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REVIEWS
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Adult Literacy: Global Perspectives

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Editorial

by Donna D. Amstutz and
John A. Niemi

The United Nations (UN) has declared 1990 as International Literacy Year, with UNESCO taking the lead in planning. The UN objective is to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000. The International Council for Adult Education initiated an International Task Force on Literacy to facilitate preparation for this celebration. In the first issue of its newsletter, the task force listed specific objectives of the 10-year intensive effort:

...dramatically reduce illiteracy in the world; mobilize resources from the grassroots and factory floors through governments and educational institutions; recognize that illiteracy is a problem of both industrialized and non-industrialized nations; not confuse a campaign against illiteracy with a campaign against illiterate people; link literacy to the achievements of social, economic, and political democracy; strengthen the organizations of women, the poor, the jobless, and the landless; result in increased empowerment of people, not increased dependency; and, result most importantly, in

strengthened permanent structures for promoting literacy and adult education at governmental and non-governmental levels (1990 International Literacy Year Newsletter, p. 2).

The International Literacy Year reflects a new vision for literacy that includes increased participation by adult learners in the planning and implementation of literacy programs.

This issue of *Thresholds* is dedicated to examining, from an international perspective, the nature and scope of literacy and the issues that affect it. The opening article **Literacy Definitions: Who Wins and Who Loses?** provides a landscape of literacy definitions and issues. The purposes of literacy, as viewed from a political standpoint are presented. **The Language of Literacy** discusses the use of military, medical, banking and other metaphors as applied to literacy. **Literacy as Social Policy: Issues for America in the 21st Century** details the history of literacy policy in the United States, and offers implications for future policy.

Three articles address literacy in the United States. **Cultural Literacy: Ethnocentrism versus Selfethnic Reflectors** outlines a strategy for African-American literacy programs. **Freirean Literacy in North America: The Community-based Education Movement** relays the relationship between community-based literacy programs and education for liberation, as conceived by Freire. **Literacy in the Workplace: Adults as Learners** ex-

amines several issues related to workplace literacy and suggests that both workers and organizations benefit from literacy programs in the workplace.

Three articles scrutinize literacy in different cultural contexts. In **Literacy in China: The Mass Campaign**, relevant methodologies and values as they relate to literacy are expressed. **Working Together for Literacy in Africa** takes a look at how adult education associations have come together to coordinate information regarding literacy programs. **Literacy in Latin America: The Development of Popular Education** provides an overview of the conditions that initiated the popular education movement.

The final article, **Literacy: Considerations for Policies in the Future** examines the relationship between women and literacy, and summarizes the implications for policy formation from the other articles in this issue.

The issue concludes with reviews of two books that examine literacy programs in the United States, *Illiterate America*, Kozol (1985) and *Participatory Literacy Education*, Fingeret and Jurmo (eds.) (1989).

We hope that you will find this special issue of *Thresholds* thought provoking, and that it will form the basis of a continuing debate regarding the most appropriate approaches to be taken by literacy programs.



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Definitions of Literacy: Who Wins and Who Loses?

by *Phyllis M. Cunningham*

'Illiteracy' can be seen as a way of escaping an oppressive ideology as Zetkin argued with Lenin:

"While in Moscow today ten thousand—and tomorrow another ten thousand—are charmed by brilliant theatrical performances, millions are crying out to learn the art of spelling, of writing their names, of counting, are crying for culture, are anxious to learn, for they are beginning to understand that the universe is ruled by natural laws, and not by the 'Heavenly Father', and his witches and wizards."

"Don't complain so bitterly of the illiteracy, Comrade Lenin," I interjected. "To a certain extent it really helped forward the revolution. It prevented the mind of the workers and peasants from being stopped up and corrupted with bourgeois ideas and conceptions. Your propaganda and agitation is falling on virgin soil. It is easier to sow and to reap where you have not first of all to uproot a whole forest."

"Illiteracy was compatible with the struggle for the seizure of power, with the necessity to destroy the old State apparatus...Illiteracy is incompatible with the tasks of construction." (Quoted in Hoyles, 1977, *The Politics of Literacy*).

This passage describes the two faces of literacy—literacy that is used to control and literacy that is used to

democratize and to make free. Again, as Gee (1988) stated:

There is a contradiction here.

In Plato we see two sides to literacy: literacy as liberator and literacy as weapon. Plato wants to ensure that a voice behind the spoken or written 'text' can dialogically respond, but he also wants to ensure that this voice is not overridden by respondents who are careless, ignorant, lazy, self-interested, or ignoble. One must somehow empower the voice behind the text, privilege it, at least to the extent of ruling out some interpretation and some interpreters (readers/listeners). And such a ruling-out will always be self-interested to the extent that it must be based on some privileged view of what the text means, what correct interpretations are, and who are acceptable readers (where acceptable readers will perforce include the one making the ruling). The ruling is also self-interested in that it has a political dimension, as assertion to power, a power that may reside in institutions that seek to enforce it (whether modern schools and universities or Plato's governing classes in the Republic). But then we are close to an authority that kills dialogue by dictating who is to count as a respondent and what is to count as a response.

Whether analyzing Lenin's or Plato's concepts of literacy, there is a clear understanding by these authors that the meaning of literacy is related to power and power relationships. This understanding of literacy has been documented historically by many writers (Levine, 1986) who have shown that

persons in power, be they kings in Europe or slave-masters in the southern United States, understood that literacy was related to power and power relationships.

But this definition of literacy is not the only definition or, perhaps more precisely, the only type of definition possible. The purpose of this article is to examine the ways literacy is defined and to clarify the concept of literacy, or what now generally goes by the name of illiteracy. (Tuman, 1987, noted that the Library of Congress card on literacy reads "Literacy see Illiteracy.")

Levine (1986) provided a three-way classification of studies of literacy: competence, contextual, and critical-cultural. Each defines literacy differently. **Competence studies** "address the cognitive, linguistic and physiological foundations on which the individual builds reading and writing skills." The major thrust of these studies is the development of explanatory models for encoding and decoding the written word. Competence studies include research on readability formulas, development of reading skills, and evaluation of student ability. The competence studies defined literacy as a technical concept to be dealt with empirically. The focus is on the individual's internal skill acquisition of reading and perhaps writing.

Contextual studies, according to Levine (1986), "take the psychological and linguistic mechanics of literacy for granted and seek instead to describe its relationship with the institution and social structures in which it is embedded." In other words, the interest of the researcher is in the way literacy serves, and is served by particular historical or social situations. The study of relationships between literacy and the rate of return on life earnings, the use of literacy in a democratic state, or an analysis of literacy in terms of social

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policy takes note that literacy has a function in the society and is defined thusly. The general sociological orientation here is functionalism.

Critical-cultural studies is the final category listed by Levine (1986). The questions that interest these researchers relate to how the distribution of literacy skills affects the information available to individuals and groups and the influence that this, in turn, has on the relationships among social classes and between individuals and agencies of the state; a second interest is how literacy in the culture develops the products and intellectual activities that characterize it. Literacy here is defined, from either perspective, in a political context based on a conflictual, rather than a functional approach to sociological theory.

McLaren (1988) also divided literacy into three broad definitional groups: functional, cultural, and critical. His analysis places the **functional definition** in the mainstream theories of literacy that define literacy as a form of linguistic currency possessed by an individual relative to some related function also defined by, or assumed by the person defining. Thus "the capacity to read and write to succeed materially in a modern society" would be an example of a functionalist definition.

Cultural literacy is characterized by prescriptive and pluralistic orientations. Bloom (1987) and Hirsch (1987), along with the former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, are clearly prescriptive and specify the need of a special content to be a part of literacy; the multiculturalists, on the other hand, advocate a cultural content to exemplify the diversity within a given culture. Both positions, however, concur with the position of Heath, who emphasized the indissoluble link between literacy, context, and meaning. She noted:

Unless accompanied with cultural knowledge, personal drive, political motivation, or economic opportunity, literacy does not lead the writer to make the essential leap from literacy to being literate—from knowing what the words say to understanding what they mean. Readers make meaning by linking the symbols on the page with real-world knowledge and then considering what the text means for generating new ideas

and actions not explicitly written or 'said' in the text. The transformation of literacy skills into literate behaviors and ways of thinking depends on a community of talkers who make the text mean something. For most of history, such literate communities have been elite groups, holding themselves and their knowledge and power apart from the masses" (quoted in McLaren, 1988).

Bloom and Bennett typify the position of those who extol an elite culture within the literacy context.

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Critical literacy advocates base their analysis on a "social construction of knowledge and the ideological processes involved in reading the text" (McLaren, 1988). Knowledge is seen as part of a gendered, racial, economic, social class context, and thus not neutral. Questions then become, "Who defines knowledge? What knowledge is included, and why? And who benefits from the knowledge presented?"

Levine's and McLaren's categorizations are useful because each shows the multiple meanings of literacy, providing the reader with tools for analysis: How is the author defining literacy or illiteracy; how does that formulation affect the questions asked, the observations and assumptions made. While one author may lament the ineffectiveness of the public schools because of high drop out rates and illiteracy levels among graduates, another author in a different frame speaks, as Freire does, about the United States:

The large number of people who do not read or write and

who were expelled from school do not represent a failure of the schooling class; their expulsion represents the triumph of the schooling class. In fact, this misreading of responsibility reflects the schools' hidden curriculum (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Accordingly, empirical data relating to illiteracy can be seen as either a failure or as the effectiveness of the school curriculum.

Another important aspect of definition has to do with the assumptions one makes regarding the utility of literacy or its relationships to other factors. Graff discussed this phenomenon under the 'literacy myth' whereby

literacy leads to logical and analytical modes of thought; general and abstract uses of language; critical and rational thought; a skeptical and questioning attitude; a distinction between myth and history; the recognition of the importance of time and space; complex and modern governments (with separation of church and state); political democracy and greater social equity; economic development; wealth and productivity; political stability; organization; and contraception (lower birth rate). It leads to people who are innovative, achievement oriented, productive, cosmopolitan, politically aware, more globally (nationally and internationally) and less locally oriented, who have more liberal and humane social attitudes, are less likely to commit a crime, and more likely to take education and the rights and duties of citizenship seriously (Gee, 1988).

Thus, the myth claims to foster social equality at the same time that those in the critical illiteracy discourse claim that today's literacy programs (Adult Basic Education, General Educational Development, and adult high school programs) are perpetuating inequality.

On the other hand, critiques of the critical literacy discourse speak to the repressive myths contained in concepts such as 'empowerment, dialogue, student voice, and the word critical,' leading to a practice that "produces relations

of domination in the classroom—and have themselves become vehicles of repression” (Ellsworth, 1989). Ellsworth (1989) went on to quote Minh-ha, “There are no social positions exempt from being repressive to others—any group—any position can move into the oppressor role.”

When one hears that literacy in and by itself is being defined as a means of promoting such things as economic or social mobility, a better life, or democratic participation, one needs to proceed with caution.

Much has gone on in recent scholarship to decontextualize the reality of literacy from the myths. To what degree have schools historically prepared persons for a vocation? Graff showed that throughout history education has not, for the most part, been directed primarily to vocational training or personal growth. Rather, Graff, using Gramsci for his analysis, showed how literacy became a vital tool for the development of hegemony, whereby the common person accepted uncritically the social hierarchy, and the norms, values and beliefs of the elite (Gee, 1988). From a sociological viewpoint, Collins (1977), noted that although schools have three functions (e.g., vocational training, ensurance of political stability, and promotion of the social standing of various groups), the essential function of schools historically has been primarily to promote the status of elites. The home and the church took care of the other two functions. Tuman (1987) argues that Gramsci's attack on vocational education holds true for functional literacy. Gramsci's point was

that giving persons skill training created an illusion of democracy:

The labourer can become a skilled worker, for instance, the peasant a surveyor or petty agronomist. But democracy, by definition, cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can be skilled. It must mean that every 'citizen' can 'govern' and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this. Political democracy tends towards a coincidence of the rulers and the ruled (Gramsci quoted in Tuman, 1987).

Tuman (1987) went on to comment,

Gramsci clearly realizes, as American radicalism for the most part does not, that, if society itself is ever to be changed by people working collectively in their own interest, then students themselves, more than their teachers, need to be transformed. To the extent that literacy has a vital role to play in self-transformation, all students thus need to become fully literate readers and writers of texts, and this attainment must be the primary goal of education.

If one accepts these analyses, then definitions of functional literacy and the role of traditional schooling in promoting functional literacy are suspect. When one hears that literacy in and by itself is being defined as a means of promoting such things as economic or social mobility, a better life, or democratic participation, one needs to proceed with caution. It is true that the intense literacy campaigns in Cuba and Nicaragua, when combined with a revolutionary shift in power relationships, had incredible success in bringing an uninformed citizenry into the political process, at the same time that it built an aspiring work force and citizenry (Müller, 1985; Kozol, 1980). However, that literacy was developed in a context of political discontinuity, not continuity. For Kozol, to suggest that every American student should become a 'brigadista,' and that we should mount a campaign such as Cuba's, is to miss the essential point that literacy campaigns in the United States are about continuity, not discontinuity. Thus, the

two faces of literacy, either Lenin's or Plato's, assert themselves: literacy can pacify and literacy can be revolutionary.

One can negate another myth—that is, that literacy in and by itself leads to cognitive development. Scribner and Cole (1986) in their seminal study of the Vai, were able to separate the effects of literacy in Vai, Arabic, and English. They concluded that literacy was not related to cognitive development or higher order intellectual reasoning such as syllogistic reasoning, or enhanced use of taxonomic skills. What Western literacy did for the Vai was to help them operate within institutional or contrived contexts. However, without practice in these institutional settings, which would have to be characteristic of the culture, this type of learning falls into disuse. One can learn from this demythologizing and always contextualize literacy definitions.

The evangelical fervor of the recent attacks on literacy have claimed that anywhere from 20 to 33% of the adults living in the United States are functionally illiterate. In the caption on the book *Illiterate America*, Kozol (1985) noted, “One out of three adult Americans cannot read this book.” How are these figures assembled? How do we know the rates of illiteracy? Many authors continue to cite the Adult Performance Level (APL) (Northcutt, 1975) study in which a national sample from the United States were given a 65-item test of functional literacy that was analyzed on the conveniently measured variables: income, job status, and educational attainment. Three levels of competency were defined, and 25 million persons found to be in category one (functionally incompetent). Another 35 million persons were labeled category two and found to be marginally competent in fulfilling these tasks.

Based on this study, the Department of Education released the data that there were 57 million adults unequipped to carry out basic tasks in daily life. The validity of the APL study has been critiqued elsewhere (Griffith & Cervero, 1977). Levine's (1982) comment, ten years later, that “only through crude empiricism and political crassness can this trio of variables be accepted as a satisfactory interpretation of social survival,” will probably do little to destroy this myth. Despite the conclusions of various scholars as to the conceptual

ridiculousness of this national study, funded for over one million dollars by the federal government, the APL results continue to be quoted in 1989 as social reality. One can only surmise that literacy (illiteracy) is defined politically, and when one needs to explain such things as non-productivity, drug use, family disintegration, and single parent households, the proclivity is to revive the literacy myth, and the campaign for its eradication is begun anew.

In conclusion, I have tried to make clear the dialectical nature of the con-

cept of literacy as it relates to the continuity and discontinuity within any given societal context. How we define literacy has more to say about our politics than it does about any scientific objectification. The literacy myths are powerful, but, thanks to more recent research, the concept is being decontextualized and the many faces and uses of literacy and its myths are becoming clear. The 'scientist' may concentrate on such questions as encoding, decoding, testing, readability formulas, and learning disability; the culturalist may

concentrate on the ideology of content; the functionalist may question the high correlations illiteracy has with incarceration, unemployment and other social ills (and ultimately implement such social policies as workplace literacy, and family literacy); those in the critical frame concentrate on questions of who defines, who wins, and who loses. Each group is limited in its inquiry and in the questions they ask by their definition of literacy.

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The Language of Adult Literacy

by Paul J. Ilesley

Illiteracy is often discussed in relation to such striking notions as war, disease, prison, and chronic unemployment. In this article, the language used to describe the phenomenon of adult illiteracy will be interpreted as to its meaning and purpose. If there is a moral to this analysis, it is that "we'd better watch our language."

A magazine advertisement contains a headline that does as much for the adult literacy movement as 'be all that you can be' does for the army. The idea behind the ad is to recruit volunteers. Produced by the National Advertising Council (1989) (of Smokey the Bear fame), the advertisement portrays a crowd of mostly regular-looking people in a large picture. Undemeath is the eye-catching phrase, "There's an epidemic with 27 million victims. And no visible symptoms." The application of certain trigger words in the headline is intended to recruit volunteers to assist non-reading adults in need. The text of the advertisement is even more gripping, in that it appeals to both altruistic and patriotic instincts. It says, "...millions of Americans are victims of a tragic epidemic," and, "In human terms, the price of illiteracy is staggering. People who can't read, often can't work. They make up 50-75% of this country's unemployed." It appears one need not have special skills to help, because "...when you join the fight against illiteracy...it takes no special qualifications. If you can read, you can tutor or help us in countless other ways."

Who can forget the game found in children's literature, "what's wrong with this picture?" The idea is to find misplaced items, such as a turkey wearing a scuba diving outfit, while skiing down a sand dune in the middle of sum-

mer. The same kind of critical reflection can be trained on the media in general, and in the above mentioned advertisement in particular. Accordingly, first, as one looks critically at the advertisement, the following items seem out of place:

- The people in the picture look confused and aimless, as if non-reading adults are that way. Probably some are, though certainly not all, as is true of the larger population.
 - The reference to 'epidemic' is strange, if not patently inappropriate, because it sounds as though people who cannot read are sick. Probably some are, but, again, so are some of the rest of the population.
 - The typical whine by members of the adult literacy movement that there are '27 million victims' is suspect for two reasons. First, to estimate a number of illiterates requires a solid definition of illiteracy. Is literacy merely the ability to read the printed word? Is it a matter of being functional in the roles of parents, citizens, and workers? Or is it to be equated with 'voice' and 'power?' As Cunningham suggested in the previous article, the numbers vary greatly according to the definitions of literacy and illiteracy.
 - The word 'victim' is a label that applies to people who are on the receiving end of a crime or a disease. Moreover, the word evinces images of a fool or a chump, or someone who has lost control of a situation. Non-reading adults are not victims in either sense of the word. It is sheer speculation, if not outright prejudice, that guides the selection of this term.
- Equating illiteracy with unemployment, crime, drug abuse, or any other social evil rests on the assumption that the inability to read necessarily makes a person a societal burden, and fails to note the productivity of illiterate, semi-literate, and non-English speaking adults in factories, on farms, in service industries, in homes, and elsewhere. To imply that illiteracy is a cause of crime not only raises suspicions about non-reading adults, it ignores the possibility that illiteracy and criminal behavior may both result from social injustice.
 - The implication that anyone who can read can help illiterates may well be true, but, by itself, the statement is facile and irresponsible. Effective volunteer literacy programs are highly complex organizations that rely on the coordinated efforts of a variety of people, including the students themselves. In a real sense, a person's decision to learn to read is a negotiated affair, not a matter of 'helplessness.'
 - The overall effect of the advertising campaign is that it serves the needs of organizations that produce literacy programs, not the needs of non-reading adults.

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Why resort to pretentious language, inflated statistics, and misplaced metaphors for the purpose of dramatizing illiteracy? Similar over-zealousness, if that is part of the problem, is observed in the speeches of well-known leaders, as well as from marketing campaigns. When addressing the 1984 National Convention of Literacy Volunteers of America, for example, Barbara Bush proclaimed that "adult illiteracy is one of the nation's most insidious diseases" (Bush, 1984). The following year, in his address to the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, former Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell, argued that "the time is now to mobilize our forces, the corporations, various sectors of government, the military, and of course, the media against adult illiteracy," (Bell, 1985).

It is probably correct to suggest that people select metaphors according to their own vested interests in defining a situation, solving a problem, or both. At this juncture, the thesis is seen to be true, at least in the case of adult literacy. In other words, the way stakeholders define adult literacy reflects their position and goals. Below are some of the more popular metaphors, followed by analysis of their usage.

School Language

By far the most popular and perhaps most ironic of all choices of language to describe adult illiteracy comes from professional educators. What sense does it make to subject people who did not perform well under this system in their early years to the same regimen of rote memorization, punctuality and obedience? When the illiteracy problem is spoken of in quantifiable terms, such as grade levels, achievement tests, and competency exams, it is reduced to school language. Accordingly, adult literacy education assumes properties of consistency and efficiency, the kind of attributes that are especially appropriate to drive an organization or profession in this modern technological culture. It is out of place in the adult literacy context (Ilsley, 1985b).

The stereotype of the dejected, despondent, emotionally starved illiterate adult is not real. Anyone who has discussed the matter with one or more non-reading adults will agree that

it is quite possible, even likely, that the standards by which we are measured in the typical classroom in the United States have given way to other kinds of standards and goals in adulthood. It is not necessarily true that adult non-readers do not know what they want, as the stereotype would have us believe, at least to any greater extent than the general population. It is that, like many of the rest of us, they would like to achieve their goals on their own terms. When school language, tests, processes, roles, and norms appear unrealistic or uncompromising to adult non-readers, they simply avoid them.

The Medical Metaphor

In response to the societal disease of adult illiteracy, adult non-readers are encouraged to check into learning clinics, where their symptoms are discovered during in-take interviews, resulting in a diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses and prescribed individualized plans of instruction in the learning clinic. Through the monitoring of vital signs, prognoses are made. Once the problem has been controlled, the student/patient is 'terminated' from the program.

The medical metaphor, like any metaphor, has merits and limitations. Among the merits is the image that there is scientific precision in teaching adult literacy. The result is the quest for systematic analysis of students, and consistent and efficient programming and evaluation. Goals are clear, accountability is high, and records are neat under such a model. Moreover, the sense of drama contained in labeling adult illiteracy a social disease creates social awareness and evokes public consciousness-raising and charitable participation.

As for the limitations, there is a difference between curing a disease and promoting health. A premise behind the idea of eradicating illiteracy, as if it were a disease, is that a deficit model is appropriate. The elimination of illiteracy means that the goal has been met. Even if it were possible, the rooting out of illiteracy from society does not in any way promote literacy. In actuality, the procedure is not nearly as hopeful as the advancement of literacy, which is more purposeful and full of hope. Common sense would indicate

that educational programs are more likely to appeal to people when the benefits and ease of attending are persuasively presented, than if people are shamed into programs designed to 'eradicate the disease of illiteracy.'

When illiteracy is defined as an individual problem, an educator can define deficiencies in ways that remove a student from the decision-making process.

Moreover, the medical metaphor places the problem within an individual. Consider the purpose of diagnosis. Once tested, various characteristics of an individual, as opposed to his or her context, culture, or society, are identified for treatment. The myth is encouraged that all similarly diagnosed individuals can be treated with the same kind of instruction. When illiteracy is defined as an individual problem, an educator can define deficiencies in ways that remove a student from the decision-making process. Belief in the stamp of industrialization or the cookie cutter model, predominates, leading to the unitization, standardization, and compartmentalization of students and their problems. In this way, illiterates are not educated, they are processed.

Finally, the medical metaphor, with its crass implication that people are diseased and that there is an epidemic in our midst, suggests that illiterates carry contagion and are to be shunned or feared. Despite the sense of drama implied when the medical metaphor is put to use, it is pretentious and misleading.

The Military Metaphor

Perhaps the Johnson era slogan 'war on poverty' gave rise to the more current slogan, 'war on illiteracy.' In

declaring war, the legions of volunteers will be strategically mobilized in a campaign to hit the target populations. Americans will win the battle against illiteracy and conquer ignorance. Such militaristic talk brings a harsh analysis to the problem of illiteracy. There is no mistaking those who use such rhetoric—the problem is serious and requires an enormous amount of attention. Similarly, no estimation is made of the difficulty of reaching illiterate adults and convincing them to join programs. It will take strategic efforts to reach the target population, those non-reading adults. In this way, the military metaphor provides the illusion that the campaign is serious and bold.

No amount of hating a social condition such as illiteracy will bring about the opposite, such as the achievement of a literate society.

What does a close examination of military talk say about volunteers and the call to arms? Talk of war suggests the inevitability of casualties. When a person decides to become involved in the 'war on illiteracy,' he or she must face the fear-inducing possibility of becoming another casualty. And what does the military metaphor say about students? Just who is the enemy in this war on illiteracy? Is it all of society, for permitting conditions to reach such proportions? Not likely. Social reform is not an important matter in the circles that rely on such rhetoric. Are schools to blame for ineffectively educating a proportion of students under their care? Hardly, since the action is with the students, and not with school reform (adult literacy and school reform are concepts that are rarely linked). No, students themselves are the objects of attention, and though they are not deemed the

enemy, they are nevertheless depicted as burdens to society, as unemployable, and as ashamed of themselves; and as such, are likely 'targets' for literacy instruction.

As with the medical metaphor, the military metaphor is based on a deficit model. The logic of it leads one to believe that conquering the enemy will bring peace. That is, ridding society of illiteracy will promote higher levels of employment, better family relations, and even improved worker morale. There is an old saying that "a nation that hates war will never find peace." It is not enough for society to hate the opposite of what it wants. It must, instead, envision its goal, and then act on the vision. No amount of hating a social condition such as illiteracy will bring about the opposite, such as the achievement of a literate society. There is a vast difference between a nation that is not illiterate and one that is literate. Promoting war, calling good people to arms, and encouraging hate of any kind is a limited worldview in any event. While the battles rage on, and non-reading adults are hit in the cross-fire, the military metaphor is not all it can be.

The Banking Metaphor

In the banking metaphor, assumptions are made about the nature of knowledge and of the way people gain it. Accordingly, knowledge is stored in vaults from which withdrawals and deposits can be made. A person is rich when his or her mind is full of facts. In this way, educators are like bankers, in that they keep watch over the currency of knowledge, or knowledge that is officially approved. Official knowledge is that which is taught in school, appears on standardized tests, and supports the belief system of the dominant white culture. Language, facts, and even regional dialects that are not part of the official system are deemed inappropriate, and on balance, 'correctable' (Freire, 1970).

One positive attribute of the banking metaphor can be seen in its hopeful nature. There is comfort in wealth, and a realistic plan to gain it is intriguing to people. Better yet, unlike money, knowledge is infinite. It is all around people and there for the taking. A belief in the banking metaphor is belief in the current goals of education—to prepare

people for adult life through acquisition of knowledge.

To consider its prejudicial side, not all knowledge is as equally accessible, and not everyone is granted entry to the halls of academe. Some knowledge is sacred and is kept from people who lack the proper credentials to use it. Information from medical, legal, mortuary science, curriculum construction, and insurance fields come to mind as outstanding examples. It takes persistence to secure specific information about a disease, coffin, or life insurance policy, unless one happens to be a doctor, undertaker, or agent. Professionals are not typically educative. Many professional practices are monopolistic and are designed to hinder public access to information that would otherwise be in the public interest. Why should adult educators be keepers of official knowledge, as opposed to facilitating critical thinking skills? Finally, unlike the lively medical and military metaphors, the banking metaphor is static, suggesting endless items piled in endless vaults. It is, therefore, singularly appropriate to Freire's criticism of schooling.

Choice of Metaphors

Other metaphors in vogue within public relations circles, if not among professional educators, include gardening, computing, machine language, and communications. All of these metaphors, along with the ones analyzed above, have at least two things in common. First, they place the selection of solutions above the determination of the problem. In doing so, students are categorically removed from the decision-making process, as if their opinions of what it means to be illiterate or literate are subjective, value laden, or in some other way, do not matter.

Second, these metaphors are all non-human. Reliance on medical, military, and banking metaphors conveys a belief in systems, techniques, and professional expertise—not in human processes of learning, mission, and purpose. The careful selection of language first means considering the full extent of a situation, determining what is to be achieved, and in what ways, and then finding the connotations that accurately convey the meaning. Adult literacy educators need not be locked into non-

human metaphors, despite their allure, unless they truly describe our beliefs. Hopefully, the day will come when human language is more compelling than technical and mechanistic language.

There are times when dramatic, emotion laden language is used to convey a sense of urgency and there are other times when it is used to advance an agenda. In discussions of adult literacy, all stakeholders have a moral responsibility to avoid allowing the 'war against illiteracy' to turn into an undeclared war on illiterates. Society must respect the dignity, the rights and the accomplishments of all people, regardless of their ability to deal with the printed word.

Understanding the Competing Stakeholders of Adult Literacy Education

Values and assumptions are inherent in language. Contained in such phrases as 'combating adult illiteracy,' for example, are fundamental premises about the nature of illiteracy and those who cannot read, as if illiteracy itself is an identifiable scourge that must be fought. Those most prone to making such statements are probably members of the adult literacy movement, such as politicians, community leaders, and educators. Though they may not intend to affront adult non-readers with their language, their word choice probably follows their interests. That is, in the interests of the profession, educators may wish to spice up the rhetoric by utilizing scientific language, to provide the clarion call; and politicians use forceful, vote-winning military language. Whatever the interest in adult literacy, the resulting choice of words used to describe it is important because the labeling of a problem directs the solutions. To elaborate, if illiteracy is defined in terms of reading deficiency, the solution is to direct the non-reading adult population toward reading instruction. If literacy is to be defined in

terms of citizenship, that is, if what it means to be literate includes the ability to fill out tax forms, drive a car, vote, or utilize medical services, then the solution is quite different (Ilsley, 1985a).

While literacy for work is one desirable goal, literacy for consumer protection, religious worship, and democratic participation is equally important.

Who should label the adult literacy problem? The federal government? Corporations and other employers? The students themselves? Clearly, since illiteracy has become a media-invested national concern, various groups have expressed an interest in defining illiteracy and the attending solutions, including professional educators, reading specialists, adult educators, politicians of various stripes, corporation moguls, workplace leaders, criminal justice workers, religious leaders, and newspaper personnel. In each instance, there is a different view of literacy and what it means to be literate, according to their stake or investment. There are also expectations of people regarding how they are to behave, for example, to be spiritual, law abiding, good consumers. In no instance are provisions made to help non-reading students determine for themselves why they should learn to read. Each stakeholder touches a part of the elephant and describes the beast accordingly.

Literacy is one of those phenomena about which society assumes common and universal understanding. Of course, neither assumption is correct. Compare, for example, how literacy is defined in the workplace with how it is defined in a community action center. In one location, the desired end result is increased productivity, whereas, in the other it is group empowerment for the poor and oppressed. These two examples of competing stakeholders are elaborated below.

Administrative goals are currently centered on 'workplace literacy,' where federal funds are channeled through employers in order to reach non-reading adults. While literacy for work is one desirable goal, literacy for consumer protection, religious worship, and democratic participation is equally important. A comprehensive program should focus on an individual's needs, not those of his or her boss. Rather than directly benefiting the quality of life of illiterates, funds earmarked to educate non-reading adults are used, instead, to help corporations prosper. Learning to read the company rules may not be enough.

Rather than presupposing illiteracy is only an individual problem, it is worthwhile to consider that literacy always resides within a political context. If illiteracy can be said to have political origins, it is likely that literacy requires political solutions. Adult non-readers can certainly be active participants in the determination of the curriculum. In this way, literacy education centers not only on individual instruction, but also on group instruction, to the end that participants come to understand the forces and sense of injustice that can lead to the oppression of entire groups of people. If in literacy education one helps people understand the crass and stingy attitudes of the various stakeholders, exhibited through the metaphors and language used, a lot would have been accomplished.

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Literacy as Social Policy: Issues for America in the 21st Century

by *B. Allan Quigley*

At the 1924 American Library Association Conference, Alexander Meiklejohn (1924), a leader in the early library movement, concluded a stirring address with the following statement:

Democracy is education.

There is only one thing a community can give to its members on a large scale and do it successfully...and that is education. In so far as we can educate the people, in so far as we can bring people to understanding of themselves and of their world we can have a democracy. In so far as we cannot do that we have got to have control by the few.

Above all, Meiklejohn (1924) stressed that, "A people can be a democracy if it can learn to read...I don't believe that any society can be a democracy in any considerable measure at all except as it develops reading." Sixty-one years later, like a prophecy fulfilled, Kozol (1985) observed that the number of illiterate adults in America exceeded the entire electorate in the 1984 Presidential election by 16 million. For Kozol, illiteracy denies full participation in democracy. He explained:

So long as 60 million people are denied significant participation, the government is neither of, nor for, nor by the people. It is a government, at best, of those two thirds whose wealth, skin color, or parental privilege allows them opportunity to profit from the provocation and instruction of the written word.

As America approaches the 21st century with illiteracy rates ranging from

21 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986) to 60 million (Kozol, 1985), with participation rates in governmentally sponsored Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs as low as 5% (NACAE, 1977), and with attrition rates in ABE as high as 40–60% (Cain & Walen, 1979; Mezirow, Darkenwald & Knox, 1975), it is clear that literacy as social policy has a long way to go in this country before it can be considered 'successful' in any real sense.

In this publication concerning international literacy issues, an opportunity arises to examine literacy as social policy in America and in other countries. This brief discussion will address three social policy questions, specifically: 1) What is the history of America's social policy as it relates to literacy? 2) What lessons may be learned from the literacy policy experience of other countries? 3) How can these experiences be interpreted in social policy terms for America's future?

Social Policy and Literacy for Social Problem-solving

Although there is wide disagreement on definitions of social, public, and welfare policies, social policy is generally considered a component of public policy—a component dedicated to improving some specific aspect of societal conditions. Whereas public policy is considered broad governmental intervention, social policy typically leads to direct/indirect development of human resources or the redistribution of resources for the goal of human development (Djao, 1983). Health and education are classic examples of social policy arenas. Both have a history of involving varying degrees of governmental action to create and redistribute both valued resources and 'life chances' (Griffin, 1987). As a component of education, literacy has historically been a highly active area of policy

formation, touching every corner of the globe, irrespective of political ideology. But, irrespective of political ideology, geography, or time in history, it is important to note that literacy social policy has typically been motivated by social problem-solving purposes.

Dating back to the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, "then, as now, reformers and idealists...have viewed literacy as a means to other ends—whether a more moral society or a more stable political order..." (Arnove & Graff, 1987). In the attempt to attain such social goals, it is important to note that, "far too often, illiteracy has been the scapegoat for other social ills associated with it, but rather than attack the basic maladjustments of society, illiteracy has been the perennial target." (Verner, 1973). Although one may want to think of literacy acquisition as mere cognitive skill development, for social policy purposes literacy has mirrored the hegemony of the day, and, in this, has had a history of hidden and not-so-hidden social agendas based on the normative interpretation of social problems and the perception of the illiterates' role in them.

To examine America's experience, and see it in a comparative context, it is useful to look first at literacy social policy models and experiences of other countries.

Literacy Social Policy Frameworks and Their Applications Internationally

Bhola (1987) suggested that two literacy delivery models can be seen in Third World literacy development: motivational-developmental model and a structural-developmental model. The motivational-developmental model places emphasis on individuals and sees structures as essentially benign. This model typically provides a

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context of control and seeks vocational-technical functions within specific developmental purposes—third World development projects and programs are examples. It is expected that the illiterate populace will come forth if the individual benefits are explained or demonstrated. By contrast, the structural-developmental model creates new economic, social, and political structures. In this model, the illiterate populace has a responsibility to participate in these new structures for the benefit of the entire society. The first model has a reformist purpose, the second a revolutionary one. Bhola's models can be placed within a larger framework of social policy (Quigley, 1989), with links to adult education and sociological theory, as shown in Figure 1.

education. In the case of literacy, the market model would coincide with Bhola's motivational-developmental delivery model. The market model frequently provides incentives (real or promised) to participants and bases much of its action and strategic planning on a marketplace rationale with negotiation as the stabilizing mechanism. It understands education as a social policy instrument for the enhancement of productivity and the economy. Grounded in structural function sociological theory, this model typically promotes literacy education as an investment in human capital. Internationally, India's National Adult Education Program (now renamed Adult Education Program) is an example of this social policy literacy model at work, but it would be safe to expand this statement

for literacy. It is useful here to look at one of the most ambitious multi-national literacy initiatives in history as an example. The 1965 Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) was a UNESCO experiment that laid the groundwork for a global literacy campaign. This five-year, eleven country experiment raised the expectations and hopes of thousands, if not millions, in countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, and Latin America. The apparent seeds of its problems were unwittingly contained in the words of Secretary-General U Thant at the Thirteenth Session of UNESCO's General Conference. The EWLP would provide "valuable information on the relationship of literacy with social and economic development." This proved harder to do than initially imagined. Ultimately, the International Herald Tribune was but one of dozens of sources that declared: "An ambitious UNESCO project to eradicate illiteracy, begun a decade ago, has been a dismal failure, according to the organization's own report" (Freund in Gillette, 1987). While some have argued that its critics have been too harsh (it did, after all, provide literacy to over one hundred thousand people in eleven diverse countries), nevertheless, the impetus failed to lead to a worldwide campaign or sustain momentum in many of the participant countries. Reasons given included that the market model social policy utilized was overly rigid, mechanistic, depended too greatly on human consumption as a motivating factor, frequently ignored the variances of culture, and vastly oversimplified the socio-economic forces that contribute to the conditions that foster illiteracy. As Gillette (1987) summed up the efforts of the EWLP:

The program's basic vocational and productivistic logic made it vulnerable to precisely the kind of stimulus/response and instrumental thinking that pervaded its evaluation design and the values by which results were judged under that design. Literacy...like education more generally, cannot be reduced to behavioral conditioning. It endows people with skills that they can (although do not always) use to receive and emit messages of an almost infinite

Area	Model One	Model Two	Model Three
Social Policy:	Market	Progressive-liberal-welfare	Social redistribution
Adult Education: (Bhola's adult literacy model)	Vocational-behaviorist	Liberal-humanistic-progressive	Liberatory-social reconstruction
	Motivational developmental		Structural developmental
Sociological Theory:	Structural functionalism	Structural Functionalism	Conflict Theory

Figure 1
Relationship of Models from Quigley (1989), *Social Policy, Adult Education and Sociological Theory*

In this framework, the three social policy models shown (Griffin, 1987; Jarvis, 1985; Gil, 1976) correspond with three broad adult education philosophies of practice (adapted from Elias and Merriam, 1984). The more laissez-faire social policies of the market model expect individual response, encourage individual initiative, and typically seek vocational-behavioristic delivery systems in adult

to literacy movements in most industrialized (Gayfer, 1987) and developing countries (Armove & Graff, 1987). Developing countries that have had the support of international agencies, such as UNESCO, have often utilized this model for economic development.

The larger Market Model and Bhola's motivational developmental delivery model do not always succeed

range, a range that in any event largely escapes the control of those who imparted literacy to them. Literacy is potential empowerment.

The EWLP experience has direct application to U.S. policy, as will be seen.

By contrast, Bhola's structural-developmental program model can be seen to correspond to the broader social redistribution model, shown in Figure 1. Here, new structures for the redistribution of resources and life-chances are put in place in an attempt to redress inequality. As Bhola noted, such structures must prove themselves helpful and responsive. The social redistribution model is grounded in conflict theory and, in revolutionary states, can provide enormous participation by learners, but at what human cost? Le Thanh Khoi (1976) has observed that, "up to the present time, revolutionary regimes have been the only ones capable of organizing successful mass literacy campaigns. From the Soviet Union to China, from Vietnam to Cuba, all revolutionary governments have given high priority to the war on illiteracy." The young Soviet republic of 1917-1921 launched a massive literacy drive that was a forerunner to the literacy campaign pattern of Cuba and Nicaragua (Eklof, 1987). However, it must be remembered that this pattern included the famous (or infamous) 1919 Decree on Illiteracy that made it illegal and a criminal offense to refuse to teach or to study (Eklof, 1987). What is germane here for literacy social policy is the social policy perspective. In Cuba, "from the very beginning, the attack on illiteracy was viewed by the Cuban leadership as not simply a technical or pedagogical problem [emphasis added]. It was seen as a profoundly political effort, one tied intimately to the revolutionary transformation of society and the economy" (Fagen in Leiner, 1987). Likewise, in China and Nicaragua, conflict theory provided the springboard for structural-developmental literacy policies that again did not see literacy as a technical problem or a vehicle for subordination, but as an opportunity for massive participation in the country's future.

As America approaches the 21st century with mounting illiteracy problems, the limits and strengths of the market and social redistribution models

provide a number of lessons. It is significant that Bhola provided no 'middle ground' literacy policy based on a Progressive-Liberal-Welfare model for developing countries. This model has application to the literacy experience of certain industrialized countries (Gayfer, 1987) and has been the philosophical and policy mainstay of the larger field of adult and continuing education in America (Elias & Merriam, 1984). It might seem that this would have been the obvious social policy route for literacy in the United States. Surely a populist culture founded on participatory democracy would be an obvious home for policy based on progressive-liberal-welfare ideology—ideology that seeks governmental intervention through new and existing structures and, while far from perfect, seeks levels of participation in the policy process. If much of America's mainstream adult and continuing education has followed the Progressive-Liberal-Welfare model, would it not be reasonable to assume that literacy might also benefit from this social policy model in reaching adults?

Literacy Social Policy in America: Past and Present

The history of literacy and social policy in the United States (Dauksza Cook, 1977; Graff, 1979; Stevens, 1987) reveals that literacy has typically contained a social-problem solving purpose as discussed, but, unlike certain other industrialized and developing nations (Gayfer, 1987), American literacy social policy has taken a remarkably non-participatory road. Its history reflects Finch's (1984) definition of social policy, "action designed by government to engineer social change [emphasis added]: as a mechanism for identifying human needs and devising the means to meet them; as a mechanism for solving social problems; as redistributive justice; as the means of regulating subordinate groups [emphasis added]." In addition to attempting to solve social problems, America's literacy policies have long been founded on an historical theme of 'regulating subordinate groups.' The beginnings of literacy education in 19th-century America had distinct social engineering and regulating purposes:

The process of becoming literate was itself a process of socialization promulgated by those interested in using the school to resolve social, economic, and political tensions arising from a culturally pluralistic and emerging industrial society. The actions of those who would control the process of schooling and hence the process of becoming literate are seen in relation to nation building, a fervent evangelical Protestantism and technological innovation. All of these provided a foundation upon which reformers could build (Stevens, 1987).

Moving into the 20th century, "literacy could not be promoted or comprehended in isolation from morality" (Graff, 1979); 'morality' meaning, "a mode of conduct and a way of life: habits, values, attitudes, which were based on the cultural necessities of progress and the requirements of society." Few examples are clearer or more dramatic than the turn-of-the-century policies for the regulating of immigrants and their literacy education. With immigrants seen as subordinate, the public sentiment was that "unless we Americanize them they will foreignize us" (Carlson, 1970). Seeing groups as subordinate has meant regulation based on their non-involvement. Throughout history, neither the learner nor the practitioner (indeed not even the wider field of adult and continuing education or the public) has participated in open policy formation.

The widespread use of the Adult Performance Level (APL) tests and program in the 1970s, a program whose effect has since been called 'largely salutary,' (Fischer, Haney, & David, 1980, p. 75) is a recent example. The original APL study conducted in Texas was not an educational program and not intended to be one (Fischer et al., 1980). It was a study on functional illiteracy. However, in search of a national program to address literacy levels, an APL educational program was devised, launched before national APL norming tests were completed. Without either advisement or consent, states were expected to utilize funds to support this national program. The APL study was approved in March, 1975, by the United States Office of Education. In April, 1975, the Federal Register announced APL as program priority. In less than two months, a test had become a nation-

al campaign through "a stroke of marketing genius" (Fischer et al., 1980). All of this happened before the issue was determined, the test fully validated, or the program clearly determined. This bandwagon in search of a corresponding need was abandoned in virtually every state by the early 1980s and added to the shelf of discarded programs designed to meet economic and political needs.

Today, this legacy has moved all the way from nation-building to nation-saving. The recent report *Jump Start: The Federal Role on Adult Literacy* (January, 1989), prepared for the newly inaugurated President, concluded that,

Among the most important things it [America] must do is ensure that the twenty million-plus adults who are seriously deficient in basic skills become fully productive workers and citizens...without their best efforts over the next twenty years, there is little hope for the economic and social future of this country (Chisman, 1989).

Today, literacy and basic education programs are held to greater accountability than ever—accountability for resolving massive economic issues far beyond the influences of illiterates and the traditional mechanistic programs in place to somehow address these social policy goals.

Literacy Social Policies for the Future

Niemi and Nagle (1979) astutely noted that, "in every educational setting, an inevitable tension persists among three sets of needs: those felt by the learner, those defined by professional educators, and those derived from institutional and society expectations." The market model for literacy in America, like that employed by the EWLP, has seen needs defined by 'professional educators.' Subsequent literacy solutions have been based on 'societal expectations' throughout the history of literacy education. Although researchers such as Fingeret (1984) have continuously emphasized that literacy cannot "create additional jobs, solve the problems of crime and malnutrition, or make the world safe from terrorism," America has insisted on a rigid market model and a motivational-development delivery mode to attempt to solve social problems. It has avoided alternative models of delivery through social policy that essentially discouraged policy participation by illiterates. At no point has literacy had an open public debate, such as that fostered by the *A Nation at Risk* report in the public system. Literacy has been equated with training in the motivational-development model of delivery and, by reducing the dynamics of under-education to productivistic issues and behavioristic programs, it has had only the most modest success. America has not employed whole strategies out of the structural-development model nor engaged the wider society in a national initiative.

As Fingeret (1983) observed, "part of the problem is that once we recognize

the inadequacies inherent in our approach to illiterate adults, we have little to offer in its place." Today, as government literacy policy insists on increased accountability, and as the public grows disenchanted with ABE (Kozol, 1985), practitioners and researchers who seek more innovative programmatic approaches to illiteracy find themselves working at odds with market model-driven governmental policies—policies that should be supporting their efforts. Thus, it is proposed that the fundamental issue for the future is to develop literacy policy out of a social policy model more commensurate with adults as learners in an open, participatory—even democratic—policy process. Enabling social policy based on learner needs and wider practitioner and public debate could encourage alternate program doors to open and could see increased participation, with no loss of accountability for results.

Thus, it is proposed that space must be made for literacy social policy that derives from a progressive-liberal-welfare model, seriously expands the market model, or adds much wider strategies out of the social distribution model. Social policies are needed that can set programs and local policies in motion with the adult learners contributing to development of their own learning activities—activities that would be both relevant and acceptable. Until a shift takes place in the social policy model utilized, until a policy model appears that is more commensurate with both adult education and the pluralistic nature of policy formation in this country, Meiklejohn's prophecy of 'democracy by the few' will continue into the 21st century.

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Cultural Literacy: Ethnocentrism Versus Selfethnic Reflectors

by Scipio A. J. Colin, III

Educational theory and philosophy are based upon certain assumptions about human beings and human nature, society and its needs, and the role and function of members of that society. These assumptions are framed within a spectrum of perceptions culminating in what is characterized as one's world view (how one views the world and one's relationship to it). One's world view has three purposes: 1) the molding of the selfethnic (see Note 1) image, 2) the development of perceptions, and 3) the transmission of the dominant culture.

Given the structure of society and the historical relationship of Africans and their descendants to the dominant cultures (American and European), it is the view of this author that a result of that relationship is an educational system, youth and adult, that by its very nature and design, continues to mis-educate African-Americans (see Note 2). The mis-education of the African-American is a significant historical issue with current implications. Within the race there is no age group that is unaffected, but the focus of this article is the African-American adult and the development of an educational theory upon which to base appropriate adult education activities and programs.

In light of the current low rate of participation of African-Americans in mainstream adult education programs, and the fact that as a result of the institutionalization of this theory at the beginning of the 20th Century, the largest adult education movement in the history of this country was established within the African-American community through the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African

Communities League (estimates of membership ranged from 600,000 to 6 million) (Colin, 1988; Franklin, 1974; Hill, 1983; Jenkins, 1967; Maglangbayan, 1972; Martin, 1976). This fact warrants a serious debate relative to the appropriateness of the content and goals of current adult education programs.

To date, the literature relative to the historical development of adult education in America has ignored the intellectual contributions of African-Americans to the knowledge base and conceptual framework, and has failed to acknowledge this group's participation as both consumers and producers of adult education programs..

To date, the literature relative to the historical development of adult education in America has ignored the intellectual contributions of African-Americans to the knowledge base and

conceptual framework, and has failed to acknowledge this group's participation as both consumers and producers of adult education programs (Anderson & Darkenwald, 1979; Grattan, 1971; Knowles, 1977; Stubblefield, 1988).

Although African-American adult educators have attempted to expand the knowledge base of the field (DeVaugh, 1986; House, 1977; Hutchison, 1975; McGee & Neufeldt, 1985; Ross, 1986), the historical literature has remained American ethnocentric in both its structure and content. Ethnocentrism, as defined by Sumner (1906), is that "view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it."

The exclusion of African-American thought and conceptual contributions to the field of adult education influences not only the type and content of the adult education programs that are being offered to this group, but also what is being taught in graduate classrooms to adult practitioners.

In researching the history of African-American adult education, a theory of selfethnic reflectors was developed from a study of those African-American writers who agreed with the premise that systematic exclusion of the history and contributions of any groups or persons leads to selfethnic negation. Although this theory is not necessarily reflected in a single conceptual framework, these writers focused on the need for members of the race to be educated about self. They advocated the inclusion of African-American curricula (theories and concepts), philosophy, activities, events and personalities in the educational literature. It is the synthesis of these views, and the observations and experiences of this author, that has been used in the development of the theory of selfethnic reflectors.

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The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors

Indicative of a pattern of exclusion that has characterized American educational history in particular, Caliver (1950) noted:

...while Negro students are being given the principles and techniques for success in present day American life, and being taught to accept the values in American culture, they must also be taught to admire the worthwhile values in their own race and to appreciate the contribution which these values may take to the general culture and welfare.

Of importance to this article are the effects of this omission upon the African-American collective psyche (the selfethnic identity), and a solution proposed by African-American theorists, a theory of selfethnic reflectors.

This lack of reflectors, psychologically tells the African-American students that their selfethnic group has developed nothing that has had significant contributory value to the field.

African-American adult education students have no 'reflectors' (see Note 3). By this it is meant that in the study of adult education philosophies, personalities, organizations, and program offerings (literacy, ABE, GED, etc.) there is no selfethnic reflection. They do not see representation of their ethnic group; therefore, they do not

see themselves. This lack of reflectors, psychologically tells the African-American students that their selfethnic group has developed nothing that has had significant contributory value to the field. One is left with the impression that, even 300 years after slavery, the race has yet to develop intellectually to the point that it can produce philosophies, theories, ideas, or concepts—elements that are a natural by-product of any intellectual endeavor. Sowell (1974) states that "Black people are too often seen as 'problems' and as recipients of benefits rather than as creators of something admirable." The truth of this statement is evident when one reviews the content and goals of those programs designed for the African-American population.

It has been suggested that a lack of selfethnic pride results in the subconscious acceptance of the theories of innate biological or intellectual deficiencies that produces a condition termed 'Negromach.' The Negromachitic condition is defined as a state of inadequacy fostered by a racist society (Thomas, 1970). This state of being was first articulated by DuBois (1903) in his description of the African-Americans' sense of 'double consciousness,' observing that

...the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and gifted with second-sight in the American world...a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the type of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness an American, a Negro; two souls; two thoughts; two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Emphasis added.)

In Thomas' (1983) view, the most important self-acknowledgment or self-value construct is that which

reflects a 'proper conception of self.' One must understand the significant differences, according to Thomas, as "the importance of distinguishing between two important, but very different senses of worth, namely, self-respect and self-esteem." In essence, selfethnic pride and respect are influenced by one's knowledge of one's own culture and history, whereas selfethnic esteem is influenced by what others say about one's culture and history.

Research has shown that as early as 1891, African-American social solutionists (educators, philosophers, historians, etc.) have written of the need for selfethnic reflectors. It is evident in the writings of Johnson (1891); Northup, Gay and Penn (1896); DuBois (1903); Miller (1914); Woodson (1933); Locke (1936); Bunche (1936); and Rogers (1946), that African-Americans recognized this deficiency in American education, and were cognizant of the damage that would result.

This theory has been prescribed for all areas of education by Miller (1914) in his question, "What boots a few chapters in chemistry, or pages in history, or paragraphs in philosophy, unless, they result in an enlarged appreciation of one's own manhood?" Another observation was made by Woodson (1933):

The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples. The Negro thus educated is a hopeless liability of the race.

According to Woodson (1933), the most lasting and negative effect of this mis-education is:

[These] 'educated Negroes' have the attitude of contempt toward their own people [for they] are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African.

The Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors and Adult Education

The only reference to this theory in adult education literature is found in the 1936 adult education yearbook, *Adult Education in Action* (Ely, 1936). Alain Locke's (1936) article, "Lessons of Negro Education" highlights the on-going conceptual conflict between Americans and their 'peripheral' people. On one hand he maintains the universality of adult education learner needs, but yet suggests the incorporation of the race's culture. He cautioned that this incorporation should not conflict with the dominant culture's adult education philosophy, policies, and program goals. This conflict is reflected in this description of a 'proper adult education for Negroes':

It should not by any means, or for any compromising expediency, be a separate program or a truncated program, though certain special slants and emphases may be found suitable and advantageous...Under proper circumstances and with due precautions, the study of racial and group history, of group contributions to culture, or even of specific group problems is sound and constructively educative. In fact, these emphases have been found to be magnets of interests and galvanizers of adult education programs with Negro groups. But we need to be sure that such emphases given to racial interests do not involve a contradiction of our major premise of a program built upon universal values (Locke, 1936).

It is significant to this discussion that Locke advocated the validity of selfethnic reflectors, but had not resolved the dilemma of the 'double consciousness,' (DuBois, 1903) nor did he totally understand the price of integration. Who determines what is 'suitable?' And what is 'sound and constructively educative?' Not the African-American, for, if the race had the power to develop and institute educational policy and programs, there would have been no need to depend upon the offerings of Americans. Carter G.

Woodson (1933) would not have had a thesis upon which to base his book, *The Mis-education of the Negro*.

Some individuals felt that the primary teaching-learning strategy must be framed within the theory of selfethnic reflectors, for this would enable members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success.

Relative to the appropriateness of the theory of selfethnic reflectors, Locke (1936) stated:

...that this approach has significance for adult education in general, and certainly for that section of the program that deals with social situations and problems. For correctly interpreted, it means simply that *in educating adults we find that their vital, concrete, particular interests provide the strongest and most effective motivations for serious study*. This principle holds for all groups, whether the group feeling is based on racial, class, professional, sectarian, or just local community interests. Of course for *group-conscious minorities* such an approach is *more effective*, such an appeal *more intense*, and the response is accordingly *more positive*. (Emphasis added.)

Aside from the ambiguity of Locke, the literature reflects a conceptual continuity that demanded that

educational curricula reflect the reality of African-American culture, values, and social and intellectual histories. It is evident that African-Americans were not as intellectually dependent as the omission of their works would indicate. Clearly, they were quite capable of interpreting reality and constructing an African-American world view. In doing so, they overcame the oppressive constraints of external interpretations of internal experiences based upon ethnocentric bodies of knowledge.

Some individuals felt that the primary teaching-learning strategy must be framed within the theory of selfethnic reflectors, for this would enable members of the race to see themselves, and their people, within a socio-cultural frame of accomplishment and success. A more viable participatory motivator would have been established. The utility of this strategy is predicated on the knowledge of a basic truth and an understanding of the role of history in human development: human beings tend to accomplish what they think they can, for present possibilities are made probable based upon past experiences.

It is evident that these 'apostles' of the power of selfethnic consciousness-raising viewed this theory as a curricular element, a strategy for learning and a foundational stone for the building of a positive selfethnic image. They viewed this as a tool for success, a tool that segregated America had by law and custom determined they would never have—confidence. Northrup, Gay, and Penn (1896) believed:

Want of confidence is, perhaps a greater obstacle to improvement than is generally imagined. It has been said that the failures in life arise from pulling in one's horse while he is leaping.

Given the historical experience of African-Americans in the United States, adult educators must recognize the existence and ramifications of the stigma of race. If they do not, their observations, solutions, and programs will continue to be both irrelevant and inappropriate. The rediscovery, and revitalization of African-American socio-educational thought is both warranted and necessary.

Last, one African-American adult educator viewed the field:

Adult education as a profes-

sional field still has a long way to go in recognizing the learning activities of Black adults. It has probably an even longer way to go in translating yet-to-be complete assessments of

learning needs and interests of Black adults into educational programs that appeal to Blacks both in content and format (Ross, 1986).

Hopefully, this article has provided a foundation for recognition and an understanding of the participation and the intellectual contributions that African-Americans have made to the field of adult education.

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Note 1. Selfethnic written without the hyphen has a socio-cultural meaning, and is of historical significance relative to the African-American cultural frame. Historically, American society has developed concepts regarding the race that has made it impossible for the status of the individual to be viewed as separate from the status of the race. But even more important is the socio-cultural significance that is reflected in the conceptual syntheses of the descriptors self and ethnic. This process reflects the revitalization of a traditional basic value of African society which is: the concepts of individuals and groups is a false dichotomy, for there is an irrevocable bond between the members of the race and the collective whole. Therefore this researcher's use of the descriptive term selfethnic without the hyphen reflects the underlying principles of influence and reciprocity that form the foundational basis of the relationship between African-Americans and their race. It would be both culturally and historically inappropriate for there to be a separation between individual membership and group identity when referring to African-Americans.

Note 2. African-American describes any person of African descent born in America. This racial group has been referred to as black, Negro and Afro-American. American describes any person of European descent born in America.

Note 3. The theory of selfethnic reflectors differs from C.H. Cooley's concept of the looking glass self and Mead's concept of the self in society in terms of the status of the race in society and the influence of education upon the individual. Briefly, Cooley and Mead focused on the 'social self'—the relationship between individual and society, and the influence that human interaction has upon the individual's self-image. E.A. Johnson (1819), Northrup, Gay and Penn (1896), DuBois (1903), Miller (1914), and Woodson (1933) focused on the racial self and the relationship between individuals and their racial group and the influence that racial interaction has upon the selfethnic image. Their contention is that in white America the African-American is perceived in a collective sense, as a member of a racial group that is characterized as being biologically and intellectually inferior. Further information on the views of Cooley can be found in Coser (1977), Masters of sociological thought.



Freirean Literacy in North America: The Community-based Education Movement

by *Thomas W. Heaney*

Brightly colored political posters, even more than mismatched chairs, worn carpeting, and unwashed windows, set this classroom apart from other schools. Eight Hispanic adults—three women and five men—gathered with their teacher to resume their lessons in literacy. Maria had arrived late, visibly distraught, explaining that her husband had threatened her. He didn't want her going out to classes at night and argued that her three children were being neglected. Maria, leaving the argument unresolved, had come to resume her studies. Her teacher, instead of giving advice or encouragement, asked the group for help. The members reflected on Maria's experience and, in the process, identified several issues: a husband's putative 'rights' over his wife, acceptance of domestic violence against women as 'normal,' a presumption that women are 'asking for trouble' if they go outside at night, and that Maria had the major responsibility for her children.

The discussion was energetic, with strong sentiments expressed by some who appealed frequently to 'the way things are,' and a growing solidarity among the women. While the group continued discussing these issues, the teacher recorded words on an improvised blackboard: woman, violence, mother, and wife—words to which the class would return, once their meaning had been expanded and enriched through the group's discussion. Finally, it was Maria who interrupted and said, "You've told me the way things are; I'll tell you how they should be, and

together let's talk about how to make them so." She effectively shifted the focus of the group from the patronizing solicitude of some who accepted the present reality to a strategy for social transformation.

'Freirean' Education

Since the 1930s, American adult education has grown without an articulated philosophy. Most adult educators have not delved into complex issues of human consciousness, the origins of knowledge, or the meaning of freedom. Echoes of 'education for freedom,' with beginnings in Froebel and Dewey, found their way into the thought of Eduard Lindeman (1961) and others, but 'freedom' remained an abstraction lost in a discussion of method and technique. If an expressed philosophy were to exist, its roots would lie in pragmatism, for the practice of adult education in the United States has paralleled the advance of a technological society. Social, industrial, and political machines have similar needs. All require exchangeable and renewable parts; all need specialized components and tightly managed coordination. As technology has become more complex and specialized, so has schooling on all levels. Not only must skills be developed in bodies and minds, but attitudes must be formed that are supportive of a technological superstructure within which adult labor is organized.

In the early 1970s, Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, visited Harvard and published an English translation of his best known work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His general critique of education presented an analysis that challenged the neutrality of the technological model dominant in American

schools. He argued that any curriculum that ignores racism, sexism, the exploitation of workers, and other forms of oppression at the same time supports the status quo. It inhibits the expansion of consciousness and blocks creative and liberating social action for change.

...any curriculum that ignores racism, sexism, the exploitation of workers, and other forms of oppression at the same time supports the status quo. It inhibits the expansion of consciousness and blocks creative and liberating social action for change.

Freire's critique of education was not new. Even defenders of traditional schools have admitted that, if society is to hold together without the overt force of a police state, schooling must adapt learners to more subtle controls: career choices (specialization), authority (dependency), and the good life (consumerism). Schooling must encourage competition (rule of the fittest), while maintaining order and cooperation (so-

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cial conformism). As to the pursuit of happiness—in Jacques Ellul's (1964) words, "education makes men happy in a milieu which normally would have made them unhappy, if they had not been worked on, molded, and formed for just that milieu."

Practical and expedient interests play a determining role in educational policy making. Veblen (1957), in his commentary on higher education, noted "The plane in men's esteem once filled by the church and state is now held by pecuniary traffic [and] business enterprise." So, also, adult educators uncritically accept an ancillary role in the service of economic interests. This is especially evident in programs for the 'disadvantaged,' the design of which more frequently serves employers in order to increase the pool of the skilled and semi-skilled from which workers can be selected. It does so at public expense, thus subsidizing training which, at the turn of this century, was undertaken by business and industry themselves. Adult education for remediation and the development of work skills replicates patterns of earlier schooling: a top-down model of instruction that fosters respect for authority, experts, discipline, and good work habits.

For poor and dispossessed people, strength is in numbers and social change is accomplished in unity.

Freire's pedagogy for freedom, exemplified in his work in South America, found ready acceptance among many community-based, popular educators who organized adult learning outside established schools and institutions. For such educators, Freire's critique of traditional schooling validated their own conclusions that schools were part of the problem, contributing to the marginalization of minorities and the poor. Education for liberation, in

Freire's view, would challenge the 'givenness' of the world and enable learners to reflect on their experience historically, giving their immediate reality a beginning, a present, and most importantly, a future. It would awaken in adult learners the expectation of change—a power which, once awakened, seeks expression in collective, transforming social action (Mackie, 1980).

The Freirean Philosophy

In Freire's view of education, learning to take control and achieving power are not individual objectives, as in a 'boot strap' theory of empowerment. For poor and dispossessed people, strength is in numbers and social change is accomplished in unity. Power is shared, not the power of a few who improve themselves at the expense of others, but the power of the many who find strength and purpose in a common vision. Liberation achieved by individuals at the expense of others is an act of oppression. Personal freedom and the development of individuals can only occur in mutuality with others. In the experience of women's groups, civil rights workers, and many others committed to liberatory action, collective power, and collegiality protect the individual far more than authoritarian and hierarchical modes of organization.

Shared power in learning is exercised in control over the curriculum, its contents and methods, and over the coordination of all learning activities. Education for liberation provides a forum open to the imaginings and free exercise of control by learners, teachers, and the community, while also providing for the development of those skills and competencies without which the exercise of power would be impossible. Empowerment is both the means and the outcome of this pedagogy that some have come to call 'liberatory education.'

Liberatory education is mutually supported learning for empowerment. Whatever its formal structure or precise purpose, such education is a component of and subordinate to a liberatory praxis, which seeks to transform the social order. Transforming actions in aggregate comprise a revolutionary stance that simultaneously announces an egalitarian, participatory, and

democratic social order and denounces hierarchical, authoritarian, and alienating systems of organizations. The content of liberatory education is both critical consciousness and the development of appropriate skills and competencies related to liberatory praxis. Its process is dialogical, affirming the mutual and coequal roles of teachers and learners. The governance of liberatory education reflects and anticipates the social order announced by its vision.

Critical Consciousness

Freire (1973) suggested three stages in the progression by which critical consciousness is attained. The first of these stages is 'semi-intransitive consciousness.' Verbs that do not act upon an object are 'intransitive.' Consciousness of and action upon reality are two constituents of a critical relationship with the world. Consciousness that does not challenge the world is, therefore, uncritical and intransitive, for it does not act upon the world as an object. Total intransitivity is not a form of consciousness at all. Hence, the first phase in the emergence of consciousness is, for Freire, semi-intransitivity. Semi-intransitive consciousness is the state of those whose sphere of perception is limited, whose interests center almost totally around matters of survival, and who are impermeable to challenges situated outside the demands of biological necessity. Freire observed that when these persons amplify their power to perceive and respond to suggestions and questions arising in their context, and increase their capacity to enter into dialogue not only with others, but with their own world, their consciousness becomes 'transitive.' Where before they reacted to particulars, to limited spheres, now they react to the general scope of a particular problem.

The second stage of consciousness is 'naive transitivity.' Freire characterized this stage of consciousness by an over-simplification of problems, nostalgia for the past, an underestimation of ordinary people, a strong tendency to gregariousness, a disinterest in investigation, a fascination with fanciful explanations of reality, and by the practice of polemics rather than dialogue. Naive transitivity is never totally and irrevocably surpassed; for all who enter

the learning process, this remains a lifelong task.

The third and final stage is 'critical transitivity.' This stage is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems, by testing one's own findings and openness to revision and reconstruction, by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them, by rejecting passivity, by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics, by receptivity to the new without rejecting the old, and by permeable, interrogative, restless and dialogical forms of life.

It was these techniques that many literacy and basic education programs immediately incorporated into their practice: reflection on the political content of the learner's day-to-day experience, the organization of 'culture circles' that promote dialogue and peer interaction, and the use of 'people's knowledge' as the basis for curriculum.

Liberatory education holds no monopoly on fostering these characteristics of consciousness. They are generalizations that describe the values to which all learning can subscribe. Neither are the three stages mutually exclusive. They not only admit of degrees on the vertical plane extending from semi-transitivity to critical transitivity,

but on a horizontal plane as well, which would indicate the direction and focus of consciousness. Consciousness is not without focus. Reality is not grasped in its totality, as the generalizations in the third stage might suggest. Rather, the inquirer has a vantage point and moves about reality, viewing it from first this, then that perspective. It is perspective that is the horizontal plane on the matrix of liberatory education is political—a point of view that affirms the transforming role for humankind in history and culture and supports the political apparatus by which this role can be exercised. It links learning with action through which transformation can and does occur. It neither submerges human will under psychological determinism, nor does it subordinate it to divine or mechanical imperatives. It finds hope neither in the unconsciousness within, nor in providence beyond, but in historical participation in the creation of a just and a free society. It proclaims the future as ours to determine and seeks the liberation of the human will to do so through learning and social action.

Application to the United States—Institutionalization

While Freire's theoretical framework gave many community-based educators grounds for hope, it was his pedagogy—the practical, how-to-do-it methods—which gave them sought-after tools for the reconstruction of urban adult education. Freire advocated dialogue and critical thought as a substitute for 'banking' education, in which the riches of knowledge were deposited in the empty vault of a learner's mind. He suggested several pedagogical techniques based on the mass literacy campaigns he organized in Brazil and Chile—campaigns integral to broadly defined programs of revolution and social change. It was these techniques that many literacy and basic education programs immediately incorporated into their practice: reflection on the political content of the learner's day-to-day experience, the organization of 'culture circles' that promote dialogue and peer interaction, and the use of 'people's knowledge' as the basis for curriculum.

One facet of Freire's pedagogy not easily translated into the American

scene was the link between learning and action. The literacy campaigns upon which Freire's work was based occurred in the context of revolutionary social change. The political apparatus was at hand into which the released energy of liberated minds and bodies could flow. Opportunities for collective action were antecedent to learning; land redistribution was underway, technical and financial support was available for economic development, and elections were to take place. Seldom in the United States have these conditions of liberatory education been replicated (see Note 1). As a result, Freirean programs in this country have 'raised consciousness,' but seldom directly influenced social change. Their revolutionary bark has clearly been more fearsome than their bite.

'Freirean' programs multiplied during the seventies, giving rise to national networks of liberatory educators attempting to adapt methods used in rural and underdeveloped countries to the urban barrios and ghettos of North America. Paulo Freire assisted in this development and participated in numerous conferences and workshops, frequently sponsored by academics who sought to learn from and work with 'grass roots' educators. Occupying storefronts, abandoned schools, and low rent offices, these same educators were often denied access to funds available to their less effective competitors—the schools and community colleges. Effectiveness in this case means that their numbers—enrollments, retention rates, and completion rates—were often significantly higher than in traditional programs.

The effectiveness of Freirean programs made them attractive to publicly supported institutions whose funding was based on formulas affected by such numbers. In some instances, networks of community-based programs lobbied to sit at the public trough as a solution to their constant struggle for foundation support. By the early eighties, many Freirean centers came under the wing of city-wide bureaucracies and, in some instances, schools or community colleges began their own 'alternatives' based on a Freirean model. In addition, governmental funding programs—from the Joint Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) and the Workplace Literacy

Program to the State Local Impact Assistance Grant program (SLIAG)—have lured many financially-beset community-based programs to refocus their activities on federal priorities which, however important to national policy, nonetheless emphasize individual growth over collective empowerment and pre-empt local agendas for action. As a result, very few of the experiments of the 70s remain intact, having succumbed to at least partial public subsidy.

Limited Cooperation

As long as liberatory education can be interpreted as methodologically distinct, but not different in its social and cultural consequences, then it can be tolerated as a variation within traditional systems of education. In fact, liberatory education is likely to be viewed this way by many educators, who tend to interpret all approaches to learning as variations in pedagogical technique. Even the rhetoric of revolution sometimes used to describe the purposes of liberatory programs has proven acceptable to traditional school sponsors as a gimmick for increasing enrollments. Official school publications make reference to Paulo Freire, as did the Brazilian military during the years of Freire's exile from 1964 to 1979! A sanitized and depoliticized Freire is now featured in the reading lists of graduate programs on adult education, and Freire himself has been invited to address mainstream organizations such as the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education. Bureaucratic systems impose their own logic on liberatory practices, but underlying contradictions remain. In the process, too many Freirean programs have become little more than low-budget versions of the senior institutions upon which they have come to depend—their most emancipatory initiatives effectively blocked by economic sanctions imposed by their institutional sponsors. For them, the long term cost of survival in 'the system' is that social and political empowerment as a collective goal is replaced with the more anemic goal of individual enrichment.

Some liberatory programs have fought to maintain their independence, either rejecting outright any public sub-

sidies that would tie their program to traditional educational purposes or accepting partial support, while building a diversified funding base. Both strategies have been fraught with problems. On the one hand, independence has meant bare-bones budgets, a diversion of energy from education to fund-raising and the coordination of volunteers, and staff 'burn-out.' On the other hand, cooperation with mainstream educational institutions takes its toll on staff for whom the limited interests of their sponsors dictate priorities and moderate action. There is no free lunch, and programs that thought that the residuals of public funding would sustain the 'liberatory' aspects of their program find that the obligations they have incurred under government funding so occupy staff that there is little time, energy, or incentive left for critical teaching and transforming action.

Those who sought to build limited cooperative relationships with schools and community colleges without succumbing to domination by these more affluent and powerful institutions have purchased their survival at considerable cost. The dynamics of limited cooperation frequently involve the use of 'deviance credits,' a strategy developed by liberatory women's groups for sabotage in the work place. The strategy works like this: while establishing a pattern of cooperation, one simultaneously accumulates deviance credits—that is, conformity with a system's norms and standards increases the tolerance of that system for an occasional lapse into deviant behavior. Limited cooperation involves the establishment of an overall pattern of cooperation that will regularly, but almost imperceptibly, be punctuated by dissent. Its success as a form of engagement depends on the frequency with which boundary-violating demands are placed upon the group accumulating the deviance credits.

However, the cumulative consequences of deviance can lead to increased repression, as sponsoring institutions, which transform partisan politics into civics lessons and substitute a technology of government for political conflict, move to protect their own political hegemony. Two nationally recognized and highly successful community-based programs, bound in a cooperative relationship with the City

Colleges of Chicago, began to experience this repression in the late 70s, after out-performing all public programs in the state for almost 10 years. One program, an alternative, Freirean-based high school for adults, was simply closed down; the other, a Hispanic center for literacy and political education, broke its ties with its sponsoring institution and remains committed to its initial vision, but with a greatly reduced program and mostly unpaid staff.

Alienation

Alienation is oppositional otherness—the simultaneous presence of conflict and distance. As Fanon (1968) observed, when alienation remains beneath the surface of consciousness, it results in ennui, passivity, submissiveness, and anxiety. When alienation becomes conscious, it provokes anger, aggressiveness, hostility, frustration, and fear. Self-conscious alienation can also lead to critical reflection on reality and thereafter to action. Action will effectively overcome alienation to the extent that it can reduce conflict either by eliminating the distance through adaptation or compromise, or by increasing the distance through movement outside the sphere of oppositional influence, or by neutralizing the opposition through superior power or force. The first strategy eliminates alienation by accommodation and cooptation; the last two strategies overcome alienation by a positive and 'creative' affirmation of position. Creative alienation is self-conscious, maintaining continuity with one's own identity and principles and building upon them in consistent ways. Self-consciously alienated people learn to fight back, to resist their oppression.

Creative alienation is not to be confused with marginality. Most community-based programs built on Freirean principles are marginal to what is now a highly funded and widely respected adult education enterprise. Only a few embody creative alienation—a small but vocal minority who, with political clarity, seek through their programs to destroy the symmetry of conventional social boundaries by building within learners a heightened sense of alienation. For them, the experience of alienation provides stability—a corrective for bureaucratic

systems that prescribe the future as a continuation of the past. They value those conditions identified by Morse Peckham (1973) in his discussion of art as the institutionalization of alienation:

These [conditions] are social protection, psychic insulation, the capacity to endure over long periods problem exposure and solution postponement, the preference for tension rather than tension-reduction, the capacity to tolerate tension, the ability to tolerate disorientation and the desire to seek disorientation actively, a sensitivity to cultural incoherence, the capacity for self-validation which in other circumstances would be condemned as arrogance, and the ability to exist without the constant flow of validation which is so constant and pervasive a part of non-alienated life and the absence of which...is so destructive.

These characteristics are evident in veterans of struggles with public agencies throughout the 70s and early 80s. The trauma of independence and remaining truly based in the local community exacts much from liberatory educators who built their programs outside the dominant educational system, but the survivors value their sense of alienation and take pride in their uniqueness and marginality among adult educators.

Conclusions

Literacy work is generally recognized as most effective when undertaken by or in the context of community-based organizations—and least effective when directly managed by large, bureaucratic systems of schooling (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975; Hunter & Harmon, 1979). Literacy and other basic skills can be acquired with astonishing speed when the development of those skills is linked with other activities, the intended outcome of which is change in the conditions of oppression (Adams, 1975; Freire, 1970; Shor, 1987).

Freirean, community-based adult education continues to provide a working model for resolving the problem of illiteracy in the United States, not because it incorporates more effective methods of instruction, not even because its connections with 'grass roots' organizations enhances recruitment efforts and grounds learning in the day-to-day experience of the people. Liberatory education provides a working model because it links the problem of illiteracy with broader social and political ills and because it does not propose merely educational solutions to these problems. Its hope and its promise lie in social action for change as an intended consequence of critical understanding.

Embedded within many community-based programs is a depoliticized vision, a by-product of cooperative arrangements with other, mainstream institutions. These programs, although no longer based on principles put forward by Freire in the

previous decade, nonetheless are frequently more effective in reaching and retaining illiterate adults because they are closer to the problems of the neighborhood. They less resemble the more formal schools with which previous 'failure' has been identified, and they evidence care and respect for their neighbors that leads to mutual trust and perseverance.

Most Freirean programs, on the other hand, have been condemned to a marginal existence. There is little that school-based educators can emulate in the practice of their 'liberatory' counterparts. Participatory and democratic pedagogical practices might be adapted to American schools, but the critique of social and economic oppression linked with collective action for social change creates dissonance, destroying the neutrality of the schools and unmasking their complicity in maintaining the economic and political imbalance of the social order. Historically, liberatory programs for literacy have been sustained by government only during the brief time following a revolution, as in Nicaragua (Miller, 1985) or Guinea-Bissau (Freire, 1978)—a time when the possibilities for change are real and the political apparatus for accomplishing those changes is at hand. The pedagogy of Paulo Freire has limited potential outside such chaotic and transitional periods in a nation's history.

The survivors—those liberatory programs in the United States that have maintained their vision—await the revolution and attempt to prepare learners for political options not yet available.

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Note 1. An exception to this was the Citizenship Schools in the South during the Civil Rights Movement—long before Paulo Freire was known in the United States. This massive literacy campaign succeeded because it linked literacy with the right to vote in those states where enfranchisement was contingent upon passing a test based on reading the state constitution. Here, the opportunity for action (voting) clearly preceded learning.



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Literacy in the Workplace: Adults as Learners

by John A. Niemi

The scope of the problem facing the American workforce is highlighted in a recent policy study of the Federal government's role in adult literacy. In the final report, Chrisman (1989) stated:

Seventy-five percent of the people who will constitute the American workforce in the year 2000 are adults today. They are out of school. Most are beyond school age. Most are working. This 75% adds up to about 100 million workers.

From his further analysis of this future workforce, some startling statistics emerge. By a conservative estimate, 20 to 30 million of this group have a limited grasp of the basic skills of reading, writing, and computing, and three to four million are illiterates with no grasp of those skills. These 20 to 30 million Americans constitute a diverse group that includes ordinary working people occupying dead-end jobs, immigrants or native Americans with a limited knowledge of English, and other minorities. Many are school dropouts and most share problems of low incomes, unstable job histories, and pressing personal concerns. Some strategies whereby these adults manage to function in the corporate setting, while concealing their inability to read, are discussed by Ross (1986) in *Fortune* magazine. They include the 'buddy system,' by which one worker enlists the help of another worker who can read, and the acquisition of needed information by watching and listening.

The serious nature of the situation becomes apparent when it is juxtaposed against the mounting demands of ever more complex technologies and changing management styles that involve greater collaboration between workers

and management. These developments impact not only 'high-tech' positions, but the growing number of positions in service industries and government agencies. An example is the truck driver who will need a considerable degree of literacy skills to operate increasingly sophisticated machines. As for manufacturing industries, jobs that require only physical power are being replaced with those that require higher level thinking skills that, in turn, require language skills for their expression. As Ziegler (1989) noted concerning the automobile industry:

Ten to fifteen years ago, the industry wanted workers to check their brains at the locker room...All you had to do was learn one job and you did it, did it, and did it. But now...workers are supposed to understand a number of jobs; the number of job classifications has diminished, so you have to know how to do all the jobs in the team.

Responsibility for designing and conducting literacy programs in the workplace rests with the human resource development (HRD) unit. But before embarking on this topic, it is important to understand the meaning of HRD, and the characteristics of adults who need literacy programs.

The Meaning of Human Resource Development (HRD)

Sredl and Rothwell (1987) construed the meaning of HRD as

organized learning experiences sponsored by an employer and designed and/or conducted for the purpose of improving work performance, while emphasizing the betterment of the human condition through integration of organizational

goals and individual needs.

Within the context of an organization, HRD has three sub-categories, which Nadler (1986) identified as training, education, and development. 'Training' was defined as learning knowledge and skills for the present job, with the goal of organizing learning for workers to enable them to perform their immediate assignments efficiently and effectively. In other words, training embraces a process whereby an organization modifies existing behaviors and introduces new ones, in order to heighten an individual's competence in performing a current task.

'Education,' on the other hand, is a long-range process designed to prepare an individual for a future move within an organization. Its goal is the updating of knowledge and the upgrading of skills for a future position through a lateral or an upward move in an organization. However, this process should also enable an individual to become more 'human.' As Cotton (1968) asserted, education means an

emphasis on personal growth, helping the individual realize his [or her] latent human potentiality. It treats [an individual] as an end in himself [or herself]. Thus, the aim of education is human excellence. But how can the individual achieve human excellence unless he [or she] can think and communicate effectively, make informed judgments, discriminate among values, and appreciate beauty? Obviously, he [or she] cannot. Therefore, education must direct its attention to the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual conditions of the human condition.

'Development' is viewed by Nadler as long-term personal growth, not necessarily related to a present or a future job. Such development may en-

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compass both training and education, along with mentoring. Mentoring commonly involves a relationship between a new worker and an established worker. A mentor can act as a model, suggest how to cope with an organization's bureaucracy, provide encouragement, and promote the worker's long-range interests.

...previous school failure has little to do with intelligence, as countless studies have shown (Fingeret, 1989).

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, HRD is not devoted solely to increasing an organization's productivity, as some believe. It is equally concerned about workers' needs, viewing them as inextricably entwined with the organization's goals.

Characteristics of Adults Participating in Literacy Programs

In any discussion of adults participating in literacy programs, the first point to emphasize is that there is no such thing as a 'typical' adult learner. Their age range is from youth to late middle age, they have widely varying backgrounds of life and work experience, and they occupy, or have occupied different roles in the workplace and in society in general. However, many of them share, with respect to learning, a fear of the change created by the demands placed on them by supervisors, trainers, or teachers. These anxieties are compounded in those adults who have experienced previous failures in school and who associate learning with unpleasant memories of unsympathetic teachers, difficult tests, low grades, and punishments. Often these adults have a low self-concept that causes them to shrink from exposing their ignorance to others and to

dread further failure. Also, with advancing years, they face physiological changes that include deterioration of sight and hearing, some loss of energy and strength, decline of memory, and a lengthening of reaction time. Clearly, not all adults age at the same rate or display the same characteristics of aging. Nevertheless, the changes, or the fear of them, can create anxieties that interfere with learning.

However, there are counterpoints to this rather dismal record. One is the seemingly endless resiliency and adaptability of human beings when faced with new challenges. Another is that previous school failure has little to do with intelligence, as countless studies have shown (Fingeret, 1989). A third counterpoint is the possession by many of these adults of a healthy self-concept within their own subcultures, a condition that is supported and strengthened by close kinship and friendship ties (Anderson & Niemi, 1970). Finally, there is the 'dignity' to which Fingeret (1989) alluded:

Foremost, it is important to recognize that non-reading adults are creators of their own social lives, as imperfect as these lives may appear by middle class standards. They participate in the ongoing creation and maintenance of the social world in which they live.

Problems Hindering Workplace Literacy Programs

The importance of HRD as an integral activity essential to the very survival of an organization is rapidly gaining recognition from Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), as its incorporation into the strategic plan of an organization attests. This plan must take into account changes occurring in the workplace with the greater involvement of workers in participatory decision-making through quality circles and work teams. This development calls for a literacy program that incorporates both work skills literacy and personal literacy. The latter would help workers to enhance their analytic reasoning abilities and permit them to transfer their experience to another job. This two-dimensional literacy program should form the cornerstone of an organization's train-

ing endeavor. However, a recent study by the Omega Group (1989) revealed that there are barriers in the form of attitudes to be overcome by some CEOs before they would permit the expenditure of an organization's resources for literacy programs. These attitudes include the following:

- The issue of literacy is considered to be someone else's responsibility and an inappropriate use of the company's resources.
- Literacy skills are deemed unnecessary for job performance (manual tasks, maid service, janitorial services, etc.).
- The investment in procedures would be very costly, both in terms of implementing the programs and of the inevitable changes that would result.
- The admission of having a serious literacy problem could negatively impact the image and reputation of the organization, both internally and externally.

Another problem hindering workplace literacy relates to workers' perceptions. One is the fear of the stigma, in the eyes of the company and of their peers, attached to illiteracy. The second is fear of failing the literacy program and the negative results of such failure, the most acute of which would be the loss of jobs. The third is distrust on the part of workers, who might assume that literacy programs are designed to identify illiterates and dismiss them from the organization (Omega Group, 1989).

Exemplary Workplace Literacy Programs

Each workplace literacy program is distinctive, shaped by the particular corporate culture in which it operates. One renowned corporation that is known for its dedication to workplace literacy is Polaroid. Its first in-house program was launched in the 60s. Today the program offers a broad range of courses and services. The former include basic literacy and arithmetic, computer skills, and skills (study, speaking, listening) that advance the learning process. Some im-

portant features of this literacy program are individual assessments, the voluntary nature of the program, collaboration between worker and supervisor in deciding upon course content, and educational counselors to advise workers (*The bottom line: Basic skills in the workplace*, 1988).

A program that received recognition from the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (1989) involved a joint partnership between Motorola, Inc. and William Rainey Harper College in Arlington Heights, Illinois. This comprehensive program (consisting of 47,700 hours of literacy instruction in reading, mathematics, and non-native language skills) has had a dramatic effect on Motorola's productivity, because workers have improved their reading skills and mastered basic arithmetic skills. Such partnerships as this one could extend to local school dis-

tricts, state agencies, colleges and universities, vocational schools, libraries, and community-based groups.

Another interesting program is offered by the Travelers Insurance Company. It prepares chronically unemployed workers who have been referred to Travelers by community agencies. These young adults undergo an intensive 18-week program with two phases. The first consists of 8 weeks of full-time classroom training in mathematics, English, office skills, and interpersonal skills. The second phase consists of 10 weeks of class and work-study, in which workers spend time in departments where they will obtain jobs after finishing the program.

All of the above programs are based on the assumption that workers can learn. Equally important is the sometimes overlooked assumption that

they have a right to learn. A declaration to this effect was made at the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education, sponsored by UNESCO (1985) and held in Paris in March, 1985. This right to learn, with its emphasis on human dignity and potential is described as follows:

the right to read and write; the right to question and analyze; the right to imagine and create; the right to read one's own world and to write history; the right to have access to educational resources; the right to develop individual and collective skills.

If these two assumptions—that workers can learn and that they have a right to learn—were to undergird workplace literacy programs, such programs would likely have a positive impact on workers and organizations alike.

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Literacy in China: The Mass Campaign

by Li Xiaopei

The Chinese culture is one of the oldest in the world. Literacy has long been held as one of the most admirable achievements of a person. Unfortunately, throughout Chinese history, literacy was considered a spiritual wealth, specially reserved for the rich and the ruling classes. As a result, more than 90% of the people were deprived of the right to read and write. At the end of the Ching Dynasty, or the turn of the century, intellectuals and reformers increasingly saw the problems of an illiterate population as it related to political, economic and societal problems. Illiteracy was the result of those problems, as well as the hindrance to their solution. Thus, many educators and political leaders started various literacy programs in the hope of solving these problems and reforming society. Among them, the most effective and influential were those programs by Yen Yangchu and Tao Xinzhi, both of whom were forerunners in Chinese literacy movements.

China is a vast country with an area of 9.6 million square kilometers and a population of 1 billion. During the early 1900s, China was a poor country facing the aggression of the external imperialists and persistent internal unrests. To attack the problem of illiteracy against that background, educators needed to adopt some new ways of teaching literacy with as little time and money as possible. Yen Yangchu started his literacy work in France in 1918, where he developed a program to teach a small number of basic Chinese characters to adult illiterates. He also started a successful periodical, using these characters for the neo-literates to read. With this experience, he returned

to China in 1921 and launched a large-scale literacy campaign in the city of Changsha. His most influential literacy work was a rural reconstruction effort in Ding County, Hobei, where adults were taught to read, to be more sanitary in their living habits, and to improve their economic conditions. By 1934, there were 844 literacy classes in 416 villages with an enrollment of 21,170 people. Unfortunately, the literacy movement was forced to stop because of the Japanese invasion (Gamble, 1954). Yen Yangchu's main contributions to Chinese literacy work were his creation of a textbook with one thousand of most commonly used characters and his idea that literacy work in China must be focused in the countryside.

His 'little teacher' system and Ten Minutes Education Program were two unique ways designed to cope with the limited human and material resource problem in China.

Tao Xinzhi shared Yen's idea that the eradication of illiteracy was the key to the improvement of the people's lives. Much of his educational work was devoted to literacy. He set up China's first school for training literacy teachers. His 'little teacher' system and

Ten Minutes Education Program were two unique ways designed to cope with the limited human and material resource problem in China. Little teachers are school children who were taught to share their learning with their unlettered neighbors. Usually for one hour every day, students became teachers. They went to homes, farms, wharves, tea houses, market centers, and many other places where illiterates worked or lived. There they carried out their teaching by using the so-called Ten Minutes Education program: two minutes singing, two minutes news reporting, three minutes talking on health education, and three minutes teaching two words. Thus, the illiterates learned something without interfering with their workday. These creative methods were adopted by later literacy campaigns.

Although the efforts of Yen and Tao and many other educators were commendable, and the results were encouraging; nevertheless, the essential problem of a large illiterate population was still almost untouched by the time the new China was founded in 1949. According to one 1948 statistic, there were more than 348 million illiterate people in China, about 80% of the whole population (see Figure 1).

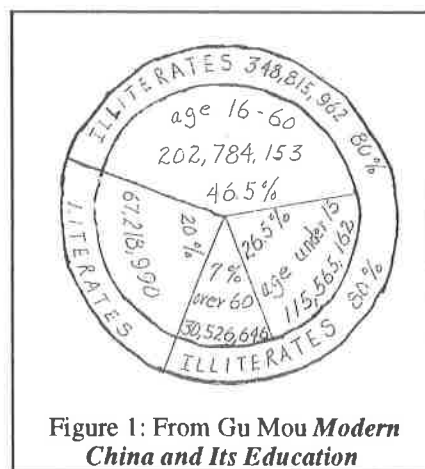


Figure 1: From Gu Mou *Modern China and Its Education*

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Like many other third world countries, the new China made great efforts in literacy education soon after its founding. Following repeated literacy campaigns, the percentage of illiterate people has dropped from over 80 to 20 at the present time. In other words, more than 100 million people have become literate since 1949. It was a phenomenal victory. The way in which the victory has been achieved is uniquely Chinese and worth exploring. The attempt to remove the huge 'mountain' of illiteracy and the unique characteristics of the literacy campaigns are discussed in the next section.

The Central Control of the Literacy Campaigns

China is a centrally controlled country. Political power is vested in the central government and the whole political system is a well-organized network, with lines radiating from the central committee of the Party. Through this network, the will and the decisions of the central government can be carried quite efficiently to the bottom. Under the central government, there are provincial level governments which are usually controlled by the provincial level Party committees, and under them, the county levels. The grassroots level organizations are called units. A unit could be a factory, a school, a shop, etc. They are units of production, as well as organs for carrying out the Party's policies. Whenever there is a need that is considered important by the top leaders, a decision or decree will be

made at the top level and it will filter down to the grassroots level quite quickly and efficiently through the network (see Figure 2).

There are two factors that ensure the smooth movement of the system. One is the absolute authority of the central government, combined with the confidence people have in the Party. There is little resistance against the implementation of the policies, for most people believe in the unity of the Party's goals and theirs. Carrying out these policies is, they think, for their own benefit. The other factor is the ruthless repression of opponents, whenever there are any. When a policy is made at the highest level, the lower level people are left the choice of either following it or being punished. To avoid getting into trouble, most people just do what they are told if it does not go too far against their will. Thus, the centrally controlled system has a very strong and muscular momentum. In the case of literacy education, the goals of the central government and the masses are not contradictory. People, as well as the government, see the importance of literacy. When the decision is made by the Central Committee to address illiteracy, it is carried out fairly smoothly and effectively.

At the beginning of each literacy campaign, the Central Committee usually issues a decree or decision announcing the aims of the campaign, the methods to be used, and the ways of evaluation. For example, in 1956 the Chinese Communist Party and State Council issued the Decision on

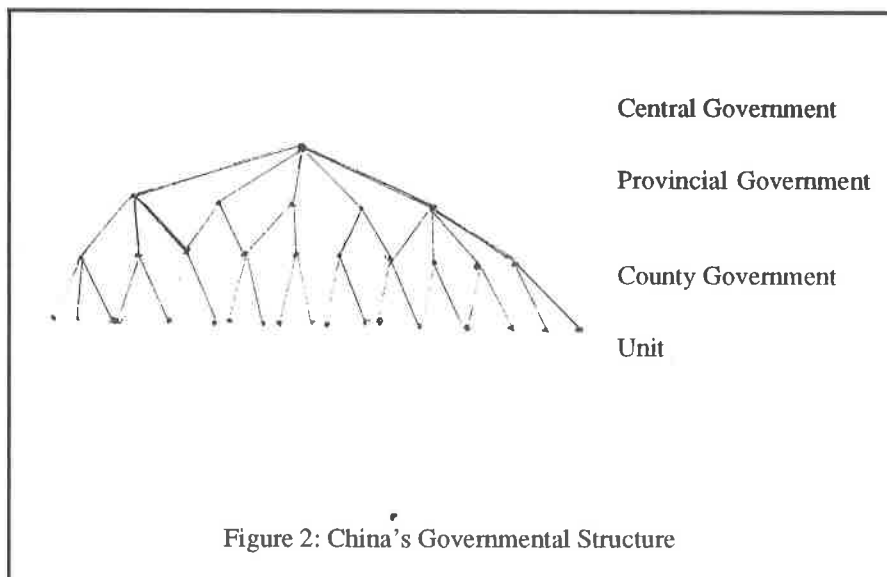
Elimination of Illiteracy, the goal of which was to wipe out illiteracy in five to seven years.

The organ officials are required to eliminate illiteracy in two or three years. About 95% of the industrial workers in factories, mines and enterprises are to overcome illiteracy in three to five years. The residents of the countryside and the cities should be basically literate in five to seven years (*People's Daily*, March 13, 1956).

A person was considered literate if he or she was able to read and write 1,500 characters, understand popular newspapers, keep simple accounts, and write informal notes.

This decree also defined clearly the standards of literacy. A person was considered literate if he or she was able to read and write 1,500 characters, understand popular newspapers, keep simple accounts, and write informal notes. Illiterates were those with no written vocabulary or with a vocabulary smaller than 500 Chinese characters. Adults with a written vocabulary larger than 500 but below the standard of literacy were considered semi-literates (Zhang, 1984).

The Decision on Elimination of Illiteracy also included suggestions as to what kind of methods were best in trying to reach the goal, where to get the funds, and who should be responsible for the task. Then it was up to the lower level organs to carry out the plan. There was pressure for leaders at all levels to act as promptly and actively as possible, otherwise, they were likely to be deposed. There have been three upsurges of literacy education in the forty years since the founding of the People's



Republic of China. Each started with a decision from the central organ, and each time the campaign reached most of its goals. The centrally-controlled system lacks the flexibility and diversity needed in such a large country; nevertheless, it ensures the implementation of the literacy plan.

The Political Color of the Literacy Campaigns

In China, literacy education has always been related closely to the political aims. Leaders of various literacy movements and campaigns all declared firmly the political purpose of their efforts. Most of them claimed that their purpose was to strengthen the country through uplifting the people. For example, in the early part of the 20th century, a governor of Shandong eagerly pointed out that "the more the knowledge of the people increases, the easier it will be for government orders to be implemented." This point of view is commonly shared by the imperial, national and Communist leaders. Frequent aggressions by the imperialists and the passive attitudes towards these aggressions have always been attributed to the illiteracy among the people. Thus, literacy was considered a 'must' if China was to be modernized.

*"The eradication of illiteracy is a necessary condition for the construction of a new China."
(Mao, 1957).*

New China connected the literacy campaigns to politics even more strongly. Mao Tsetung proclaimed in Tienanmen Square on the day of the founding of the People's Republic of China that "the era in which the Chinese people were regarded as uncivilized is now ended. We shall emerge in the world as a nation with advanced culture." (People's Daily, Oct. 1, 1949). Soon

after, he pointed out that "the eradication of illiteracy is a necessary condition for the construction of a new China." (Mao, 1957). Literacy campaigns and political movements were considered related components. The first directive on literacy education in 1950, declared that a literacy campaign was to begin immediately after "elementary political education has been carried out among the workers and staff members for a certain period" (People's Education, 1950). Political education was thought necessary in order to explain why literacy was so important, and to arouse the necessary enthusiasm for the task of learning. At almost the same time, the Education Ministry of China announced that teaching literacy in a planned way was an immediate and momentous political task. In the countryside, the need for literacy was heightened by the developing agricultural cooperatives. The prevalence of illiteracy made some villages unable to find a person to do bookkeeping. In order to develop the cooperatives in the countryside, it was imperative to teach literacy to the peasants. During the Great Leap Forward, literacy was again related to political needs. The Great Leap Forward could not be realized without the literacy of the masses. It was believed that only after the workers and peasants became literate, not just literally, but scientifically and technologically, could the Great Leap Forward in production attain the momentum to continue. Consequently, "literacy education carries on the great aim in building socialism and communism," (People's Education, 1958), according to one editorial published at that time. When the Reform started in the seventies and eighties, literacy was again seen as a prerequisite for the success of the economic and political reform. The following rationale for literacy education is still quite typical. "When the laboring people are lifted out of illiteracy, they become scientific-minded. They are able to read newspapers, study government policies and decrees, and take an interest in national affairs. Reading, writing, and calculating ability helps people to participate in political life and democratic practice, and to join in cultural activities. As a result, they play a stronger role in industrial and agricultural production" (Hong, 1982).

The political character of literacy education in China can be found not only in the declaration of its political aims, but also in the government's way of launching movements. The repeated literacy campaigns, especially those during the People's Republic of China period, are themselves political movements. Each campaign starts with the propaganda of the significance of the literacy movement for the achievement of the political goals of the country. Leaders at various levels make detailed plans of how to fulfill their tasks of elimination of illiteracy. A special committee in charge of the campaign is usually set up to lead the movement and it is often headed by the leader of the Party committee. Everyone is expected to take part in the campaign. If they do not, they may be considered politically backward, or, sometimes even worse, counter-revolutionary. On the one hand, this attaches more weight to literacy education since a political movement is the most important task in China. On the other hand, literacy education becomes an imperative action instead of a voluntary one.

Non-formal Ways of Teaching Literacy in China

Facing a large population of illiterates with few resources, literacy education in China had to be organized in ways that sharply contrast with formal school education. The following three ways are quite popular and effective, and are used by people in various areas and of various nationalities.

Winter Schools, Spare-time Schools and Intensive Literacy Classes

These forms of education are used to serve different needs of the illiterates. Ninety percent of the new literates are graduates from these schools. Winter schools are set up for the peasants during winter time, when they have little farm work to do. Spare-time schools are set up to help solve the problems that existed in the winter schools, i.e., most students forget what they learned in the previous winter and have to start over in the second winter. Spare-time schools have fewer classes during a busy season and more during less busy seasons. In this way, students can learn year round. Intensive classes are set up for leaders

or semi-illiterates. People can try to become literate during two week's or a month's intensive study in a class. It is an effective way for some adults, since learning is more concentrated on the subject than during a prolonged time period.

Textbooks are very important in these classes. Usually, the local people themselves produce their own textbooks, starting with their names and the names of tools, animals, fields and crops. After they learn the basic words, they begin to construct texts about their lives, simple sciences, and basic agricultural technologies. These texts can be used both for learning words and learning science and technologies.

To give everyone a chance to learn, a 'pairing' method is used, whereby those who can read and those who cannot are put into pairs.

Classes are financed mainly by the people themselves and subsidized by the state. The government subsidy covers the salaries of the full-time personnel, administration, teacher-training, and part of the textbooks and awards. The production brigade or team (which are the basic production units in the rural areas) pays for part-time instructors, and light and heating from their welfare fund or the profits from their small industries. In addition, schools often organize work-study programs, to make money locally, in keeping with the Chinese proverb: those who live near mountains live on mountain products; those who live near water live on water products. Some go to the mountains to collect Chinese herbal medicines and sell them for funds; others raise chickens and sell eggs; and some city people raise funds by recycling newspapers and bottles.

Teachers of these classes are usually young high-school graduates with

little experience. There are teacher-coaching centers in each commune where teachers get instruction, usually once a week, concerning teaching materials, and instruction about tackling teaching difficulties. Teachers are grouped together to prepare for their classes.

Mass Education

There are always some illiterates unable to attend any literacy classes because of heavy housework, remote locations, or other inconveniences. To give everyone a chance to learn, a 'pairing' method is used, whereby those who can read and those who cannot are put into pairs. The former are responsible for teaching the latter, and the latter promise to become literate in a certain period of time. All the literate people are mobilized to help, including elementary and middle school children. There are husbands teaching wives, sons and daughters teaching parents, relatives teaching relatives, and neighbors teaching neighbors. In this way, literacy is achieved without formal teachers, schools, or textbooks, and without interrupting necessary work. For example, one fourth-grade child was assigned to teach one of her neighbors to read, but was driven away by the woman because she was busy with her housework. The girl was not discouraged. The next time she started the lesson by helping the woman with her housework. Gradually, the woman became motivated and started to learn actively.

Literacy Environments

When a literacy campaign starts, people try to help illiterates by helping them function in a literate environment. Objects all over the villages are labeled. Peasants memorize the characters for different farming operations as they perform them. 'Literacy check points' are set up in some markets and village streets where passers-by are stopped and given a reading test. Only those who can read can pass through. During the campaign, peasants have to learn to read in a public office before they can ask for help. They must learn to read in a hospital before they can see a doctor. Often adults must learn to read in a shop before they can buy things. All these activities not only help the illiterates memorize the characters, but give them

a constant need to learn reading and writing skills.

Summary

As the economic reform proceeds, many basic structures on which the literacy movements depend have been dissolved. New ways of coping with the changes have emerged. The most obvious change has resulted from the new economic responsibility system. The production team is no longer the basic unit. Instead, the family becomes more important and many of the methods that were team-based are no longer effective. In other words, peasants are not as easily controlled as before. Taking this situation into account, a contract method that is used widely in production reform has been applied to the literacy field. In a contract, illiterates make clear the time they need to overcome illiteracy. If they fail, they will face many economic disadvantages. For example, they will not be contracted to the more profitable land, or assigned to factories. Young illiterates will not be given wedding permits. Some places even have illiterates pay a fine if they do not become literate within a required time.

The big question of learning the word or learning the world has not been considered seriously by literacy workers.

On the whole, China has achieved much in literacy education. However, literacy is still regarded by many as simply depositing words in the illiterates. It is done in a very mechanical way. The big question of learning the word or learning the world has not been considered seriously by literacy workers. Nevertheless, more and more people start to think of this aspect of literacy as crucial to expansion of the literacy efforts in China. As com-

munication between China and the world continues, leaders and programs

in China will surely learn from the experiences of others to develop even

more effective ways to resolve literacy issues.

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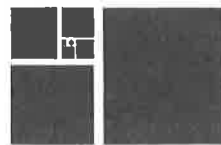
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Working Together for Literacy in Africa

by Michael A. Omolewa

Prologue

Literacy efforts have been central to the issue of the attainment of an African solution to the continent's problems. One school of thought contends that territorial divisions on the continent are artificial, and that the language shared by neighboring countries are a demonstration of the unity of the African peoples and cultures. It is also noted that Africans, through the centuries of trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic slave trade, have shared a common experience, and have forged common links through colonial experiences, struggles for liberation, and the attainment of independence. Another school of thought, however, draws attention to the lack of unity among Africans, as shown by the many languages, the hegemony of the local chiefs, and the suspicion and mistrust among African peoples. It is also noted that people did not generally know about a colonial experience that was later attacked by the educated elite anxious to share power in forging an artificial unity, or that many Africans were themselves slave-raiders, collaborators, and traitors to the cause of African unity.

Thus, the issue of literacy has been used in current times to forge a lasting link among African countries and peoples faced with common problems of technological backwardness, political instability, economic underdevelopment, and mass illiteracy. It is important to note that African education has its base in the oral culture and that literacy was a later addition, arising from the pioneering work of Muslim and Christian missionaries. There followed more serious literacy efforts with the establishment of colonial rule and requests

for Western education by those previously neglected by the formal school system. The efforts of the missionaries were, of course, feeble due to limited resources. The governments have found the task of providing education to the teeming masses daunting and sometimes exhausting. Furthermore, all of the African countries have faced the problem of sections of the populace reluctant to embrace literacy and remaining confident that the simple life of farming, hunting, fishing, blacksmithing, carving, and home management is satisfying and sufficiently rewarding.

...it is assumed that the solution to the problems of Africa should begin with the eradication of illiteracy.

In seeking factors that could assist in the unification of Africa, governments and educators have identified literacy as having potential. In the process, illiteracy has been blamed for the absence of a public transportation system in African cities, the high mortality rate, poverty, and tyranny that are evident on the continent. The preliterate, indigenous system is held accountable for these lapses (Mushi, 1989), as are the colonial administrations and governments of independent African countries that have been unwilling and/or unable to mount massive adult literacy work. Thus it is assumed that the solution to the problems of

Africa should begin with the eradication of illiteracy. It is under this assumption that several efforts are being made to coordinate work aimed at consciousness-raising in the field of literacy development on the continent. In the process, a number of pan-African organizations have emerged.

Roots of Cooperation

The task of cooperation for development is by no means an innovation in Africa as it has its antecedents in the community life of Africans and in village cooperative ventures. The harnessing of resources through cooperation was the national symbol of the Dahomeans of the nineteenth century. Efforts on the continental front have their antecedents in the work of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) formed in 1963 to assist the continent in sharing common problems and approaches to issues of mutual concern. The establishment of the OAU was clearly a political action aimed at unifying the continent.

At the education level, Ministers of Education of African countries met in Lagos in 1976 to prepare the Lagos Plan of Action that requested member countries to:

commit themselves resolutely to the eradication of illiteracy among the masses of the people so as to make it easier for them to receive training and further training in their national languages in order that they may be able to participate more effectively in development and in raising their own standard of living, taking for this purpose, the necessary measures to mobilize all available resources in specific training institutions, local communities and development agencies (Lagos, 1976).

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Six years later, the Ministers of Education met again at Harare and pleaded with all African countries to:

eliminate illiteracy through a vigorous sustained two-pronged campaign to universalize primary education for children and to promote literacy among young people and adults on a massive scale (UNESCO, 1982).

The coordination machinery is, therefore, available at the governmental level through the UNESCO Regional Office for Africa, the Council of Ministers of Education and the Education Division of the OAU. At this level, Africans meet to discuss issues of common concern, such as the education of nomads, youth unemployment, and the relevance of school curricula, vocational education, apprenticeship training, and strategies for eliminating illiteracy.

At the non-governmental level, efforts have been made to coordinate the work of international and national non-governmental organizations working in Africa. This action resulted in the establishment in Dakar of the Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO) by "delegates from eighteen African countries representing indigenous voluntary non-government development organizations at grass roots...in Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and Arab-speaking Africa" at its founding General Assembly from May 26 to 30, 1987 (FAVDO Papers, 1987).

Literacy and Adult Education

Soon after the attainment of political independence, educated Africans and expatriate Africans working in the field of adult education recognized the vital role of coordinated effort in adult education. Thus, seven African countries met on January 5, 1968 to set up a pan-African movement named the African Adult Education Association (AAEA). The aim of the Association, launched at Makerere University College, Kampala, Uganda, was to expand the association of East and Central African countries that had been inaugurated three years earlier in Zambia. It was agreed that the training of adult educators should constitute an important objective of AAEA. Therefore, in

1969, a conference was held in the Sudan on the theme of "Training for Adult Education." Later, the association hosted another conference on the topic of adult education and national development in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. It was agreed that regional associations can only be effective if national associations are established and strengthened. This assumption led to the adoption of an AAEA resolution in 1968 that the formation of national associations should be given "a top priority" (African Adult Education Association, 1971).

The AAEA had spread to sixteen African countries by 1971. However, it had not become the pan-African organization dreamt about by its founders, for it still lacked members from French-speaking African countries. In the meantime, another organization, named the Afrolit Society, had also been founded by African non-governmental organizations from predominantly French-speaking countries

for the objectives of creating a continental voluntary movement of professionals, practitioners and volunteers, and mobilizing and managing available expertise and resources in order to promote the development of adult continuing, non-formal education and the eradication of illiteracy in Africa (Ulzen, 1986).

A large number of African countries were attracted by Afrolit Society's emphasis on literacy. Thus, the society included English-speaking African countries (Afrolit Society Papers, 1976).

It was soon discovered that there was considerable overlapping of activities by the AAEA and Afrolit Society. Both organizations depended heavily on material support from foreign donors, especially the Inter-Church Coordinating Committee for Development Projects (ICCO), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the German Adult Education Association (DVV), and the Ford Foundation. Identical proposals were sent to several donors, some of whom received the same proposals from the two different organizations. There was some concern by Africans themselves about

an illogical dichotomy which the historical and accidental birth of the two associations seemed to perpetuate between literacy and adult education, with the attendant wastage and duplication of scarce resources as well as efforts (Ulzen, 1986).

After more than ten years of intense negotiation, the AAEA and the Afrolit Society were merged on Wednesday, February 29, 1984 to constitute the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALEA) with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. AALEA at once began an innovation with the development of a program, first by involving more people in the decision-making process, and second, by needs identification, and resource mobilization.

AALEA, with the moral, professional, and logistic support from the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in Toronto, decided from the outset to develop new programs and strategies that would make its services more appropriate to meeting African needs and interests. It was aided in its renewed drive by financial and technical input from the Canadian International Development Agency, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation of West Germany, the British Council, the German Adult Education Association and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and UNESCO, among others. Following consultative meetings at Naivasha, Kenya and Argentina in 1985, AALEA decided to undertake massive resource mobilization and program development. It began to involve member associations and key individuals in the task of developing an effective pan-African association. In the process, with the establishment of a task force to identify needs, the association embarked on what the separate organizations should have been doing since 1968. A three-year program in the area of training, literacy, environmental education, and women's development emerged. Networks were also established to further assist AALEA in its task. Deliberate efforts were renewed to bring the French-speaking and the Portuguese-speaking African countries into AALEA. To ensure that information was shared and that research was encouraged, a journal called the Journal of African Adult Education was launched. A newsletter was also estab-

lished, more recently titled *The Spider*. AALEA and its predecessors have also made an impact through their meetings and their adoption of resolutions.

The coming together of Africans to deliberate on issues of international interest is a demonstration of their conviction that an individual's own efforts will not produce maximum results.

The coming together of Africans to deliberate on issues of international interest is a demonstration of their conviction that an individual's own efforts will not produce maximum results. This is expressed by the African proverbs; "One hand cannot lift a load on the head," and, "Wisdom is like a baobab tree; one man's hand can never go round it" (African Adult Education Association, 1971). In this unifying process, the African members of available organizations have continued to attract more members through visits and the adoption of resolutions.

Other bodies and associations have also addressed the issue of aspects of adult and literacy education in Africa. For example, the African Association for Distance Education (AADE), with its secretariat at Harare in Zimbabwe, has sought to assemble countries in Africa with an interest in the promotion of learning through correspondence and the non-print media. The aim of AADE is to democratize access to education in order to reach the neglected distant learners using as teaching media the radio, television, and printed materials. AADE also publishes a newsletter, the AADE Bulletin, which is useful only at the post-literacy level. AADE has made an effort to assemble distance education

practitioners all over Africa. To this end, it held a workshop at Lusaka in 1987, and another at Harare in 1988.

Another organization that has also sought to bring together African countries to discuss issues of innovation and to promote exchange of ideas on development issues on the continent, is the African Association for Training and Development (AATD). AATD has only recently concluded a deliberation at Maseru in Lesotho. The International Community Education Association (ICEA) held a conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1987. The ICEA is concerned with the issue of promotion of education at the grassroots level. It is also interested in developing aspects of non-formal education and encouraging the integration of the world of work with the world of learning. The relevance of ICEA in Africa is demonstrated by the new wave of national policies on education that seek to promote integrated development and the three Hs, namely the use of the hand, the head and the heart. This philosophy is demonstrated by the establishment of village polytechnic schools and functional literacy centers in Africa.

There is...an urgent need for regional coordination and monitoring of work in the broad field of literacy, including children, youths, adults, women, nomads, and all deprived sections of society.

The African regional unit of the United States based International Reading Association has also proved vital to adult education delivery in Africa. This association has an impressive record of assisting the neo-literate to cultivate reading habits. The association also en-

ures, by its input, that the neo-literates do not lapse into illiteracy by a careful provision of suitable reading texts and by stimulation of their interests in reading. Thus, the Association is a provider of continuing education and post-literacy facilities.

The declaration of 1990 as the International Literacy Year (ILY) by the United National General Assembly is, in a way, a victory for the multiplicity of these regional associations in Africa. All of the associations are needed to contribute to furtherance of the objectives of the ILY in fighting illiteracy, by creating appropriate functional literacy programs and strategies that address the basic issues of under-development in Africa. There is, thus, an urgent need for regional coordination and monitoring of work in the broad field of literacy, including children, youths, adults, women, nomads, and all deprived sections of society. This need is imperative, as many African countries house more than 75% illiterate populations: Angola 72.5; Benin, 72.1; Burundi, 73.2; Chad, 79.2; Cote d'Ivoire, 81.1; Gambia, 79.9; Guinea, 75.9; Guinea-Bissau, 75.9; Liberia, 70.5; Mali, 86.5; Senegal, 77.5; Somalia, 93.9; and upper Volta, 88.8. Apart from Botswana, 38.9, Lesotho, 30.2, Tanzania, 27.0, Zambia, 31.4 and Zimbabwe, 31.2, all other African countries have a more than 40% illiteracy rate (Afrik, 1988).

The international literacy year could then be regarded as an opportunity for improving and increasing literacy activities, innovation and originality in the development of suitable curricula, and adequate materials. Coordination should by no means lead to bureaucracy and personnel development. It should not be an avenue for talking, debate, and endless meetings that make no impact on the people for whom the year is intended. Rather, ILY must stimulate debate on the scope of literacy in Africa, opportunities for literacy in Africa within the context of rules, the intervention of literacy in the democratization process of Africa, and in overcoming economic crises. The diversity and expectations of literacy make the subject vast, and confer on it an urgency that has been compared to warfare and relief campaigns.

The ILY must also lead to project identification and execution, careful monitoring of projects and evaluation of

the goals that must consistently be community-based. Resources must be mobilized from friends and donors outside the continent, but only insofar as they support the regional and local initiatives. The idea should be to develop materials of local relevance that will sustain learning throughout life.

Epilogue

The illiteracy problem is sufficiently enormous in Africa to attract the attention of governments whose input has been crucial. The coming together of governments under the aegis of the UNESCO regional offices in Dakar has led to the sharing of ideas and experiences. The intervention of non-governmental organizations, especially religious bodies and voluntary development organizations in the area of illiteracy eradication, has been fairly effective. The attempt to bring these bodies under regional coordinating machinery has led to the proliferation of organizations, thus demonstrating the complex political context under which the literacy projects are executed in Africa.

*It is doubtful,
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unity of Africa.*

A critical study of the impact of the work of these organizations is still to be undertaken. It is doubtful, however, whether the literacy efforts have assisted in the development of the unity of Africa. Already, even in countries such as Nigeria, one could ask how united are the Nigerian Igbo or the Yoruba who speak the same language and live in the same country. It is also clear that it is the few educated elite, not the generality of the African peoples, who are currently

concerned about sharing experiences at the regional level, and that the impact of the regional associations is still to be felt at the grassroots level.

There is a need to harmonize the activities of the regional bodies to remove areas of waste and duplication. There is also a need to encourage voluntary development organizations that have not already attached literacy to their efforts in line with the declaration of the ILY. To this end, a directory of the key providers of literacy programs would be desirable (Akinpelu, 1985).

Finally, there must be a way of getting the government umbrella organization to work together with non-governmental organizations. The integration of non-formal education into the formal education system would also enhance the prospects of a successful literacy effort. These steps would require decisive support from governments and demand political action. In the last analysis, the literacy issue in Africa would assume a political nature and stature.

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Literacy in Latin America: The Development of Popular Education

by Jorge Jeria

The development of adult education in Latin America is linked to the economic development of the region and to economic changes throughout the world. During the 1930s, the economy in Latin America was based on the export of raw materials, and the import of manufactured goods. It was essentially agrarian, with few landowners and a large sector of peasants surviving in a semi-feudal economy. At this point, education was a form of domination in which the main goal was the reproduction of a capitalistic-mercantile economy that favored the dominant class and that was joined to an authoritarian political system. This type of education focused on expansion of the dominant culture and internalization of the culture for national integration and subsequent reproduction. This period can be called *educacion culturizante* (Grossi-Vio, 1988).

From this point of view, ignorance was seen as not knowing the dominant culture; therefore, learning how to read and write would give access to the dominant culture. The expansion of capitalism, with an incipient industrialization, developed a need for manufactured goods, which in turn demanded more money in order to obtain them. This development required an increasing use of mathematics. The money generated served only to produce goods for the market and to generate more capital. Peasants were forced to surrender their self-sufficiency and to become more dependent on the market. History was important because it was written from the point of view of those building the nation, not from the point of view of the conquered

natives. Education within this framework used religion to convince the dominated ones that they were not only dominated by temporal powers, but also by divine power. The methodological form used to sustain the system was the textbook. The books at this time concentrated on literacy, mathematics, history, and religion. The texts used a repetition-imitation methodology that came from an authoritarian manipulative form (Grossi-Vio, 1988).

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By 1940, Latin America's economy changed to an industrial base so as to produce goods that had previously been imported, resulting in a demand for technology. There was a need to link education and technology, in order to train laborers to use the newly imported technology. During this period, adult education was tied to preparations for utilizing technology. The creation of adult technical training

institutions, such as Instituto Nacional de Capacitacion (INACAP) [National Training Institute] in Chile, Secretaria de Educacion Nacional de Adultos (SENA) [National Office for Adult Education] in Colombia, and the Universidad de los Trabajadores (Workers University) in Uruguay were part of this trend. The method used in the training process was the transfer of skills and knowledge. Often, the instrument for imparting this knowledge was a training manual (Gross-Vio, 1988).

At the 1960 UNESCO meeting in Montreal, adult education was not considered to be an occasional task, but a steady commitment of governments. The new technologies were developing quickly and governments were not able to adapt to their changing economies. At the same time, adult education was to be integrated with the educational system and was conceptualized as lifelong learning. Adult education was not seen as compensatory or as a means to use free time by the middle class. On the contrary, it was believed that adult education should be a national goal, a political element, and a factor in the social planning that was to achieve nationwide unity, and to promote citizenship and political participation. Thus, adult education was viewed as having unlimited potential. The hope was that the development of well-organized programs of adult education, with technical assistance from governments, would bring about community action, which in turn, would enable rural sectors to become more functional; rural adults would be trained in professional and family roles.

In 1968, the Organization of American States (OAS) organized a Regional Program of Educational Development (PREDE) for Latin America. It included traditional literacy programs to involve adults in the

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economic-social development of member countries. There was a recognition during this period, that adults should be considered differently from children in the learning context. Institutions, such as schools, should be adapted to the psychology of adult learning. The learning process should be mediated by life experience, work, and the school.

During the late 60s, a new concept began to take form in the adult education process in Latin America. Increasingly, alternatives to the social economic order were seen as a result of political changes (for example, the impact the Cuban revolution had on its literacy campaign). Schools were criticized as entities that were not able to produce changes in society. Contradictions that affected schooling and society were noted. A change occurred in the concept of lifelong education from one that assumed the adult to be the object of the educational process to one that assumed that adults are part of a social reality, in which they are participants who can transform that reality as active subjects. Learning was not merely the reception of information, but a dialogical process. Reality was the learning experience and constituted the frame of education. The concept of conscientization and the criticism of traditional schooling are closely associated with this period. These concepts were debated widely at the National Seminar on Lifelong Learning in Buenos Aires in 1970 and at a preparatory meeting for the 11th International Conference also in Buenos Aires in 1971 (Cirigliano & Paldao, 1984).

These meetings inaugurated a period of criticism and a search for new alternatives. Without seeking definite solutions or refining definitions, the meetings clearly established the contradictions of educational systems that do not offer alternatives to the status quo. Mass media were seen as a parallel educational system without clear educational content. New alternatives of educational research in the whole process of educational planning were demanded. It was clear that adult education should not form part of institutionalized school systems or a part of their professionalization.

During the late 60s, the concept of popular education took root as a synthesis of the earlier ideas that more clearly defined adult education as active

participation by the community. Local initiatives, as opposed to national ones, were emphasized. Non-governmental agencies were linked to social action with a more global, national, and local vision. Popular education took on a new name, liberatory education, or education for liberation. Essentially, it emerged from the works of Freire in Brazil during 1964 and afterwards in Chile.

Education for Liberation

The background of education for liberation in Latin America can be situated within changes in political scenarios during the late 50s and 60s. The resurgence of authoritarian and repressive regimes, the progressive orientation of some sectors of the Catholic Church, and the Cuban revolution sent profound waves of change through Latin America. For many, this was a time of taking consciousness and questioning the value of schools. Some authors characterized this development as Freire's first movement toward popular education (La Belle, 1987; Garcia-Huidobro, 1981). It was clear that a massive reorganization and reform of schools would be contrary to the development of cultural spaces. The opening of such spaces, where the main objectives would be participation and the creation of circumstances that would permit a democratization from the base, would be an alternative to school reorganization proposed by the state. School reorganization was viewed as contrary to development purposes. According to Camoy (1971),

the present education systems are derived from their centralization away from the local community to the state. The result is that centralization destroyed people's control over their own environment.

Schools were generally viewed as vehicles to accomplish that purpose. For example, in Brazil during the 1950s, due to changes proposed by the followers of Jacques Maritain, a French philosopher, and the rank and file of the Church, the question of democratization of the school at all levels, public and private, initiated a movement in which adult education would develop specifically with direct help from the state. At the same time, the formation of the

Movimiento de Educacao de Base (MEB) [Base Education Movement], a new more radical orientation of young Catholics, questioning the traditional and authoritarian forms of pedagogy, drew from popular education programs the concept of education for liberation (Jeria, 1986).

For them, literacy implied more than learning to read and write. Literacy implied participation and change at all levels of the structures of society.

The work of Freire, at the beginning of his educational ideas, provides relevant information that makes it possible to understand the concept of education for liberation. Here, it is important to note that, at a meeting of the National Confederation of Brazilian Bishops in 1956, under the leadership of Don Helder Camara in the northeast region of Brazil, an acknowledgment of their growing concern about the inequalities in certain regions was expressed. A document was prepared that reflected a desire to respond to social changes and to initiate an awareness of the problems in societal structures and of the injustice in general (De Kadt, 1970). The document presented detailed proposals for different community projects in the region. Concurrently, some units of the Catholic Youth broke up due to internal struggles over the form in which liberation was to be achieved. A group called Popular Action (AP) was formed. On many occasions, both organizations participated together. They also jointly organized peasants and labor unions, and participated in cultural circles. These groups ultimately provided the personnel needed to spread the ideas of Freire and the concept of education for libera-

tion. The MEB was progressive in nature. All of the participants, from directors to field workers, saw their function as an element in the democratization of the structures of society. For them, literacy implied more than learning to read and write. Literacy implied participation and change at all levels of the structures of society.

By 1959 the northeastern section of Brazil, specifically Recife, saw the emergence of the Popular Cultural Movement. The main thrust of this movement was to raise the consciousness of the people through cultural circles. The cultural circles became a new dimension of learning, in which the concept of school had completely different meanings.

During the last twenty years in Latin America, adult education has evolved and become recognized as education for liberation.

During this period and until 1964, new types of education were developed in different ways. What happened in Brazil after 1964 resembled in many ways, what happened in Chile after 1973. The spaces that had been opened were closed, and the state did not offer an alternative to the questioning of the system. The word liberation became uncomfortable and participation replaced conscientization as a magic word that legitimized very diverse practices and propositions (Paiva, 1980). The work of Freire was of the highest importance, since it contributed to relative homogenization of the Catholic camps. As long as the political-pedagogical

ideas were consonant and compatible with the modern directives imposed by the Vatican Council 11, Freirean concepts helped to sustain the idea that Catholic forces were needed to participate in social tasks and to develop political education with the participation of the masses. Also, Catholic forces wanted to secure the functioning of the base democracy in order to effect authentic liberation. Popular education and political-pastoral efforts proceeded collectively and progressively, particularly in those countries that had dictatorial regimes. Therefore, the Church became the only institution sufficiently strong to keep working with popular alternatives (Paiva, 1980). In Brazil before 1964, the concept of education for liberation suggested profound changes. The reorganization and redirection of these efforts produced a multitude of programs under the label of popular education. In Chile, from 1964 to 1973, efforts were made to support the policies of the governments of Frei and Allende, primarily through the agrarian reform project and the development of a popular form of organization at all levels of the community. Analogous to the situation in Brazil was the post-coup situation in Chile that allowed the emergence of Church-sponsored programs that had a strong emphasis on liberation. Programs that have successfully operated in both countries have emphasized community-based participation and the responsibility of those communities to build a more just and equal society. However, to indicate the hegemonic aspects of society and its resultant schools, it is significant that, in Brazil, sectors of the church confronted the power of the dictatorship. The Church's proposals had a style that resembled the opening of spaces similar to those in Chile. These two alternatives were opposed, the character of the state versus the dignity of man (Celedon, 1988). An alternative democracy would require the participation of Christians in their base communities who recognized democracy from the grassroots level and educated others in this alternative.

During the last twenty years in Latin America, adult education has evolved and become recognized as education for liberation. Education is liberation, when presented through Freirean ideas. As expressed by Osorio (1988), characteristics of Freirean education are the a) innovative character of the teaching experiences, b) movement generated by this educational alternative, c) participation at the grassroot level in the educational process, and d) critical distance in relation to other educational experiences carried out in popular sectors and based on approaches defined as adult education or community education (Osoria, 1988).

Education for liberation cannot be carried out by itself but under a more programmatic construct that is called popular education. In the last analysis, popular education can be defined as instrumental political work in addition to the creation of a knowledge base that is popular in nature and collectively exercised.

Conclusion

In the last 30 years, adult education in Latin America has developed and transformed many points of view. As a result, there are different interpretations about the relationship between the production of knowledge and social and educational experiences. The future of popular education will deal with concepts such as subjectivity of the social agents, orientation of the socialization process, and the means to achieve liberation. Moreover, other factors affecting popular education will include telecommunications, computer information, clarification and distribution of knowledge. Adult education, previously conceived as a function that attested to individual and collective necessities, is today changing. The notions of space and territoriality now allow a link with a reality that needs to be addressed so that popular education can act as an effective means for liberation.

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Future Issues of Thresholds in Education

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The Improvement of Instruction

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Literacy: Considerations for Policies in the Future

by Donna D. Amstutz

The articles contained in this issue of *Thresholds* have examined, from an international perspective, several concerns regarding adult literacy. This article attempts to integrate the various viewpoints expressed by suggesting several policy implications that arise from these views. In this overview, the relationships among poverty, gender, and literacy are first made explicit. Given the discussion regarding definitions, language, policies, methodologies and contexts contained in this issue, the article concludes with potential implications for policy. Policy is derived from the assumptions regarding literacy that the policy-makers hold. An examination of these assumptions introduces the specific considerations for the formulation of policy that affect literacy programs and adult educators.

Poverty and Illiteracy

Although no causal relationship has been established, the fact that oppression and poverty consistently occur in the illiterate population warrants an examination of the relationships between them. According to many adult educators, poverty is inextricably linked to illiteracy (UNESCO, 1989; Duke, 1985). Often, reading and writing are not highly valued when the struggle for survival requires constant attention. When basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, water, and medicine are inadequate, the energy needed for learning to read is devoted to survival. It is for this reason that the utility of literacy has often been questioned. UNESCO's Associate Coordinator for the International Literacy Year, John Ryan, indicated:

People living in extreme poverty and rural environments sense that they have very little need for literacy, and until you can transform the environment and circumstances in which they live, they in fact have little need for it (UNESCO, 1989).

Of the estimated 889 million adult illiterates in the world (27.7% of the population), nearly 98% live in developing countries. The International Task Force on Literacy (1988) indicated, "...[this is] a testament to the fact that illiteracy is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World." The common denominators of unemployment, inadequate housing or medical care, and little opportunity to participate fully in society are shared primarily by illiterates.

Reading is often given a magical aura, as though when adults learn how to read, they will become economically viable. This way of thinking goes on to insist that, if illiterates learn how to decode the written symbols that currently rule their lives through legal and bureaucratic documents, poverty will disappear. However, as Rivera (1987) noted,

Unfortunately, simply learning to read will not change the social and economic hardships they confront, since these hardships relate not so much to individual motivation but to the economic, social, and political structures of society.

Neo-literates have often questioned whether their endeavor was worth the investment of time and effort, as Hanf and Vierdag (1982) argued, "Where there is no economic improvement, adult education based on purely social or educational activities will merely arouse false hopes, which ultimately lead to frustration."

While the ability to read does confer and maintain a certain status, even in rural communities, it does not provide rice for hungry stomachs or better living conditions. Therefore, it is easy to understand why participation in adult education programs is not seen as a priority by many illiterates.

Gender and Illiteracy

In every region of the world, without exception, more women than men are illiterate. The illiteracy rate for women, globally is 34.9% compared to 20.5% for men (UNESCO, 1989). Traditionally, men have had more access to education. Many societies have placed women in subservient, nurturing roles that some men feel do not require literacy. Methods for cooking, caring for the house and family, and gathering food have been passed on from one female generation to the next. The skills of reading and writing are not commonly believed to be primary tools to increase women's expertise in performing these functions. However, women across the world have begun to question these roles, and subsequently, to desire to become literate in preparation for different or additional roles.

The religious and social practices that teach and reinforce the subjugation of women impact directly on some women's participation in literacy programs. The qualities of women portrayed in literacy texts still prescribe women's roles as ones "of sacrifice, self-abnegation, living for others, docility, love and softness" (Bhasin, 1985). Rockhill (1987), in a study of participation by Hispanic women in English language programs in Los Angeles, concluded that literacy:

...poses the potential of change and is experienced as both a threat and a desire...The images of desire associated with literacy are associated

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with images of the middle class, femininity, and anglo ethnocentrism. These images pose a threat to traditional Hispanic family relations, especially when they challenge the male's experience of his masculinity. In these situations, the woman's participation in schooling can exacerbate violence. As such, it also poses a threat to women...

To act seriously upon the principle of literacy or learning as a right—or even a possibility—for women, we must reconceptualize how we think about 'the political' to include 'the personal.' Our educational work suffers from a splitting between the public and private which reinforces the domination of women through gendered practices... We are wary of acknowledging the centrality of family, religious, and other cultural forms, as well as sexual practices, to women's oppression.

Awareness of women's legal rights, divorce and equal wage laws, services for abused women and children, and equal access to opportunities are necessary components of literacy programs for many women.

Stromquist (1987) suggested that literacy education for women must include three areas of emphasis: reproduction, production, and emancipation. Literacy should assist women in gaining skills that make the execution of reproductive roles (bearing and rais-

ing children, and managing the home) more efficient. Literacy programs should include nutrition, home economics, and medical wellness information. Since the continuation of the subordination of women can be partially related to their lack of economic independence, literacy programs should provide women with marketable skills. Included should be leadership and decision making skills. These two types of literacy, reproductive and productive, are not sufficient, however. Literacy programs must also give women the skills to recognize and change the current social order through emancipation activities. Stromquist (1987) noted,

The combination of these three types of skills, for reproduction, for production, and for emancipation, is by no means an easy task. But, obviously, any one-sided approach would not be addressing the nature of women's condition.

Education for women should lead to a realization that male domination and exploitation by the rich are political issues that women can only fight politically. Awareness of women's legal rights, divorce and equal wage laws, services for abused women and children, and equal access to opportunities are necessary components of literacy programs for many women.

Literacy Policies: Technical or Structural Solutions?

Policy is dependent on the policy-makers' view of the issues surrounding adult literacy. If illiteracy is assumed to be a technical problem, then policy will reflect technical solutions. If, on the other hand, illiteracy is assumed to reflect the existing power relationships in the world, then policy will reflect structural solutions (see Note 1).

Throughout the world prior to the 1970s, literacy was often viewed as a technical problem, the solution to which was also technical—the creation of better techniques for teaching, recruiting or programming (Miller, 1985). This conceptualization of literacy sustained the assumptions that 1) illiterate individuals were deficient relative to a standard established by 'advanced' societies; 2) the acquisition of literacy skills could cor-

rect this deficiency; and 3) as an end product, literacy increased social and economic standing of individuals. These assumptions tended to maintain the established power relationships by placing the responsibility for illiteracy on the illiterate. Programs based on this reductionistic approach to literacy avoided the complex qualities of human experiences and thus were often not successful (Kassam, 1977). It is from this technical conception that the military and medical metaphors for literacy arose (see Note 2).

Literacy educators can no longer afford to provide individualistic answers to collective societal problems.

Techniques to improve literacy programs have received attention by many adult educators. These approaches included better teacher preparation, improved textual materials, computer assisted instruction, and more appropriate recruitment and retention methods. However, although these actions have, in many cases, positively affected literacy programs, they also maintained the structural power relationships that separate the 'haves' from the 'have nots.' Proponents of a technical viewpoint insist that "the sharing of information capital and of related power is impossible without literacy" (Bhola, 1989). Thus, many organizations that see literacy as a means to increase productivity, offer literacy programs (see Note 3).

Literacy is no longer defined as merely the ability to read and write (see Note 4). Literacy is a contextual concept, whether defined as functional, cultural, or political (McLaren, 1988). Literacy is not an end in itself; rather, it is a means to various other ends, each of which is determined from a political

viewpoint. As the International Council for Adult Education noted in 1979, "The end point of education is not a set of facts and specific skills but a consciousness, an awareness of the world and a sense of confidence that has been denied the illiterate." The technical skills of reading and writing can bring consciousness, but they are not prerequisites for developing an awareness of the forces that operate to maintain the status quo.

Literacy educators can no longer afford to provide individualistic answers to collective societal problems. The important questions relative to many literacy efforts were asked by St. John Hunter (1987), who cited Thompson's (1983) sociological concern:

Are our programs, whether sponsored by public or private agencies, intended to teach reading so that the poor may more readily cope within existing structures?...Or do we intend that they will become full participants in and contributors to the processes of a democratic society? If the latter, then our programs will need to change considerably. The focus on remedial approaches and functional competence may 'distract attention from the root causes of structural inequality and powerlessness within our society.'

If adult educators act to bring about changes in the current unequal distribution of resources and power relationships, literacy could become a tool for liberation. As noted by Ahmed (1982), "Adult educators must view their roles as agents for social change and economic development." Literacy is not a prerequisite for understanding the issues of inequality, oppression of women, poverty, and exploitation.

Because the notion of literacy is culturally determined, "...many literacy programs are devised according to the notions of what illiterate adults should want rather than what they actually want" (UNESCO, 1972). Literacy is often a luxury that only educated individuals believe is essential for survival. Thomas (1970) noted that the demand for literacy programs may be primarily expressed by those who are literate:

What is very difficult to decide is whether the urge to be literate in the narrow sense of the word is really a mass stimulus to learning or a persistent demand placed on adult populations by a relatively small number of successful people who equate individual and national success with the ability to read and write.

Considerations for Policy Formulation

If literacy is not the major issue that needs to be addressed in order to improve the living circumstances of illiterate adults, then those adult educators who construct literacy policies in every country may need to address the following considerations. Some of these considerations may appear to be self-evident, but reiteration of their importance may keep them in the forefront of one's thinking. These considerations are not based on systematic research; rather, they are based on the recognition that existing literacy approaches are miserably failing to have significant impact. They also reflect many of the positions expressed in a considerable amount of the international literature on literacy. Thus, the following considerations are offered as a mechanism to stimulate debate and, hopefully, more appropriate literacy policies in the future.

Respect for illiterate adults and the cultures in which they live is imperative. If illiterates live in interdependent community networks, as suggested by Fingeret (1983), then literacy strategies that focus on individual achievement should be de-emphasized. Colin's theory of selfethnic reflectors (see Note 5) also emphasizes the need for respect for cultural contributions of minority groups in the United States, and may have even more significance for the majority of illiterates across the globe. It must be recognized that people of color constitute the majority of the world's population.

Popular participation in the change process is a prerequisite to meaningful literacy programs. As Heaney notes in his article elsewhere in this issue (see Note 6), true participation in a community-sense is often constrained by existing structures. Literacy policies

will have a chance to succeed only if they encourage participation and self-management of local communities. Adult educators should facilitate the opening of spaces for popular participation and protect such spaces from governmental interference (see Note 7). Perhaps the role of adult educators is not one of teaching illiterates, but rather, one of changing the power-holding literates' conception of appropriate collective responses to society's problems. In the United States, less focus on literacy and GED preparation and more emphasis on structural changes to permit all adults to participate in an equitable society may ultimately result in higher literacy levels as well as better living conditions.

This means that the 'bootstrap' myth of how to achieve success needs to be replaced by an explanation of the reasons why many illiterates do not have boots.

Adult educators must address the pervasive domination of maleness in this society in order for the contributions of women to be recognized, fostered, and appropriately rewarded. The primary arenas for this discussion are the workplace and the family. In both contexts, women are at a significant disadvantage in terms of the application of their literacy learning since women apply their learning in contexts generally controlled by men. Female adult educators have particular responsibility for developing learning networks and action groups for women. As women increase their knowledge and independence, some males may fear a loss of control that may accompany the emancipation of women. Educational programs for men may therefore also be needed.

Non-governmental organizations are usually more flexible, innovative, and responsive to the needs of communities than are government and traditional schools. Adult educators should foster and support these organizations as primary tools for literacy. Adult educators could help to legitimize these organizations by assisting governmental structures to understand the primacy of the community.

For individuals currently in literacy programs, the materials used to present information must contain the images and symbols that reflect political realities. This means that the 'bootstrap' myth of how to achieve success needs to be replaced by an explanation of the reasons why many illiterates do not have boots. Possible follow-up actions for adult educators in this case could include facilitating collective action or questioning the unequal distribution of goods and services.

Literacy instruction does not have to be viewed as an immediate need that must be constantly attended. Experiences of adult educators in China, Mali, and other countries indicate that the 'spare-time' schools (see Note 8) and cyclical instruction have more impact since learners are not pressured to attend to other life situations at the same time.

Coordination of literacy efforts could be enhanced by the cooperation of

associations for adult education, much as the African non-governmental organizations that have banded together (see Note 9). But other organizations, such as trade unions, businesses, community-based organizations, and religious institutions should also be involved in the coordination of locally responsive literacy programs that are part of other ongoing community development projects.

Literacy campaigns in the past have been more successful if a national commitment has been made. Literacy policies that relate to other economic, social, political, and cultural goals of a country should be supported by allocations of adequate money and personnel. However, adult educators can help governmental policy makers to direct their commitment to appropriate efforts. An example is the current United States legislation that allocated money to federally sponsored adult basic education programs to provide literacy classes for the homeless. Adult educators should have, in this case, raised the question of why people are homeless. A structural response to correct the conditions that cause homelessness would be more appropriate than the provision of money to educate those who find themselves in that position.

Adult educators should insist that sharing of information capital and of related power is possible without a fully

literate society. Emphasizing the interdependent relationship between the producers and the consumers would be a beginning step in realizing that illiterates have valuable skills and information.

Instead of looking for national economic impacts of literacy, perhaps adult educators should look, instead, to fostering societal conditions that value individuals. Botkin, Elmandjra, and Malitza (1979) questioned the appropriateness of looking for economic returns:

It is neither proper nor necessary to assess such literacy programs in terms of immediate economic returns; while literacy may bring economic advantages in the long run, the most immediate concern is to start a process that leads to increasing human dignity and to breaking the vicious circle of poverty and marginalization.

If these considerations are taken seriously, then part of the work of adult educators may, indeed, be that of community organizers, activists, change agents, lobbyists, and development workers (Duke, 1982). Effective adult education assists with the transformation of both literate and illiterate societies.

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- Note 1.** See Quigley article "Literacy as Social Policy: Issues for America in the 21st Century" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 2.** See Ilsley article "The Language of Literacy" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 3.** See Niemi article "Literacy in the Workplace: Adults as Learners" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 4.** See Cunningham article "Literacy Definitions: Who Wins and Who Loses?" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 5.** See Colin article "Cultural Literacy: Ethnocentrism versus Selfethnic Reflectors" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 6.** See Heany article "Freirian Literacy in North America: The Community-based Education Movement" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 7.** See Jeria article "Literacy in Latin America: The Development of Popular Education" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 8.** See Li Xiaopei article "Literacy in China: The Mass Campaign" in this issue of *Thresholds*.
- Note 9.** See Omolewa article "Working Together for Literacy in Africa" in this issue of *Thresholds*.



Book Review

Kozol, J. (1985). *Illiterate America*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Reviewed by Vanessa Sheared

Illiteracy in America is a growing crisis, according to Jonathan Kozol's assessment in *Illiterate America* (1985). Despite all of the technological advances in the United States, this country has not adequately addressed this problem. Kozol outlines the conditions, solutions, costs, and effects of illiteracy if Americans persist in ignoring this problem. In his 229-page discourse, he attempts to find answers to the problem. In the first section (*Invisible Minority: The Growing Crisis of Illiterate America*), he posits that America has not been able to accurately identify the number of illiterates (he estimates that there are at least 60 million non-readers), or to examine the conditions that underlie illiteracy. He enjoins studies such as the University of Texas' Adult Performance Level (APL) to estimate the number of 'functional illiterates,' and discusses the generational cycle of illiteracy. In the second section (*A Plan to Mobilize Illiterate America*), Kozol puts forth his solutions. Illiterates should be helped to rename their world and to gain control of it through 'wise anger' that serves the needs of one group without injuring others (p. 178). The youth and the elderly in society should volunteer to teach the illiterate adults using the mechanism of oral histories of these illiterates. He encourages us to go beyond the rhetoric espoused by individuals currently involved in the literacy movement. Through footwalkers (former illiterates who can now be seen as community

leaders) and community-based literacy programs, funded by 10 billion federal dollars, America could institute a fundamentally humane literacy movement. By this effort, he surmises that at least 30 million illiterates could be reached by the year 2000 (p. 197). Humanities and liberal studies would be included in literacy programs. Finally, in the last section (*Beyond Utility*), Kozol indicates his belief that technology cannot be relied on to teach literacy, since a humane program requires human intervention. Computers can assist, but not replace teachers, who are needed to help illiterates understand their past in order to reflect critically on their world and the word. His thesis is replete with examples and case studies concerning the welfare of the illiterate in America. These examples pull and tug at one's soul, reaching right to one's humanity.

It is words like Kozol's that are frightening. He assumes that illiterates cannot discern the truth without being able to read. Many people who read this book will think that he is the only one who speaks for the poor illiterate folk in our society, those who cannot think about, or critically assess what their world could be like, because they cannot read the printed word. Although volunteers are usually sincere in their intentions, the harm this book does is to suggest that illiterates need saviors to show them the true, the good, and the beautiful. Volunteers have no inkling of how to help an individual rename his or her world, because they persist in naming the world as Kozol has proposed. Nevertheless, Kozol has shown volunteers how to become humane and involved in teaching illiterates how to read.

What does 'fundamental humane literacy' (p. 186) mean to a person who cannot read? This reviewer suggests that it means very little. If learning to read is going to provide illiterates with the vestiges of the true, the good, and the beautiful, what is called 'literacy' does not matter nearly as much as how it is delivered. Maybe non-reading (a term that does not connote ignorance) adults understand that simply learning how to read will not substantially improve the conditions in which they live. Maybe a new message is needed. This message would say to non-reading adults,

Yes, you're right. Reading is an invention of the few to maintain control over the many. Yes, we have told you that unless you can read, your life has no real meaning. While literacy is desirable, lack of it does not mean that you have little or no substance in the words you speak. Yes, we know you have a significant history and that you deserve respect and dignity.

This reviewer believes that in addition to literacy, society must provide decent and affordable housing, raise the minimum wage significantly, and remove stifling conditions. Also contained in this new message must be the affirmation that Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, and other famous people of color and prestige be included in literacy curricula, in addition to the writings of Dickens and Thoreau, whom Kozol suggests. This new message must admit that volunteers are not adequately equipped to deal with non-reading adults' learning disabilities, or their lack of self worth arising from the conditions they now endure. Literacy programs must provide trained personnel who are sensitive to the issues that abound in the world of the non-reader, as well as be

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able to identify and remediate specific reading skill impairments.

Kozol is correct in stating that Americans give lip service to illiteracy, but have not adequately funded basic education programs, and have not truly addressed the concerns of individuals who lack access to the written word. However, the assumption he makes that non-readers are also non-thinkers is incorrect. According to him, if adults could read, then they could benefit from the ideals for which America stands. By learning to read, these adults would be able to take control and make positive changes in their economic status. This reviewer believes that Mr. Kozol entirely missed the fact that learning to read does not change economic status or social and political conditions. In fact, this book provides fuel for policy-makers to continue to search for a simplistic answer to the complex economic, politi-

cal, and social issues that sustain illiteracy.

The words of Kozol are not new. He fails to credit Freire (whose works he has obviously read); yet, there are striking resemblances between Freire's and Kozol's language. Ten years prior to the publication of this book, Freire called for the elderly and the young to go to the fields to teach literacy to adults. Freire talked of 'conscientization;' Kozol talks about 'critical consciousness for moral action' (p. 160). Freire discusses 'generative themes,' and Kozol discusses 'dangerous words' (p. 133). Examples abound, but the point is that the ideas Kozol propounds are not new, nor are they revelations to thousands of community-based literacy workers in America. The latter believe that those who lack access to the written word must reach it in order to question

the conditions of their lives and 'name their own world.'

Kozol suggests that adult educators "face the facts if they intend to change them" (p. 58). Perhaps he needs to face the fact that the problem of illiteracy in this nation is not just an issue of the acquisition of reading skills to gain access to a better standard of living, but rather an issue of power and control. As long as educators insist on labeling those who cannot read as non-thinking, wasted souls, non-reading adults will remain forever powerless. If educators can change their way of thinking about the contributions that non-readers can and have made to our society (despite their inability to read), then perhaps non-reading adults and educators will begin to see how much power non-reading adults really have.



Book Review

Fingeret, A., & Jurmo, P. (Eds.) (1989). *Participatory Literacy Education. New Directions for Continuing Education, No. 42.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Reviewed by Dawn Scheffner

In this era of technological advances touching many aspects of life in the United States, the need for literacy education burgeons. Society leaves little room for the illiterate. Yet, many literacy education programs perpetuate learning unacceptable to and ineffective for nonreading adults. How does one engage these adult learners? To Fingeret and Jurmo, the answer lies in participatory literacy education, where the power of learning is shared among learners and educational staff. In contrast to traditional forms of education, here "learners—their characteristics, aspirations, backgrounds, and needs—are at the center of literacy instruction" (p. 5). The editors contribute a collection of nine related writings on the topic, providing a valuable reference for practitioners, program planners and policy-makers alike.

A wealth of ideas are compressed in the 96 pages of *Participatory Literacy Education*. Writings are grouped into three sections: introduction, historical context, and conceptual framework; the practice of literacy education; and an overview of resources and recommendations. In the first chapter, co-editor Arlene Fingeret traced historical roots of literacy education, focusing on the emergence of participatory practice. She also addresses the social context of literacy, challenging the fallacious claim that literacy implies a higher order of intellectual functioning. Her concise presentation

provides a solid introduction to the present-day position of participatory literacy education.

Paul Jurmo, co-editor, makes a Case for Participatory Education in Chapter 2, examining the nature of active learner participation. Particularly noteworthy is his theoretical framework including four levels of participation in adult literacy programs, ranging from the least activity to the highest degree of learner involvement.

The second portion of the book, detailing actual cases, is introduced with Chapter 3, by Jurmo, addressing the specific activities that invite learner participation. In Chapter 4, Raul Lorenzo Añorve contributes the first of four illustrative case studies, which, collectively, bring participatory literacy education to life. Añorve describes English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy training in the workplace, highlighting programs designed to fit workers' needs and schedules, while cautioning that workplace literacy programs, if used improperly, may be used by managers to "admit few and eliminate many" (p. 40).

Marilyn Boutwell in Chapter 5 records the process of change from traditional to participatory education. This realistic and forthright contribution shares the growing pains of increased learner involvement in Literacy Volunteers of New York City. Boutwell chronicles a very real struggle, replete with examples of conflict and failure. The thorny issue of assessment is tackled by Lytle, Blezer, Schultz, and Vannozi in Chapter 6. They wrestle with developing an assessment process that can include staff and learners.

Problems with standardized assessment are addressed, and it is suggested that increased learner involvement in assessment logically leads to revisions in programming. Soifer, Young and Irwin in Chapter 7 discuss the Academy, a program begun 10 years ago by Eastern Michigan University. Another example of literacy education in the workplace, it unites management, labor unions, and educators. This more traditional program illuminates the collaborative efforts necessary to unite education and industry in a university-based program.

Paul Jurmo returns in Chapter 8 to point out that community-based programs and volunteer literacy programs continue to be at the forefront of participatory educational programs, leaving behind those bound to government funding. This final section also includes Chapter 9, where Jurmo concludes with six hopeful recommendations for elevating participatory education to a forceful position within the adult literacy field.

There are distinct strengths in this compact book. Its organization is logical and progressive. A unifying thread of the learner's potential weaves its way throughout the writings, joining theory with practice. Fingeret's introductory chapter, Jurmo's case for participatory education and concluding recommendations, and Boutwell's honest report of difficulties in transition to participatory education are particularly outstanding.

Participatory Literacy Education is by no means an exhaustive study. Weaknesses are those of omission due to limited space. As the editors state in the introductory notes, other outstanding programs exist which have not been

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included. The book's enticing overview of the subject, however, whets the ap-

petite of the reader to further explore this interesting and timely topic.



International Adult Education Study Seminars

During the International Literacy Year, Northern Illinois University is offering two study seminars, one in China and the other in Finland and the USSR, that will provide opportunities for concentrated study of the theory and practice of adult education in those countries. Up to six hours of graduate credit can be earned. Spouses of students or other interested individuals are welcome.

China Study Seminar: May 16–June 10, 1990

The Shanghai Second Institute of Education will provide seminars and field trips relating to various facets of adult education and culture in China. During the 14-day stay at the Institute, there will be a three-day field trip to Hangzhou, where adult education programs in factories and communes will be visited. A trip to Xian will include presentations by representatives of the Xian Foreign Languages University relating to the teaching of English to adults and the role of the university in adult education. Visits to cultural and historical sites will feature the Terra Cotta Warriors and the Banpo Museum. The trip will conclude with a two-day stay in Beijing, where the group will visit the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs and learn about adult education programs/services in Hebei Province.

Seminar Leader: Donna Amstutz, Assistant Professor of Adult Education

Finland and the USSR Study Seminar: August 4–August 26, 1990

FINLAND: The Vittikivi International Center will provide participants with experience in residential living in a Nordic adult folk school. An international congress has been planned at Lahti in conjunction with the 350th anniversary of the University of Helsinki. Tours of Helsinki and Tampere will be arranged. **USSR:** Participants will visit Moscow and Leningrad. In Moscow, faculty of the University of Moscow and representatives of the Znanie Society (the Soviet adult education association) will meet with the group. Ample time will be allotted for visits to the Kremlin and tours of the city. In Leningrad, staff from the famous Institute for Adult Education Research, the University of Leningrad, and adult educators who are employed in factories and collective farms will share their experiences and expertise with the group.

Seminar Leader: John Niemi, Chair and Professor of Adult Education.

For More Information on either the China or the Finland/USSR study seminar, write to:

Seminar Leader—China Tour, or Seminar Leader—Finland/USSR Tour
Graduate Studies in Adult Education—LEPS Department

101 Gabel Hall
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Or call: 815/753-1448

Complete information on each seminar will be mailed to you. Participation is limited. Early commitment is necessary to allow time for obtaining visas.

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The United Nations has declared 1990 as the International Literacy Year. In cooperation with UNESCO, an International Task Force on Literacy was established to encourage and coordinate global literacy efforts and to mobilize voluntary sector action in support of International Literacy Year. The five major objectives for the year include:

1. *Increasing action by governments*
2. *Increasing public awareness*
3. *Increasing public participation*
4. *Increasing cooperation and solidarity among governments*
5. *Increasing cooperation within the UN system and among non-governmental organizations.*

The International Literacy Year is an outgrowth of the Right to Learn declaration of the Fourth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education that was held in Paris, March 19–29, 1985. That declaration says, in part:

Recognition of the right to learn is now more than ever a major challenge for humanity.

The right to learn is:

- the right to read and write
- the right to question and analyze
- the right to imagine and create
- the right to read one's own world and to write history
- the right to have access to educational resources
- the right to develop individual and collective skills

The right to learn is an indispensable tool for the survival of humanity...The act of learning, lying as it does at the heart of all educational activity, changes human beings from objects at the mercy of events to subjects who create their own history. It is a fundamental right whose legitimacy is universal; the right to learn cannot be confined to one section of humanity; it must not be the exclusive privilege of men, or of the industrialized countries, or the wealthy classes, or those young people fortunate enough to receive schooling...The...Conference...calls on all countries, despite or indeed because of the scale of contemporary problems, to make a determined and imaginative effort to bring about the intensive and specific development of adult education activities, so that women and men, both individually and collectively, can equip themselves with the educational, cultural, scientific and technological resources necessary for a type of development whose aims, requirements and practical procedures they themselves have chosen.

For more information on the 1990 International Literacy Year, or for ways you can become involved, contact:

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