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# Reasons Students Enrolled in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation Classes

M. Elaine Chase  
*Old Dominion University*

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REASONS STUDENTS ENROLLED  
IN ADULT EDUCATION ABE AND GED PREPARATION CLASSES

A STUDY  
PRESENTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

M. ELAINE CHASE  
APRIL, 1987

This research paper was prepared by Elaine M. Chase under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in VTE 636, Problems in Education. The report was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

APPROVED BY:

John M. Ritz

Dr. John M. Ritz  
Advisor  
Vocational and Technical  
Education

4-7-87

Date

Malvern L. Miller

Dr. Malvern Miller  
Graduate Program Director  
Vocational and Technical  
Education

4/7/87

Date

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Current statistics indicated that 23 million adult Americans had zero to fourth grade level reading, writing, and math skills and that many more persons were semi-literate with fifth through eighth grade level skills. Many of these adults found themselves on a downward spiral since undereducation frequently led to unemployment, poor health, inadequate housing, and in extreme cases crime and drug abuse (ABE Newsletter, 1986, p. 3).

To a lesser degree, another group of Americans--those possessing skills above the eighth grade level but without the legitimacy of a high school diploma--found themselves unable to function to full capacity since the high school diploma had become a sine qua non for most jobs and for all higher education (Croft Leadership Action Folio 106, 1977, p. 3).

In line with the Commonwealth of Virginia's objective "to eventually eliminate illiteracy" (ABE Administrative Guide, 1978-1979, p. 1), the city of Chesapeake addressed its problem of literacy, semi-literacy, and lack of high school diplomas by offering Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes and General Educational



Development (GED) Preparation classes through its Adult Continuing Education program. The city boasted only 5.5 percent unemployment in 1986, but current census figures from the National Census Bureau showed 25,000 Chesapeake adults ages 25 and above who had not completed high school. Varied reasons prompted 137 of these residents to register for ABE and GED Preparation classes, but the common impetus for these students was probably the hope that they might eventually obtain their GED certification (Farr, 1986, p. 17).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine why students enrolled in the ABE and GED Preparation classes in the Chesapeake Public Schools Adult Continuing Education program.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to determine:

1. Why students enrolled in ABE classes.
2. Why students enrolled in GED Preparation classes.
3. Effective strategies to encourage higher enrollments in ABE and GED Preparation classes.

#### BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Adult Basic Education strived to meet the needs of adults with less than a ninth grade education, many of which adults found it

difficult to find or hold a job. Because the Department of Education, the Federal Government, and the local school board provided the funds, ABE was offered free of charge. For those with very limited education, these classes were the first step toward obtaining the GED Certificate (Adult Basic Education, Virginia Department of Education, Adult Education Service).

The Tests of General Educational Development began in 1942 as a program for United States military personnel who had not completed their high school studies. Passing these GED Tests proved these persons had the same learning outcomes as high school graduates and allowed them to qualify for jobs and continue postsecondary education once they left military service. The American Council on Education realized the need for such a program for civilians and directed the GED program over the past four decades. The GED Tests were used in all 50 states, most Canadian provinces, and the U.S. territories. Not only have these tests offered millions of people professional and academic opportunities, but they have also provided personal satisfaction to a group of people who for one reason or another were unable to complete their formal high school studies (The Tests for General Educational Development, American Council on Education).

The prospect of determining why a person decided to take the step to raise his or her level of education and how to compel others to do so--not to mention attendant implications for contributions to

society as a whole--gave credibility to this investigation. On a state level, Mrs. Jeannie Baililes, wife of Virginia's governor, had made a commitment to campaign for improving literacy skills of adults in Virginia, as had Mrs. George Bush, wife of the vice-president, on a national level. In addition, the American Broadcasting Company and the Public Broadcasting Station had embarked on a national media/outreach project called PLUS on the subject of undereducation in the United States. The two networks provided on-the-air national coverage on the subject of illiteracy while providing thematic treatment of the same in dramatic programming (ABE Newsletter, 1986, p. 4).

#### LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to a survey of students in ABE (including English as a Second Language) classes and GED Preparation classes in Chesapeake Public Schools Adult Continuing Education program, Fall 1986.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

It was assumed in this study that:

1. Students in ABE and GED Preparation classes had a common goal of obtaining their GED Certificate.
2. Responses from the Chesapeake group would be indicative of other adult populations enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes.

3. By understanding why adults enrolled in such programs, the message could be better advertised to attract more students into the programs.

#### PROCEDURES

Subjects of this study were selected from ABE (including ESL) and GED Preparation classes in the city of Chesapeake's adult education program. To satisfy the objectives of this study, students were surveyed in December 1986. The survey form was a closed form questionnaire administered by the researcher during ABE and GED Preparation classes.

#### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were important to understanding terms used in this research study:

1. ABE (Adult Basic Education) - The teaching of basic academic skills, primarily reading and computational skills, to people who may have finished only a few years of formal schooling. It may include those who are virtually illiterate as well as those who have finished seventh to eighth grades. The category takes in the study of English as a second language (ESL) for those who have no, or a very limited, working knowledge of English (Croft Leadership Action Folio 106, 1977, p. 2).

2. GED (General Educational Development) Certificate - The equivalent of a high school diploma earned by passing the GED Test.
3. GED Preparation Program - Classes to prepare students to take the GED Test.
4. GED Pretest - A test which provides a sampling of questions from the GED Test. It is often used to determine if a person should enroll in the GED Preparation classes prior to taking the GED Test.
5. GED Test - A battery of five tests, each measuring the major skills considered to be the outcome of a high school education, including Writing Skills, Social Studies, Science, Reading Skills, and Mathematics.
6. GED Testing Program - Directed by the American Council on Education, this program gives people who have not completed their high school studies an opportunity to demonstrate that they have acquired the learning outcomes expected of a high school graduate.
7. Illiteracy - Lacking the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable a person to engage effectively in all activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his or her culture or group (Cervero, 1985, p. 51).
8. Semi-Literate - Having skills at the fifth to eighth grade levels (ABE Newsletter, 1986, p. 3).
9. TABE - Tests of Adult Basic Education.

## OVERVIEW

Chapter I presented the problem of this study, provided background regarding the problem, and related why the problem was being studied. This chapter also gave the limitations and assumptions of the study. A list of definitions was included to aid in understanding terms used by the researcher. Chapter II reviewed the literature previously researched on this subject, and Chapter III described the methods and procedures for collecting data, including the subjects surveyed, design of the questionnaire, and when and where the instrument was administered. Chapter IV presented the data collected, and Chapter V was devoted to summary, conclusions and recommendations arrived at as a result of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to review the literature that was related to the objectives of this study. Contained within this chapter were sections on Federal participation in adult education, economic implications of adult education ABE and GED Preparation classes, and motivations of students who enrolled in these adult education programs and how those motivations related to recruitment and retention of students.

#### FEDERAL PARTICIPATION

Adult education programs have been funded by the Federal Government for 20 years, but Federal contributions to this population actually go back as far as 1777, when math skills were taught to soldiers in the Continental Army (Taylor, 1983, p. 10).

Many factors have led to the government's participation in adult education programs, not the least of which was Federal concern for the education of the nation's children. Better informed adults meant more positive learning experiences for children (Taylor, 1983, p. 10).

The Federal government's interest in social issues of the seventies was reflected in the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act. In 1978 funding guidelines for that Act, the target population was expanded from including those with less than a high school diploma to include those lacking skills to function productively in American society (Cervero, 1985, p. 51).

The government's role in the emphasis nationwide to eliminate illiteracy and semi-literacy in the 1980's was evident in the 1984 Amendments to the Adult Education Act's Statement of Purpose, to which the word "literacy" was added:

To encourage and expand basic literacy educational programs for adults to enable them to overcome English language limitations, to improve their basic literacy education in preparation for occupational training and education and more profitable employment and to become more productive and responsible citizens (Adult Education Act Amendments of 1984, p. 2366).

Many other factors have prompted Federal involvement in adult education, and with appropriations of \$60,000,000 in 1968 rising to \$140,000,000 in 1985, the economic implications of educating the adult population necessarily played an important role in Federal participation (Adult Education Act of 1966, p. 1222, and Adult Education Act Amendments of 1984, p. 2369).



## ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

It had been stated that the Federal Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 91-230) was one of our nation's best investments (Ridlehuber, 1983, p. 7), and favorable statistics supported the observation:

1. Results of grant allotments (\$1,059,255,719 between 1965 and 1982) included employment for 88,634 adults just in 1980.
2. 54,782 adults upgraded to a better job (1980).
3. 256,612 adults passed the GED Test or completed an adult secondary program (1980).

The financial contributions of these adults in the form of taxes paid, removal from welfare roles, and money from earnings introduced into the economy were substantial (Ridlehuber, 1983, p. 7).

It was certain that the need for Federal involvement would continue to grow with increased need for education, but it was also certain that the return would justify the expenditures. In 1984 Secretary of Education Terrell Bell reported that 23 percent of those entering ninth grade did not graduate with their class. There were 45 million Americans eighteen years or older without high school credentials, and 14 percent of the 3.5 million high school credentials issued in 1981 were through the GED Test, justification in itself for increased expenditures for adult education (Bedenbaugh & Rachal, 1985, pp. 4-5). Benefits such as job advancement, increased income, improved self image, and further education prompted 4 million adults

to earn high school credentials in the period 1971-1981, all through the GED program. For a single year in one state, the total Federal, state, and local expenditures for GED education were over \$6,000,000 (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1986, p. 25). The outlay on such programs, however, did not compare to the high cost of an illiterate nation. According to the International Reading Association (1979), the economic benefits of literacy outweighed the cost by a ratio of 6 to 1. Welborn reported in 1982 that 75 percent of the illiterates earned less than \$5,000 annually and that \$6,000,000,000 in welfare programs and unemployment compensation each year were related to illiterates. In 1981 males with a high school education had a 19.5 percent unemployment rate while male dropouts had a 29.2 percent unemployment rate. Carr (1981) reported that the adult literacy education program netted taxpayers a savings of over \$10,000,000 in 1980 and 1981 (Bedenbaugh and Rachal, 1985, p. 26).

The signs were positive that the nation would continue to recognize the profitability of these adult education programs. Support by the Secretary of Education and Mrs. Barbara Bush, wife of the Vice-President, contributed to national awareness, as did the three-year campaign of the Coalition for Literacy (Bedenbaugh & Rachal, 1985, p. 26). Another positive note was the growth of in-house programs in adult education in the private sector as employers began to view educational handicaps as occupational handicaps (Bedenbaugh & Rachal, 1985, p. 5). Of utmost importance was the

communication of the benefits of adult basic education programs to potential students, the general public, and legislators, for even more significant than the economic benefits of adult education was the potential development of America's human resources (Ridlehuber, 1983, p. 7).

#### MOTIVATIONS

Predictions were that by the year 2000, 76 percent of the nation's population would be adults (Cetrone and Sariano, 1985, p. 39). Adult education then would have become increasingly more significant. The factors that motivated these learners would have been multifaceted, including attitudinal dimensions of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors, and inherent in these factors would have been means of recruitment and retention of students.

Boshier identified four motivations of adult education students in his Education Participation Scale:

1. Social Contact/Community Service/External Expectations.

This motivation included such items as improving social relationships, making new friends, improving social position, preparing for community service, and participating in group activity. It was a motivating factor particularly for students in the 16-20 year old age group.

2. Professional Advancement. This motivation included increasing job confidence, securing professional advancement, earning a degree, meeting formal requirements, gaining insight into personal problems,

and carrying out recommendations of some authority. It was a motivating factor of the 16-35 year old age group.

3. Escape-Social Stimulation. This motivation included getting relief from boredom, overcoming frustrations of day-to-day living, escaping an unhappy relationship, escaping television, and sharing a common interest with a spouse or friend. This was a motivating factor of many groups, including non-whites.

4. Cognitive Interest. This motivation included learning just for the joy of learning, learning just for the sake of learning, seeking knowledge for its own sake, satisfying an inquiring mind, and providing a contrast to the rest of one's life. This was a motivating factor of the over-36 years old age group (Long, 1983, p. 13).

The expectation of acquiring flexibility in one's occupation was probably the most often cited reason for enrollment in adult education programs (Bedenbaugh & Rachal, 1985, p. 26).

Motivation of beginning readers studied by Heathington, Gambrell, and Boser (1986, p. 39) were probably representative of the majority of that student population. They identified five areas that prompted adults to enter the program:

1. Consumer situations: reading for menus, shopping, and filling out credit applications.

2. Working/job-related situations: reading job applications, reading materials for jobs. They felt people who read well found better jobs.

3. Home/family situations: helping with homework and reading to children.

4. Social situations: reading in front of others and sharing information with others.

5. Leisure/recreational situations: they felt reading was a recreational pursuit and wanted to read newspapers, novels, and materials related to other hobbies.

In another study in which adults were asked why they enrolled in adult education programs, adults named reasons that the authors classified as:

1. Literacy as adaptation (to learn to write checks)
2. Literacy as power (to find a job)
3. Literacy as a state of grace (to be as good as other people)

These adults linked literacy with self-worth and independence and viewed attaining literacy as a way to gain self-fulfillment.

Apparently many of these adults translated this idea of self-fulfillment into obtaining a GED because, as was stated in the Introduction to this study, one of the main reasons students enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes was to earn their GED. This was verified by Reed in her study of GED examinees, who stated that passing the GED did indeed help them find jobs, obtain salary increases, or develop a sense of self-worth (Reed and Others, 1984, p. 120). In addition, Petry and Jones (1984, p. 120) in their survey of ABE students found that program was contributing to the quality of life of those

individuals participating in it--improving self-expression, self-concept, family life, leisure, relationships with others, and life in general as a member of society.

Adult educators felt that many more adults with low educational and economic attainment could benefit from these rewards offered in ABE and GED Preparation courses, but attracting these adults and then retaining them was not always easy. When dealing with the severely impoverished, in particular, general efforts to attract them were ineffective (Long, 1983, p. 12). This was largely due to feelings of helplessness toward improving their condition on the part of the students.

The key to recruiting and retaining students in these programs appeared to be to use information regarding what motivated students to enroll in adult education programs combined with information regarding fears and stresses that deterred them from enrolling. Appealing to the strong motivators and alleviating stresses and fears were necessary in a recruitment program (Ochoa, 1984, p. 2). For instance, of the four motivators on Boshier's Education Participation Scale, the motivator dealing with social aspects (making friends, learning about the community, receiving academic readiness for a job) seemed to be most important. Thus, any advertising should have emphasized this aspect of adult education (Long, 1983, p. 13).

Ochoa also identified a number of stress factors experienced by adult learners, including fear of failure, speaking in class, writing

letters and papers, tests, marital problems, financial aid, taking math or other difficult subjects, having poor study skills, being a slow reader, handling pressures in life, meeting graduating requirements, using the library, dealing with counselors, teachers, and administrators, expressing personal values, meeting different people, interesting one's family in educational goals, and child care (Ochoa, 1984, pp. 2-3).

Factors such as socioeconomic status, education level, occupation, age, and marital status were also important variables in how students felt about taking adult education classes (Farr, Moon, & Williams, 1985, p. 10). For example, as a person got older, he tended to doubt his ability on a social, intellectual, and occupational level (Bergsten, 1980, p. 138). Although a young person might have been more confident and future oriented, seeing education as a means to find a job, if that person found employment, he might not have seen a further need for literacy (Diekhoff & Diekhoff, 1984, p. 39).

Many of those students who did take the step to enroll in an adult education program later dropped out. Eighty percent of ABE administrators polled in 1975 listed attrition as a major problem in their programs. In 1979, Cain and Wallace reported 40-60 percent attrition rates in literacy and ABE programs, while students entering literacy training for the GED Test usually persisted in their studies. Early identification of reasons for attrition could have prevented

wasted efforts and money in already understaffed and underfunded programs (Diekhoff & Diekhoff, 1984, p. 39).

Important to attrition efforts was the knowledge that adult learners were different from other students and that they required solid teaching practices (Cross & McCartan, 1984). Effective counseling could also have been an effective tool against high attrition rates (Long, 1983, p. 24). It was very important that adult education programs deliver what they promised--a good example being the success of GED Preparation classes. Then, as adults found success in education, that success fostered the desire for lifelong learning, perhaps the best motivator and deterrent to attrition of all (Farr, Moon, & Williams, 1985, p. 12).

#### SUMMARY

The review of literature indicated that there has been research into why students enroll in adult education ABE and GED Preparation classes. Because of national and state campaigns to combat the problem of illiteracy during the 80's, there was a significant increase in research in this area during that time. In spite of the fact that many of the motivating factors have been identified, along with the stresses that deter students from enrolling in these programs, it was necessary to constantly strive to find new means to recruit ABE and GED Preparation students and to retain them once they were enrolled.



Chapter III discusses the methods and procedures used to determine why students enrolled in the city of Chesapeake's adult education ABE and GED Preparation classes. In this chapter, the population, instrument design, instrument administration and statistical analysis are reviewed.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the survey procedures used to obtain data from Chesapeake Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes (including English as a Second Language). Then in later chapters this information was interpreted to determine why the students enrolled in the classes so that administrators could ascertain how to attract students into future programs and reduce attrition rates. Addressed in Chapter III were population, instrument design and administration, and statistical analysis.

#### POPULATION

Subjects of the study were all students enrolled in December 1986 in the ABE and GED Preparation classes (including English as a Second Language) at the Adult Continuing Education Center in Chesapeake, Virginia. This included a population of 64, including 32 ABE students, 19 GED Preparation students, and 13 ESL students.

#### INSTRUMENT DESIGN

A closed form questionnaire was used to obtain information about the student population, including motivating factors prompting

the students to enroll in the ABE and GED Preparation programs. Questions were posed so the researcher could determine likely candidates for future programs and means of advertising to that population. A sample of the survey form has been included in the Appendix to this study.

#### INSTRUMENT ADMINISTRATION

Survey forms were distributed by teachers of the ABE and GED Preparation classes at a class meeting in December 1986. Oral and written instruction, including purpose, were given, and students turned in the questionnaires after class.

#### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Survey data was compiled by the researcher so that findings as to why students enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes could be reported in Chapter IV. Data was categorized and then analyzed using percentiles, focusing on information as to how students were informed of the program and factors which motivated them to enroll in the Adult Education programs.

#### SUMMARY

Population, instrument design, instrument administration, and statistical analysis permitted the researcher to collect data

concerning why students enrolled in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes. Findings that resulted from the collection of the data were further analyzed and presented in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to report and present in written explanation and table form the findings compiled from data collected after a survey was administered in December 1986 to Chesapeake Adult Education ABE (including ESL) and GED Preparation classes. The data collected was to be used to determine the following objectives:

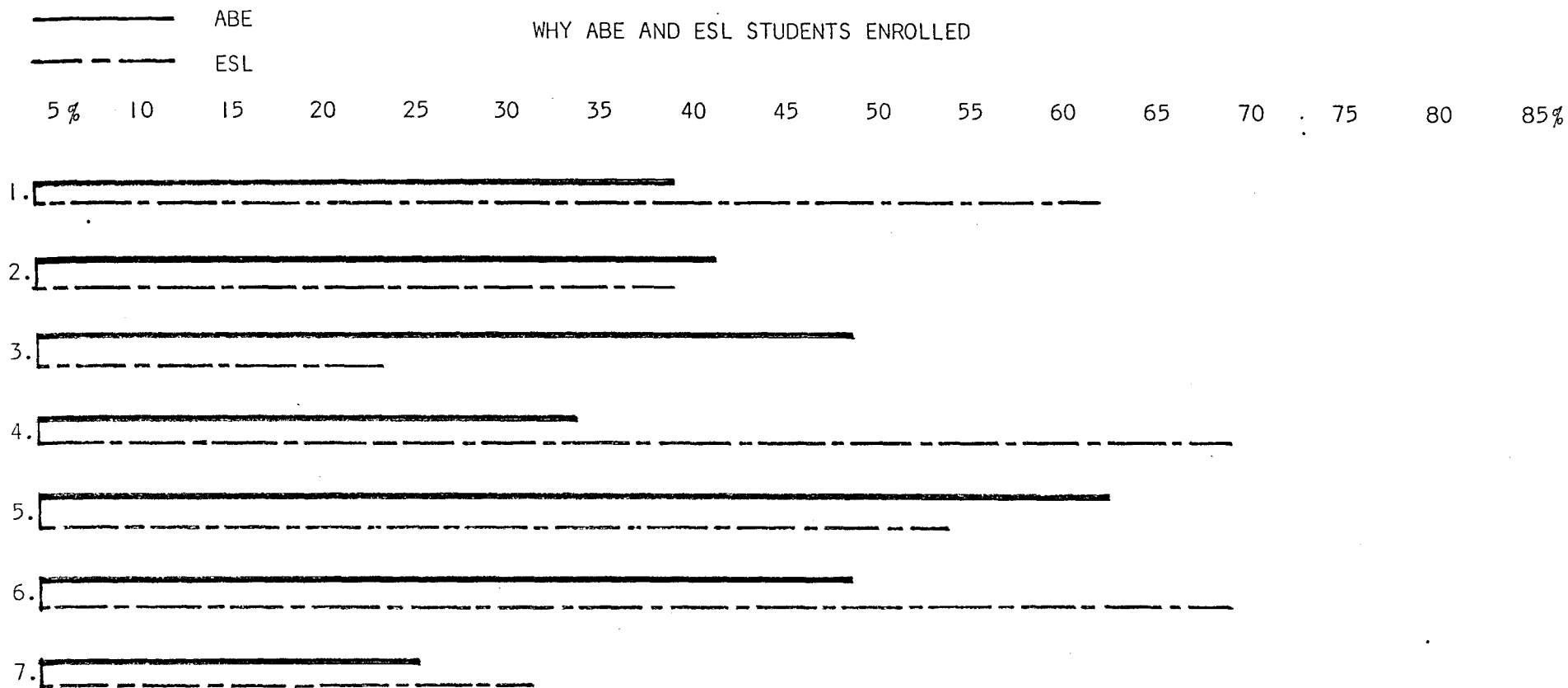
1. Why students enrolled in ABE classes.
2. Why students enrolled in GED Preparation classes.
3. Effective strategies to encourage higher enrollments in ABE and GED Preparation classes.

## ENROLLMENT IN ABE AND GED PREPARATION CLASSES

Table 1, Questions 1-7, contains the responses as to why ABE and ESL students enrolled in Chesapeake's Adult Education program in the fall of 1986. Thirty-two ABE students and thirteen ESL students were administered questionnaires to determine why they decided to take those classes. Ages in both classes ranged from below eighteen years of age to over sixty. The majority of the ABE students functioned on the 5-9 grade level, but there was insufficient information to determine the grade levels of the ESL students. As the table shows, every category

TABLE I

WHY ABE AND ESL STUDENTS ENROLLED



1. To help you deal with everyday situations, such as reading menus, labels, etc.
2. To help you obtain a job
3. To help you change jobs
4. To help you deal with family situations, such as reading to your children and helping them with homework
5. To help you relate better to other people, such as sharing information with others
6. To give you more recreational and leisure opportunities, such as reading newspapers and novels and enabling you to get involved in other hobbies
7. Other

received responses from both groups, but relating to other people and sharing information received the most response (63%) from the ABE students. The thirteen ESL students responded that family situations (69%) and recreation and leisure opportunities (69%) were instrumental in their decision to enroll in the classes. Additional comments as to why ABE students enrolled in these classes included such reasons as furthering their education and self-fulfillment. ESL students commented that they were taking the class to improve their pronunciation of English.

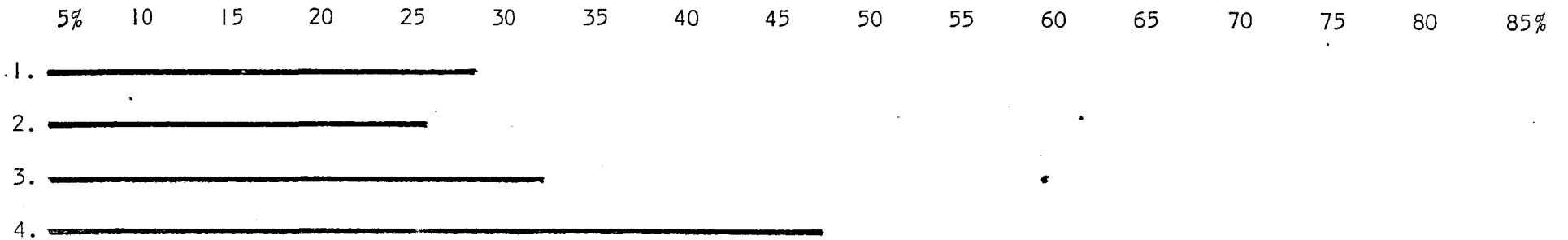
Table II, Questions 1-4, contains the responses as to why GED Preparation students enrolled in the Adult Education program. Nineteen GED Preparation students between the ages of seventeen and sixty responded. The answers to the questionnaires indicated that this group functioned on grade levels ranging from 5-12, and the majority indicated they chose to enroll in these classes for reasons usually cited by GED students--to assist with their current jobs (28%) or to allow them to change jobs (32%). Also included was the desire to go to college, as well as less tangible goals such as self-satisfaction and self-improvement. These responses all fell within the category of other responses (47%).

#### HOW STUDENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

Table III, Questions 1-6, contains information as to how ABE, ESL, and GED Preparation students found out about Chesapeake's Adult Education program. Most of the ABE students received information through friends or relatives (50%) or from the Adult Education brochure of

TABLE II

WHY GED PREPARATION STUDENTS ENROLLED



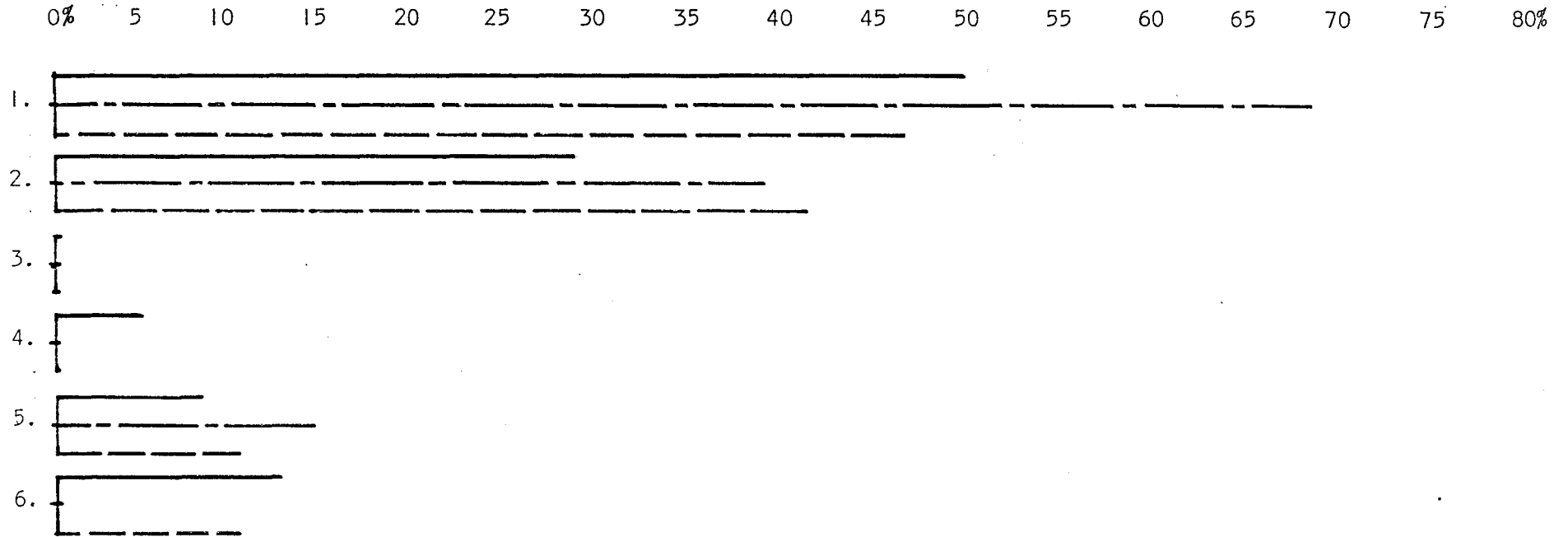
1. To assist with your current job
2. To receive a promotion
3. To prepare for a job change
4. Other



\_\_\_\_\_ ABE  
 - - - - - ESL  
 \_\_\_\_\_ GED Preparation

TABLE III

HOW ABE, ESL, AND GED PREPARATION STUDENTS  
FOUND OUT ABOUT THE PROGRAMS



- 1. Friend
- 2. Brochure
- 3. Radio
- 4. TV
- 5. Newspaper
- 6. Other

course offerings which was mailed to Chesapeake residents (28%). As might be expected of a group of students with strong family and ethnic ties, ESL students reported finding out about these classes as a result of information from family and friends (69%), although the brochure of course offerings served to inform some of the students about the program (38%). GED Preparation students enrolled after obtaining information through family and friends (47%) and via the Adult Education brochure (42%). Some students were there as a result of advertisements in the newspaper and yellow pages of the telephone directory (11%).

#### BEST WAY TO ADVERTISE PROGRAMS

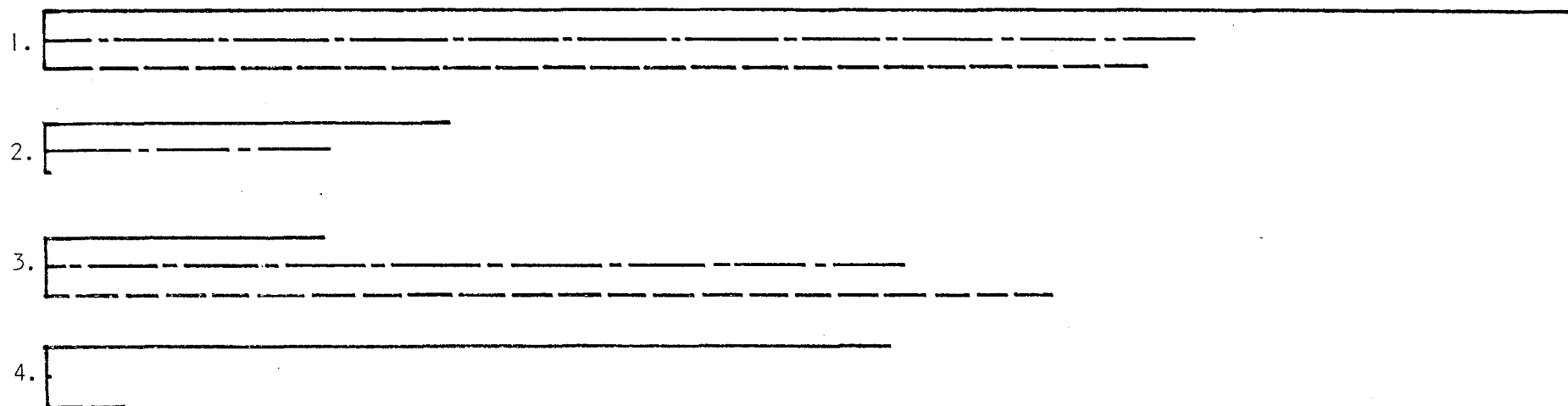
Information in Table IV relates to how the students felt future programs could best be advertised. ABE students responded that mailing brochures to Chesapeake residents would be the most effective means of advertising (81%), although they indicated that advertisement of the programs through the schools was important too (44%). ESL students also felt the brochure (62%) and distribution of information through the schools (46%) were good ways to advertise the program, as did GED Preparation students (58% and 53% respectively).

TABLE IV

BEST WAY TO ADVERTISE PROGRAMS  
ABE, ESL, AND GED PREPARATION STUDENTS

———— ABE  
- - - - - ESL  
- - - - - GED Preparation

0% 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80%



1. Brochures to Chesapeake residents
2. Presentations in the community
3. Distribution of information through the schools
4. Other

## SUMMARY

Information obtained from the survey administered to Chesapeake Adult Education ABE (including ESL) and GED Preparation classes was presented in this chapter. This data was used to determine why students enrolled in Adult Education ABE (including ESL) and GED Preparation classes and was presented in written explanation and in table form. Also reported was data concerning how students found out about these programs and how they felt future programs could best be advertised. That information was used to determine effective strategies to encourage higher enrollments in those programs. A summary of the findings, conclusions reached, and recommendations as a result of those findings and conclusions is presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reported the summary of this study, the conclusions, and the recommendations as a result of the research data obtained from the questionnaires answered by Adult Education ABE (including ESL) and GED Preparation students in December 1986. The results were to be used to assist Chesapeake adult educators in more effectively marketing these programs.

#### SUMMARY

This study indicated that a variety of reasons prompted students to enroll in Chesapeake Adult Education ABE, ESL and GED Preparation classes and that these students received information about the program from more than one source. They also had varying opinions as to how future programs should be advertised. Data collected was reliable and allowed for comments concerning the program and also provided answers to the objectives of the study.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The survey conducted by the researcher has established that students enroll in ABE, ESL, and GED Preparation programs for the

traditional reasons, such as obtaining employment or preparing for a promotion, but that they also enrolled for social reasons. Many indicated an interest in improving their ability to relate to other people in everyday situations and in enhancing their recreational and leisure opportunities. Also evident from the study was the desire on the part of these students to fulfil more personal goals such as self-satisfaction and improving their chances of going to college. The majority of students in all three groups received information about the program from friends or family (ABE - 50%; ESL - 69%; GED Prep - 47%), but all three groups indicated that the brochure was the second most important means of finding out about the program. Although most students learned about the program through family and friends, all three groups recommended that the program be advertised in the brochure as a first choice and that information be distributed through the schools as a second choice. There was moderate interest in presentations in the community (ABE - 22% and ESL - 15%).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the collected data and the findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. That the brochure mailed to Chesapeake residents remain the focus of advertising efforts. Since it was evident that many of the students used the brochure to find out about the program, mailing lists should be updated frequently to assure that all residents receive the brochure.
2. That information regarding these programs be provided to as many sources as possible. These might include:

- A. Principals and counselors in the public schools.
- B. Local businesses whose employees might have a need for such programs. The Chesapeake Adult Education Center employs coordinators for business education classes and special seminars. A marketing coordinator could provide information to employers in the area and employers could in turn distribute the information to employees.
- C. Any organizations relating to ethnic groups who could benefit from these programs, especially the ESL classes.

This recommendation was a result of the response by students that they had heard about the program through family and friends and that they thought the program should be advertised by the distribution of materials through the schools.

- 3. That future advertising emphasize all benefits of adult education. Brochures could depict the social aspects of adult education and advertise counseling for those students who would like to go on to college.

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APPENDIX  
QUESTIONNAIRE

MARKETING SURVEY

ABE AND GED ADULT EDUCATION

**PURPOSE:** This survey is being undertaken to determine why students enroll in adult education ABE and GED Preparation classes in Chesapeake, Virginia. Data collected will assist adult educators in more effectively marketing these programs.

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions by placing a check (✓) in the spaces provided.

1. Age:

- Under 18
- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 60

2. Class enrolled in:

- ABE
- GED Preparation
- ESL

3. Grade level:

- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-12

4. Place of residence:

- Deep Creek
- Great Bridge
- Greenbrier
- Indian River
- South Norfolk
- Western Branch
- Other

Check as many answers as apply in the following questions:

5. Reason or reasons you enrolled in this class (ABE and ESL students only):

To help you deal with everyday situations, such as reading menus, labels, etc.  
 To help you obtain a job  
 To help you change jobs  
 To help you deal with family situations, such as reading to your children and helping them with homework  
 To help you relate better to other people, such as sharing information with others  
 To give you more recreational and leisure opportunities, such as reading newspapers and novels and enabling you to get involved in other hobbies  
 Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Reason or reasons you enrolled in this class (GED students only):

To assist with your current job  
 To receive a promotion  
 To prepare for a job change  
 Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How you found out about this class:

Friend  
 Brochure  
 Radio  
 TV  
 Newspaper  
 Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. In your opinion, the best way to advertise ABE and GED Preparation and ESL classes:

Brochures to Chesapeake residents  
 Presentations in the community  
 Distribution of information through the schools  
 Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_