a need for more training in understanding the needs of adults as learners and in understanding the emotionally-draining aspects of the experience for tutors as well as students. They pointed out that "considering the amount of effort dedicated to student recruitment, it is ironic and wasteful of hard-won resources for the attrition rate for literacy programs to remain so high" (Bean, et al, 1989, p. 15). Significantly, one of the elderly students who dropped out still wanted to learn how to send cards to friends in nursing homes.

It appears that the human relationship aspect of the ABE program is fundamental to the utilization of its techniques, methods, and materials. The human application of the program sets the atmosphere for learning. Lindeman, in recognizing the importance of disposition between learner and facilitator, said "none but the humble become good teachers of adults" (Knowles, 1980, p. 68). No amount of training or certification can compensate for attitude, however well intended. It is the program administr-

ator's responsibility to assure that the skillful delivery of the program is equal to its contents.

Knowles (1980), in describing characteristics of adult education administrators, said "they are able to establish warm, empathetic relationships with people of all sorts; to see the world through their eyes; to be a good listener" (p. 80).

In its review of effective practices in adult literacy programs, the California Department of Education addressed the vital role of the teacher with the following:

> Perhaps Longfield (1984) sums up the teachers' role best by stating ". . . functionally illiterate adults need the warmth and understanding of an enlightened teacher who will set the learner at ease, emphasize the positive, be patient and understanding, and set educational objectives around the students' needs and potential" (1989, p. 9).

This warm and understanding attitude is the cement that binds methods, materials, and techniques into substance.

It is widely accepted that adult learners are different from child learners, yet students continue to leave ABE in rejection of methods and techniques

that are too reminiscent of their experiences in childhood. In a recent study of this problem, Quigley (1992) found that many of the people who dropped out retained a high regard for education, while showing disdain for school. Many were loners (not uncommon in ABE students) who, while liking their teachers, "felt that they had not received adequate attention from [them]". Interestingly, the dropouts praised their relationship with their counselors (p. 26).

Quigley concluded:

> the students who sit in the back of the room, who refuse to interact, who appear bored and unmotivated, who disappear into the woodwork . . . . in fact, may hold a higher belief in education and higher self-expectancy than those who *seek* [italics added] more teacher and peer attention (p. 26).

In her article on student motivation, Shanley (1986) acknowledges the importance of classroom methods and techniques, while emphasizing the importance of flexibility. If the students believe that their needs are not being met, the teacher must "either convince them that what is being taught is relevant and important, or adapt the syllabus to deal with matters requested by the students" (p. 52).

Because of the erratic attendance pattern of many adult learners, Shanley (1986) measures success as instilling in the student a desire to continue education beyond the classroom: "A teacher who knows that she has triggered off the students' interest so that learning continues to develop outside the classroom must consider that she has succeeded in her task" (p. 53).

Davis (1991) believes that more tutors of ABE should come from the students' community. She believes that too many tutors are recruited from outside the learner's community. The need for additional learning may be perceived by those from the tutors' community but not from the learners' community. Her study also indicates that when learning takes place in a community center in the learners' community, rather than at another neighborhood, it is perceived as more relevant by the learners (p. 36).

Adult learners make a major decision when they decide to take part in a literacy program. That is a decision easily rescinded at any time, and one which is frequently reexamined. The alternative, which can be exercised at any time, is to drop out. That decision can be rescinded in favor of re-entry. As we have seen, many factors enter into those decisions. Perhaps the best

we can aspire toward is that, regardless of the decision, the door to continued learning will have been opened.

The vigilance of facilitators of literacy programs in constantly evaluating and re-evaluating, with the flexibility to try different methods with different people, is the greatest technique that can be offered. Perhaps we can borrow that primary self-admonition of the medical profession: First do no harm. In the final analysis, teachers, facilitators, whatever the term, can be nothing more and nothing less than fellow learners.

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APPENDIX A

YEARS OF FORMAL SCHOOL COMPLETED

1990 CENSUS

COUNTY	POPULATION AGE 25+	YEARS OF FORMAL SCHOOL COMPLETED			
		0–8 YEARS	9–11 YEARS	TOTAL < HIGH SCHOOL	PERCENT < HIGH SCHOOL
ADAMS	22,376	3,619	3,702	7,321	32.7
ALCORN	20,746	4,443	4,627	9,070	43.7
AMITE	8,224	1,766	1,762	3,528	42.9
ATTALA	11,741	2,431	3,270	5,701	48.6
BENTON	4,843	1,301	1,294	2,595	53.6
BOLIVAR	21,777	5,247	4,577	9,824	45.1
CALHOUN	9,453	1,913	2,551	4,464	47.2
CARROLL	5,775	1,332	1,324	2,656	50.0
CHICKASAW	10,861	2,073	3,038	5,111	47.1
CHOCTAW	5,558	1,020	1,337	2,357	42.4
CLAIBORNE	5,432	1,061	1,182	2,243	41.3
CLARKE	10,624	1,923	2,155	4,078	38.4
CLAY	12,282	2,059	2,808	4,867	39.6
COAHOMA	17,510	4,228	3,828	8,056	46.0
COPIAH	15,962	2,698	3,504	6,202	38.9
COVINGTON	9,687	1,813	2,494	4,307	44.5
DESOTO	41,533	4,556	7,387	11,943	28.8
FORREST	38,761	4,343	6,490	10,833	27.9
FRANKLIN	5,233	1,036	1,156	2,192	41.9
GEORGE	9,846	1,750	2,302	4,052	41.2
GREENE	6,137	1,055	1,252	2,307	38.0
GRENADA	13,252	2,685	3,075	5,760	43.5
HANCOCK	20,398	2,636	3,894	6,530	32.0
HARRISON	99,878	9,582	15,644	25,226	25.3
HINDS	153,310	14,236	23,736	37,972	24.8
HOLMES	11,623	2,982	3,057	6,039	52.0
HUMPHREYS	6,605	1,906	1,636	3,542	53.6
ISSAQUENA	1,099	338	281	619	56.3
ITAWAMBA	12,807	2,987	3,547	6,534	51.0
JACKSON	69,935	6,453	11,456	17,909	25.6
JASPER	10,292	1,748	2,366	4,114	40.0
JEFFERSON	4,729	1,160	1,063	2,223	47.0
JEFFERSON–DAVIS	8,267	1,505	2,016	3,521	42.6
JONES	39,024	5,717	8,217	13,934	35.7
KEMPER	6,182	1,276	1,426	2,702	43.7
LAFAYETTE	16,387	2,242	2,644	4,886	29.8
LAMAR	18,151	1,872	2,971	4,843	26.7

1990 CENSUS

COUNTY	POPULATION AGE 25 +	YEARS OF FORMAL SCHOOL COMPLETED			
		0–8 YEARS	9–11 YEARS	TOTAL < HIGH SCHOOL	PERCENT < HIGH SCHOOL
LAUDERDALE	46,312	5,406	8,618	14,024	30.3
LAWRENCE	7,564	1,328	1,556	2,884	38.1
LEAKE	11,543	2,319	2,953	5,272	45.7
LEE	40,775	5,277	7,837	13,114	32.2
LEFLORE	20,941	4,930	4,436	9,366	44.7
LINCOLN	19,095	2,767	4,295	7,062	37.0
LOWNES	34,439	4,359	6,326	10,685	34.4
MADISON	32,164	4,285	4,871	9,156	28.5
MARION	15,450	2,892	3,480	6,372	41.2
MARSHALL	17,629	3,968	4,539	8,507	48.3
MONROE	22,351	4,490	5,425	9,915	44.4
MONTGOMERY	7,718	1,452	1,893	3,350	43.4
NESHOBA	15,137	2,572	3,341	5,913	39.1
NEWTON	12,426	2,011	2,947	4,958	39.9
NOXUBEE	7,064	1,840	1,718	3,558	50.4
OKTIBBEHA	18,826	2,092	2,985	5,077	27.0
PANOLA	17,281	3,772	4,121	7,893	45.7
PEARL RIVER	23,589	2,978	4,486	7,464	31.6
PERRY	6,419	1,040	1,412	2,452	38.2
PIKE	22,164	3,806	4,922	8,728	39.4
PONTOTOC	13,954	2,471	3,469	5,940	42.6
PRENTISS	14,374	2,984	3,784	6,768	47.1
QUITMAN	5,948	1,738	1,503	3,241	54.5
RANKIN	55,365	5,569	8,911	14,480	26.2
SCOTT	14,444	2,784	3,992	6,776	46.9
SHARKEY	3,672	995	793	1,788	48.7
SIMPSON	14,782	2,676	3,536	6,212	42.0
SMITH	9,164	1,678	2,259	3,937	43.0
STONE	6,324	769	1,248	2,017	31.9
SUNFLOWER	18,299	4,762	4,532	9,294	50.3
TALLAHATCHIE	8,575	2,479	1,964	4,443	51.8
TATE	12,553	2,182	2,717	4,899	39.0
TIPPAH	12,156	2,678	2,864	5,542	45.6
TISHOMINGO	11,803	2,703	2,613	5,316	45.0
TUNICA	4,110	1,226	999	2,225	54.1
UNION	14,114	2,772	3,250	6,022	42.7
WALTHALL	8,466	1,669	2,140	3,809	45.0

1990 CENSUS					
		YEARS OF FORMAL SCHOOL COMPLETED			
COUNTY	POPULATION AGE 25 +	0–8 YEARS	9–11 YEARS	TOTAL < HIGH SCHOOL	PERCENT < HIGH SCHOOL
WARREN	29,311	3,999	5,483	9,482	32.3
WASHINGTON	37,954	7,613	8,031	15,644	41.2
WAYNE	11,588	2,136	2,951	5,087	43.9
WEBSTER	6,464	1,284	1,390	2,674	41.4
WILKINSON	5,811	1,734	1,272	3,006	51.7
WINSTON	11,937	1,849	3,039	4,888	40.9
YALOBUSHA	7,666	1,729	1,669	3,398	44.3
YAZOO	14,976	3,212	3,774	6,986	46.6
TOTALS.	1 538,997	240,267	309,418	549,685	35.7