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Methods and materials for teaching adult beginning readers

Branson, Randy Long, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1988

METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR TEACHING

ADULT BEGINNING READERS

by

Randy Long Branson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School at The University of North
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Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Approved by

Barbara D Stoedt
Dissertation Advisor

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor _Barbara D Stoodt_

Committee Members _____

John VanHoose

Mary D Arndt

_____

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ii

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According to research, there are approximately 60 million American adults who need to improve their basic literacy skills. Unfortunately, present literacy programs serve only a small number of these people and have problems which reduce their effectiveness such as inadequate funding and lack of qualified personnel. One major problem of the program is that although research indicates that adults differ from children as learners, many programs use methods and materials more suitable for children than adults.

The purposes of this descriptive study are to survey teachers in a representative literacy program, the North Carolina technical/community college Adult Basic Education program to determine what methods and materials are being used as well as student interest areas; to examine research in reading and adult education to find methods and materials proven effective for adults; to rate available reading series according to content and appropriateness for adults; and to design a sample basal reading unit for adults based on research.

Chapter One gives an overview of the importance of literacy and quality literacy programs.

Chapter Two presents the research on the backgrounds of illiteracy and the adult learner, problems of existing programs, and theories of teaching adult beginning readers.

Chapter Three contains the methodology of the study including the rationale, design and procedure.

Chapter Four moves from theory into actual classroom practice by including data from the survey of teachers, ratings of 28 adult reading series, and a sample basal reading unit for adult beginning readers. The data reveals that most of the teachers have bachelor's degrees, with the largest major being education. Very few have degrees in reading or adult education. The majority of them place emphasis on some methods and materials more suitable for children than adults. All of the reading series lacked some basic components of good reading programs.

Chapter Five includes recommendations for improving programs and stresses the need for a quality reading series designed specifically for adults.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

CHAPTER 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY AND

QUALITY LITERACY PROGRAMS

Introduction

According to literacy experts approximately 60 million American adults are illiterate or functionally illiterate. Their reading dysfunctions adversely affect their personal and social lives as well as their ability to obtain and retain employment or to advance in their careers. Since illiteracy often leads to unemployment and increased requests for welfare as well as low productivity in the work force, it is a problem of our entire society.

Reading programs for adult beginning readers have problems which reduce their effectiveness. Published materials for adults are often boring and stilted and more suitable in content for teaching children rather than adults. Reading experts recommend using innovative approaches with "real life" materials, but the personnel who teach in these programs are often inexperienced in working with adults, have little training in reading, and are not paid for preparation time. Improving these programs will help overcome the problem of illiteracy.

The Importance of Literacy

Extent of Illiteracy

> Twenty-five million American adults cannot read the
> poison warnings on a can of pesticide, a letter from
> their child's teachers, or the front page of a daily
> newspaper. An additional 35 million read only at a
> level which is less than equal to the full survival
> needs of our society. Together, these 60 million people
> represent more than one third of the entire population
> (Kozol, 1985, p.4).

Jonathan Kozol reveals in the above introduction to

Illiterate America some of the problems adult illiterates

have in coping with everyday life. He further emphasizes the

plight of these people when he claims that they are

"immobilized in almost every sense we can imagine. They

can't move up. They can't move out. They cannot see beyond"

(1985, p.26).

Unfortunately, instead of the illiteracy rate

decreasing, the rate has been increasing yearly. According

to the U. S. Department of Education, the number of

functionally illiterate adults grows by 2.3 million each

year, a figure which includes 1.3 million legal and illegal

aliens, 850,000 high school dropouts and 150,000 school

pushouts--graduates who lack basic skills ("Viewer's Guide to

PLUS," 1986, p. 3). In A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for

Educational Reform, the National Commission on Excellence in

Education estimates that 13% of all 17 year-olds and 40% of

all minority youth are functionally illiterate (1983, p. 8).

Also, as the skill level necessary to function in our

increasingly complex technological society rises, so does the
number of functional illiterates.

Cost of Illiteracy to the Illiterate

The problems the many adult illiterates face daily
because of inability to read or poor reading ability are
almost beyond comprehension of literate adults. There are
everyday tasks illiterates can't do -- address letters,
interpret bus schedules or understand finance charges (Cross,
1981, p. 47). Adult illiterates are often dependent on
others to help them survive in a world that frequently deals
with words. They may need to have someone accompany them to
doctors' and dentists' offices in order to get help reading
the medical forms. Some have never been to a restaurant
alone because they can't read menus. They describe
themselves as feeling "scared," "inadequate" and "crippled" -
-- feelings which make them "withdraw and remain silent"
(Ellis, 1987, p. 6).

Cost of Illiteracy to Society

Illiterates suffer because they feel alone and isolated;
American society suffers because of the burden placed upon it
by these victims. Illiterates often have untapped talents
which could benefit society, but "their talents remain
hidden; their potential unrealized. These people would be
the first to agree that this is no way to work, or live"
(Ellis, 1987, p. 6).

Not only does society suffer from the lack of these talents; it also suffers as does each of its citizens from the high cost of illiteracy in general. Wellborn (1982) claims "6 billion dollars in welfare programs and unemployment compensation is directly related to illiteracy (p. 53). Add to that the cost of incarcerating illiterate prisoners and reforming illiterate juvenile delinquents and correcting expensive errors made by employees with little or no reading skills, and the cost of illiteracy further rises.

Out of the 159 members of the United Nations, the United States ranks 49th in the level of literacy (Larrick, 1987. p. 184). Major corporations in the United States have moved or are contemplating relocating their major manufacturing plants to countries which have a higher literacy rate. Secretary of Labor, William Brock, takes a look into the future and the possible problems our country may encounter due to illiteracy:

> I really worry about where this country is headed... I
> think we're not only creating a circumstance where we
> are going to have an increasingly difficult time
> competing and improving our economic base in a very
> competitive world, but we're creating a bifurcated
> society in which some can participate and some cannot
> (cited in Kelly, 1986, p. 15).

The Importance of Quality Literacy Programs

Reading Materials for Adult Beginning Readers

In order to improve the literacy levels which are so important to the future of our country, it is necessary to review existing literacy programs to determine strengths and

weaknesses. One major weakness according to many reading
experts is inadequate materials. The following is an example
of reading materials designed for beginning adult readers:

This is a girl.
The girl has a bird.
The girl has a bird in her hand.
The girl has a cup.
The girl has a cup in her hand (Laubach, 1981, p. 4).

Stories like this Laubach one are representative of the types
of materials produced today for adult illiterates. No wonder
Rigg and Kazemek, after surveying adult literacy materials,
concluded: "We have to reject the commercial materials we
have seen" (1985, p. 727).

Reading researchers urge teachers of beginning adult
readers to make their own materials rather than use the
commercial ones available. Rigg and Kazemek recommend using
lyrics to popular songs, well-known passages from the Bible
and simple poems (1985, p. 729). Donaldson and August
instruct teachers to use "real life" materials such as
newspapers, magazines, instructions, directions, labels and
forms (1979, p. 2).

The Reading/Writing Connection

Besides advocating the use of more interesting
materials, reading experts today are also cognizant of the
importance of integrating reading with other language arts,
particularly writing. The Commission on Reading states that
writing and reading should be integrated because "all of the
uses of language -- listening, speaking, reading and writing

-- are interrelated and mutually supportive" (1984, p. 79). The major way reading personnel encourage integration is through the use of language experience stories, stories students compose and dictate to the teacher.

In the language experience approach, students may be asked to compose stories as a group or individually about their own experiences. The stories are typed, preferably in large print, and students read them. Teachers may also make up exercises to accompany the stories. These stories, thus, become the basic reading materials for the class. They are more beneficial than many published stories for adults because they contain the language of the students --their own vocabulary and sentence structure. For example, one ABE teacher had her students compose as a group a story about their benefits at work since they all worked for the same company and had been talking about the benefits their company provided. She wrote the story on the board and then typed it for distribution to the class. The class's vocabulary study that week focused on words from the story. Bowren and Zintz claim that language experience stories foster "far greater motivation than only the use of either an adult-oriented 'look-say' basal approach or the other approaches" (1977, p. 117). The major problem with the use of the language experience approach is that it takes time and teacher expertise.

Teachers of Adult Beginning Readers

The knowledge and the expertise is available to improve reading courses for beginning adult readers. Unfortunately, the teachers who are usually employed to teach reading to adults are those who "often have the same training as the teachers who failed to teach them to read effectively in the elementary and secondary school" (Smith and Dulin, 1971, p. 65). The teachers are usually not reading teachers, but elementary school teachers or volunteers who think that because they can read, they can teach reading. They generally lack the training to find or help produce suitable materials and programs for adult reading instruction. Even if they have the expertise, they are usually hired to teach a specific number of hours per week, with no time for preparation. Many have no access to secretaries, no input in purchasing materials, no power to teach the way they want to teach.

Reading experts are speaking, but it is difficult to listen when the realities of today's adult literacy classes force the underqualified, overworked teachers to pick up the first Laubach literacy book and work from page to page until the adult students learn to read or drop out, thinking "Who cares what the girl has in her hand?"

Research Questions

Description of Study

This research study will be a descriptive one based on a selected program, the North Carolina technical/community college Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. The researcher will survey teachers of adult beginning readers (0-5th grade levels) in ABE programs at all technical/ community colleges.

Description of North Carolina ABE Program

North Carolina has a large community college system with 58 schools strategically located throughout the state so that every citizen has easy access to at least one of the institutions. Its ABE program is representative of other ABE programs in the United States as far as types of methods and materials are concerned. The ABE program is also the largest literacy provider in the state in terms of the number of classes offered and students served. Classes are held at various times of the day and night as well as at locations throughout each school's service area. For example, the researcher's own school offers approximately 20 classes each year in four different cities. Classes are held at plants, local libraries, prisons, senior citizens' centers, nursing homes, churches, local high schools and middle schools as well as the community college. All classes are free of charge and transportation is often provided. Since the North Carolina ABE program is so extensive and readily accessible,

a survey of instructors in this program will be

representative of other programs for adult beginning readers.

Research Questions

The survey of the literature leads to the following

questions:

1. What methods and materials do teachers of adult
   beginning readers use?

2. What methods and materials of beginning reading
   instruction do teachers judge to be best liked by
   students?

3. How do the teachers rate the methods and materials
   they use?

4. What are the reading interests of adult beginning
   readers?

5. What methods and materials commonly used in the
   North Carolina technical/community college system
   are judged to be suitable in content and interest
   levels for adults according to research?

6. What might be included in a unit of instruction for
   adult beginning readers?

Finding the answers to these questions is the focus of this

research study.

Operational Definitions of Terms

Literacy

To better understand the importance of literacy, it is

necessary to have a clear concept of terms used, including a

definition of the term reading. The Commission on Reading

defines reading as the "process of constructing meaning from

written texts" (1984, p. 7). Bormuth (1975) sees it as a

relationship between the process of reading and the material

needed to be read (p. 5). Hunter and Harman expand on that

relationship when they define conventional literacy as "the ability to read, write, and comprehend texts on familiar subjects and to understand whatever signs, labels, instructions, and directions are necessary to get along within one's environment" (1979, p. 7). People who do not have this ability are labeled "illiterates" which generally indicates third grade reading level or below.

Functional Literacy

A nebulous term coined in the 1950's, _functional literacy_ is often used in literacy discussions today (Cook, 1977, p. 77). Functional literacy may be defined as the "ability of an individual to fulfill those functions in life that he or she has to perform" (Park, 1981, p. 280). Although in the past people have set grade level standards for functional literacy from the fourth to fifth to eight to ninth grade levels, many people today believe that the level of functional literacy is rising. Dorothy Shields, Directory of Education for the AFL-CIO, claims that "by the 1990's, anyone who doesn't have at least a 12th grade reading, writing and calculating level will be absolutely lost" (Wellborn, 1982, p. 54).

Hunter and Harman offer a long, complex definition of functional literacy:

> (Functional literacy is the) possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, consumer, job holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations of their choosing. This includes the

ability to obtain information they want and to use that
information for their own and others' well-being; the
ability to read and write adequately to satisfy the
requirements <u>they set for themselves</u> as being important
for their own lives; the ability to deal positively with
demands made on them by society; and the ability to
solve the problems they face in their daily lives (1979,
pp. 7-8).

What are the requirements that people set for themselves
in reading? What are the demands of society? The
requirements must be high because society's demands are high:

A person now needs to read at a sixth-grade level to
understand a driver's license manual, at an eighth-grade
level to follow the directions for preparing a TV dinner
or to read a federal income tax form, at a 10th-grade
level to interpret the instructions on an aspirin
bottle, at a 12th-grade level to understand an insurance
policy, and at college level to figure out the meaning
of an apartment lease (Wellborn, 1982, p. 54).

Definitions of functional literacy may help people understand
what functional literacy could be, but they cannot pinpoint
the total meaning exactly because functional literacy is an
individual matter. "What do you need to read or want to
read?" is as viable and important a question for the
instructor of adult illiterates as "What do you want to do
for a living?" is for career counselors.

<u>Reading Expert</u>

<u>Reading expert</u> is another term the researcher will use
in the study to describe those individuals who have studied
the content of reading instruction, published books and/or
articles on reading, or researched reading instruction. Most
of the experts referred to in this study focus mainly on
adult readers, but a few have studied reading instruction on

all levels. William S. Gray published books on elementary reading as well as a <u>Manual for Teachers of Adult Elementary Students</u>. Jeanne Chall, Director of the Reading Laboratory at Harvard University has written articles on adult literacy as well as books about reading instruction for children such as <u>Learning to Read: The Great Debate</u>. Barbara Stoodt, an education professor at the University of North Carolina-- Greensboro, is the co-author of a basal reading series for children as well as the author of textbooks on the secondary level. Some of the experts conduct research mainly on adult reading processes; two such experts are Arlene Fingeret at North Carolina State University and Donald Mocker at the University of Missouri. The majority of these experts are university professors specializing in reading instruction and/or research in adult literacy.

Summary

Illiteracy is not just the problem of the individuals who suffer from it -- it affects all of society. The ramifications of the problems of so many American adults who need to improve their basic reading skills make the problems ones that affect our entire nation. Programs that have been designed to improve literacy rates have not been as effective as possible and need to be improved.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Introduction

Illiteracy affects all of society as well as the many millions of American adults who have some type of reading dysfunction. Existing programs have helped, but they need to be improved to be more effective. Adequate funding would alleviate some problems including inadequate materials and undertrained teachers. More direction from reading experts and those administrating adult programs would help overcome the problems of teachers who have little or no expertise in teaching adult beginning readers and little time for preparation.

The most important aspect of a literacy program for adults is the course content. Materials designed specifically for adults based on adult learning and reading research are needed to help lessen the problem of adult illiteracy.

Extent of Adult Illiteracy

High Rate of Illiteracy

Estimates on the number of illiterates in the United States today range from 23-25 million for those who are reading third grade level or below, figures which increase to 60 million and above when those who read, but not well enough

to function adequately in today's society, are included.
Experts have spent much time in compiling these figures
through testing adults and estimating numbers by equating
grade school completion with illiteracy rates. Although the
figures may not be totally accurate, one fact is clear from
all figures -- the rate is high.

High School Dropouts

One indicator of functional illiteracy is the high
school dropout rate. More than one-third of adults have not
finished high school (Wellborn, 1982, p. 53). The National
Education Association estimates that one out of every four
students who entered the eighth grade in 1986 won't complete
high school ("Viewer's Guide to PLUS," 1986, p. 3). Although
not every dropout is illiterate or functionally illiterate,
teachers of adults could document that a majority are reading
on levels below, not equal to or above, levels expected by
the last grade attended.

Underprepared High School/College Graduates

Underprepared High School Graduates

High school graduates are not generally included in
figures for illiteracy; however, 1400 colleges and
universities surveyed nationwide reveal that 84% offer
remedial courses in reading, writing and math for those
students who are deficient in basic skills ("Viewer's Guide
to PLUS," 1986, p. 3). Add to that the number of high school
graduates enrolled in similar remedial courses at community

and technical colleges and the number increases dramatically. Add to this number members of the work force who lack desired reading abilities and the total becomes enormous. At least "one in nine employees in America today is functionally illiterate (Ellis, 1987, p. 4). Many people included in this figure are high school graduates.

Underprepared Professional/Managerial Workers

Not too many people would be surprised to learn that 29-30% of semi-skilled and unskilled workers do not have the basic literacy skills required of their jobs (Kelly, 1986, p. 15). Nor would they be shocked to discover that "Most of the inmates of the prison system are functionally illiterate" or that "the majority of the chronically unemployed living on welfare have literacy dysfunction" (Berman, 1979, p. 7). A more shocking figure would be that 11% of professional and managerial workers are also deficient (Kelly, 1986, p. 15).

Examples of Deficiencies

Unfortunately, specific anecdotes and research verify the number of high school, college and even graduate school completers who lack basic skills and could thus be labeled functionally illiterate. A highly skilled technician in Massachusetts couldn't read instructions well enough to call up a computer program (Kelly, 1986, p. 15). A 1982 Wall Street Journal article tells of $30,000 a year MBAs who are taking basic skills courses (Kelly, 1986, p. 15). According to Lyman, "the United States has the highest level of

educational attainment in the world; 86 percent of population have had high school or some college-level education. At the same time, 54 percent are unable, or only marginally able, to cope with basic reading tasks, regardless of formal education" (1976, p. 21).

A recent literacy assessment by the Education Department indicates that only 63% of whites and 14% of blacks who graduate from high school have "the basic skills the armed forces consider necessary to be eligible for training" (Lochhead, 1988, p. 39). The National Assessment of Educational Progress in Princeton, New Jersey, gave a test to 3600 people ages 21 -25 and "found that while almost everyone could decipher the expiration date on a driver's license, just over a third could calculate the cost of a restaurant meal with tip and only 20% could interpret a bus schedule correctly" (Simpson, 1987, p. 1). Another example comes from New York Telephone Company, a company that gave its simple 50-minute exam in basic reading and reasoning skills to 21,000 applicants for entry-level jobs. "Only 16% passed" (Simpson, 1987, p. 1).

Illiteracy Underrated

Because of stories like the preceding ones, the extent of illiteracy or functional illiteracy in United States today may be grossly underrated. Literacy experts, educational leaders, and business executives warn that our country is a nation "at risk" due to literacy dysfunctions. In the

documentary "At a Loss for Words," Peter Jennings quoted

Thomas Jefferson to emphasize the severity of the problem.

Jefferson once said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and

free, it expects what never will be" (1986).

History of Adult Illiteracy

Background of World Illiteracy

With the sudden emphasis on adult illiteracy today, it

would be reasonable for anyone to think that illiteracy is a

relatively new problem, but the adult illiterate is not a new

phenomena in the United States or even in the world.

According to Chall, Heron and Hilferty, "a look at history

indicates that adult illiteracy has been with us for a long,

long time" (1987, p. 190). Larrick claims that the "first

great literacy campaign of modern times was directed by

Martin Luther in the 16th century" (1987, p. 186). Also, 200

years after Luther, English convicts being shipped to

Australia were taught to read using the Bible (Larrick, 1987,

p. 186).

Background of American Illiteracy

Just as illiteracy is not new to the world, it is also

not new to America. One way the history of American

illiteracy can be traced is through the development of

remedial education which, according to Brier, has historical

roots (1984, p. 5). Because there was no system of public

high schools after the Civil War, colleges and universities

had to try to "bridge the gap" between primary schools and

their institutions (Trow, 1982-1983, p. 16). "Almost every college in the country" created "preparatory departments" in order to serve underprepared students (Trow, 1982-1983, p. 16). Institutions of higher education had to open their doors to underprepared students because there were far more colleges and universities than there were adequately prepared students (Brier, 1984, p. 4). Colleges and universities needed students to survive; therefore, according to Frederick Rudolph, "they were laying their hands on every young man and woman they possibly could before their competitors did" (cited in Trow, 1982-1983, p. 4). The preparatory departments of the 1800's increased college enrollment and were necessary because students lacked the basic skills to succeed in college. These students could thus be labeled as "functionally illiterate" because they lacked the skills to function as they wanted to in American society. Martin Trow quotes from Frederick Rudolph's book, Curriculum, in order to reveal the significance of preparatory departments:

> As late as 1895, 40 percent of all the students admitted to the country's colleges and universities were being admitted from the college preparatory departments of the institutions themselves (1982-1983, p. 17).

The high number of underprepared students were still in existence in the early part of the twentieth century. Although preparatory departments disappeared, remedial courses were developed. These courses in basic reading and learning skills could be found on college campuses in the 1930's and 1940's (Kulik, Kulik, and Swalb, 1983, p. 397).

Such courses continue to be in existence today. The rapid
expansion of community colleges in the 1960's increased the
number of remedial courses because of the many underprepared
students who enrolled as a result of open admissions policies
(Kulik, Kulik, and Swalb, 1983, p. 398).

Eventually the term "remedial" was discarded, but the
programs never were -- they were just relabeled
"developmental." Today Developmental Studies programs are
numerous in higher education. A 1982 survey of "every two-
and four-year institution of higher education in the United
States" revealed that 1,292 institutions offer "basic skills
programs, courses, or alternatives for serving low-achieving
students" (Roueche, Baker, and Roueche, 1984, p. 31).
Community colleges do serve the largest number of
developmental studies students. According to Sydney Wiener,
"Between 60 and 70 percent of all community college students
must take remedial courses" (1984-1985, p. 52). Community
colleges, however, are not the only institutions of higher
education serving underprepared students. There are programs
for low-achieving students at "Duke, Stanford, UCLA,
Wisconsin, Ohio State, Texas, and other schools of similar
stature" (Roueche, Baker, and Roueche, 1984, p. 32).

Literacy Problems Today

A lack of basic skills has been a persisting problem
throughout history, yet it has just recently begun to be

highly publicized. Carolyn Lochhead explains the reason for this in a 1988 Insight article:

> The shortfall in the basic ability to read, write compute and reason began to surface several years ago in both the service and manufacturing sectors as increasingly complex production processes began to require a more sophisticated work force (p. 39).

She further explained that "the degree of literacy in the United States hasn't kept pace with the demands of today's jobs" (p. 38). Technology has advanced far more rapidly than education. Illiterates and/or functional illiterates are not new in America; they are just noticed more because of the need for a more literate work force and society.

Causes of Adult Illiteracy

Lack of Opportunities, Not Intelligence

In order to understand the adult illiterate, it is imperative to examine the causes of illiteracy. The term "illiterate" makes many imagine a person who lacks intelligence and/or the drive to succeed. Some blunt people may even call the illiterate "lazy" or "stupid." Although these terms may be appropriate to some illiterates, they are not applicable to the majority of them. Illiteracy "rarely results from lack of ability or initiative" (Ellis, 1987, p. 7). Instead, Ellis lists the following as basic causes of adult illiteracy:

1. childhood illnesses or injuries
2. economic problems which force some to leave school
3. unaddressed learning problems
4. inadequate schooling
5. family traumas (1987, p. 7)

What these causes suggest is that the large number of people who lack basic reading skills may not be "illiterate" which implies that they cannot read or learn to read, but "nonliterate" which indicates that they may be able to learn, but have lacked the proper opportunity (Lyman, 1976, p. 22).

Personal Problems

The personal problems which force people to discontinue their education include illnesses, economic problems and family traumas. These problems as causes of illiteracy may be substantiated by examining the personal histories of students in literacy classes. In one adult basic education class, a 62-year old woman entered reading only on the first grade level. The reason she gave is that she had to drop out of school in the first grade due to scarlet fever. Being neither stupid or lazy, she was able to increase her reading to fourth grade level at the end of nine months of class. Another student in the same class had to drop out of school in order to work on the farm -- the family needed help and could not afford to hire anyone. Other students had to drop out to nurse sick parents or due to the death of a parent. Once these adults are back in school, they reveal their strong motivation and ability to learn.

Inadequate Schooling

Inadequate schooling has caused many adults to be deficient in basic skills. Eighty percent of today's work force which has been labeled as "inadequate," consists of

women, minorities and immigrants, "groups that in general are the least educated, according to a report for the Labor Department by the Hudson Institute, a research group" (Lochhead, 1988, p. 38). A large number of adult illiterates simply never completed school.

Unfortunately, many adult illiterates or functional illiterates did complete school or, at least, attended school for 12 years. The problem is that these students never learned adequately and were just moved from grade to grade on the basis of social promotion. Some of these individuals, as well as some who dropped out, were not helped by teachers because they have learning disabilities which the teachers were either not aware of or were not capable of accommodating.

Illiterate Parents

Thomas Sticht adds one more cause to the list -- illiterate parents. Since the National Assessment of Education Progress "has repeatedly found high levels of literacy among both children and adults who come from homes where parents had post-high school education," then it is evident that literate parents "transmit literacy" to their children (Sticht, 1980, p. v). Conversely, illiterate parents do not. Again, evidence supporting this can be found by examining the histories of literacy students. In the above-mentioned adult basic education class, one man enrolled along with his two grown daughters. He said he felt he might

have learned to read had either of his parents been able to
do so. He was there to help his daughters as much as
himself.

Profile of the Adult Illiterate

Cover-up of Illiteracy

Even though the causes of illiteracy reveal that most
who suffer from it are "victims," failing to learn due to
circumstances beyond their control, they try to hide their
disability. Illiterates have often felt they are all alone -
- oddities in a technological society, a society that
supposedly has equal educational opportunities to all. Thus
illiteracy has been a "closet" disease, one carefully hidden
from most people. In order for illiterates to preserve their
self-esteem, many resort to cover-ups when confronted with
tasks that require reading and writing. When asked to use
these abilities, they may say:

> I forgot my glasses.
> I can't read your handwriting.
> I just don't have time to read the manual; can you show
> me how to do it?
> I'd like to take this application home and read it; I'll
> return it tomorrow (Ellis, 1987, p. 8).

Tarheel Banker quotes Ben Craig, president of First Union
Corporation in North Carolina as saying, "People who are
illiterate may lack some talents, but acting isn't one of
them" (1986, p. 12). Craig further admonishes employers,
"Regardless of how well you know your staff and employees,
you are probably fooled" (1986, p. 12). Illiterates not only

hide their illiteracy from employers, but also from relatives
and friends.

Vague Profile of Illiterate

Since illiterates do not publicize their problem, it is
difficult to determine a profile of the adult illiterate. So
much information is now being disseminated about illiteracy
that it would seem relatively easy to get a clear picture of
the illiterate adult, yet an awareness of literacy problems
"fails to provide general knowledge about the illiterate
adult" (Kavale and Lindsey, 1977, p. 370). Articles about
illiteracy now abound even in popular magazines, but as the
author of one points out, "No one knows exactly how many
illiterates there are, because people with the problem do not
advertise it" (O'Toole, 1985, p. 368). Furthermore, the
author aptly describes the illiterate as "male and female,
black and white, old and young" (1985, p. 369). In other
words, the illiterate can be anyone of any age or race from
any economic level. Many have little or no education, but
some have completed high school or college. A majority of
unemployed living on welfare are illiterate, but so are many
employed adults. There is no real profile of the adult
illiterate or functionally illiterate because these
individuals permeate all stratas of American society.

The Cost of Illiteracy

Cost to the Illiterate

Not all illiterates are resourceful enough to keep their inadequacy hidden. Those who cannot often evoke the pity or anger of literate people. Literates may feel sorry for the person ahead of them in a grocery store who cannot properly write a check or the one in a doctor's office who has to have a medical information form read to them and filled out by someone else. They may even ache for the woman who brought home a gallon of Crisco, thinking she had the chicken on the label, only to discover there was no chicken in the can and that she had no money left to buy supper for herself and her children (Kozol, 1985, p. 26). They may even feel angry at their co-worker who has to have all written materials explained orally or the one who decreases their own productivity due to mistakes made by not reading directions properly. However, illiterates' effect on the rest of society goes far beyond the arousal of pity or anger.

Cost to Society

Society is affected by illiteracy when 85% of juveniles who come before the courts are functionally illiterate and 30% or naval recruits were recently termed "a danger to themselves and to costly naval equipment" because they cannot read and follow directions -- one even caused $250,000 damage to equipment (Kozol, 1985, pp. 5 & 18).

Businesses are affected when "many employees can't read the memos from the boss, the rule book of the company, the training manual that they're given or understand the instructions that they're told" (Berman, 1979, p. 7). Anthony Carnevale, chief economist for the American Society for Training and Development "estimates productivity by poorly educated workers, together with the price of remedial training, costs businesses about $25 billion a year (cited in Simpson, 1987, p. 1). This estimate may seem absurd, but there are examples which support it. A steelworker in Pennsylvania cost his company more than one million dollars in disrupted production schedules and inventories because he could not read well and misordered spare parts from a company warehouse (Kelly, 1986, p. 15). A welder cost his company thousands of dollars because he couldn't read the word "clockwise" and installed an industrial blower wrong (Ellis, 1987, p. 5). A New York insurance company estimates that 70% of all its correspondence must be retyped at least once because secretaries working from recorders don't know how to spell and punctuate properly (Kelly, 1986, p. 15). Incidents like these plus the cost of retraining programs can easily escalate to billions of dollars per year.

A study conducted by the Center for Public Resources revealed that an "overwhelming majority of executives interviewed do not consider literacy a critical problem as far as the workplace is concerned" (Harmon, 1986, p. 13). Yet

Don Le Brecht, Executive Director of the Broadcasting

Productivity Council claims that "Illiteracy is not just a

social issue; it is also a dollar-and-cents issue; one that

affects a company's productivity, its bottom line" (cited in

Ellis, 1987, p. 5). The illiterate in the workplace causes

companies to lose money due to "low productivity, poor

product quality and absenteeism" (cited in Ellis, 1987, p.

6). Also, as one business executive points out, "If people

out there can't read, how can they read our ads?" (cited in

Ellis, 1987, p. 5). If companies lose money because

consumers can't read their business advertisements, that loss

is generally made up by other consumers.

Future Cost of Illiteracy

Worker illiteracy affects the economy of businesses and

it also poses problems for the future economy of the entire

United States. Worker illiteracy has been called "a grave

threat to U. S. productivity, competitiveness, and hence the

standard of living" by "business leaders such as Harold W.

McGraw, Jr., chairman of McGraw-Hill, Inc.; David T. Kearns,

chairman of Xerox Corporation; Owen Butler, retired chairman

of Proctor and Gamble Company; and Kay Whitmore, president of

Eastman Kodak Company" (Lochhead, 1988, p. 38). Illiteracy

costs businesses, the United States, and all citizens money.

Thomas Sticht, in the forward to Reading and the Adult

Learner, does not discuss the cost of illiteracy in monetary

values. Instead, he implies that the cost of not training

adults to read will be apparent in the future because "literacy appears to be transmitted from generation to generation" (1980, p. v). Sticht asserts that "children from literate homes become the literate children of the school system and, later, the literate adults of our nation" (1980, p. v). If Americans want to have a higher literacy rate, they will have to advocate quality programs for illiterates.

Literacy Programs

Cost-Effectiveness of Programs

The cost of illiteracy to our society is extremely high. Conversely, "literacy training is definitely cost-effective" - the Office of Education records show that in one year alone 108,000 enrollees in literacy training found employment or better jobs, causing the removal of approximately 18,000 from public assistance rolls (Diekhoff and Diefhoff, 1984, p. 35). David Kearns, chairman of Xerox Corporation, claims that "education is a bigger factor in productivity growth (rates) than increased capital, economies of scale or better allocation of resources" (cited in Simpson, 1987, p. 1). Retraining and remediation for adults is definitely "cost-effective" (Ellis, 1987, p. 9).

Business Programs

Businesses then can be benefitted by offering basic skills programs to employees or by encouraging their employees to participate in such programs. One in three major United States corporations now offers basic skills

training for employees (Simpson, 1987, p. 1). Polaroid Corporation has the oldest in-house basic skills program and Planter's (Planter's and Life Savers Division of Nabisco Brands, Inc.) has been offering classes since 1978 (Ellis, 1987, pp. 8-9). Other companies that offer programs include: Ford Motor Company, Pratt and Whitney --division of United Technologies Corporation, Grumman Corporation and Rockwell International Corporation (Kelly, 1986, p. 16). In some cases these programs are devised and taught by educational experts hired by the companies, but in many instances the companies use the resources of public educational programs already in existence.

Public Educational Programs

Four major educational programs are in existence to combat illiteracy today. The Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) is a nonprofit organization which originated in Syracuse in 1962 (Newman, 1980, p. 109). LVA is the smallest of the four programs, serving approximately 20,000 people (Kozol, 1985, p. 41). Laubach Literacy, established by Frank Laubach, serves 50,000 (Kozol, 1985, pp. 41-42). Two governmental programs, Adult Basic Education and the United States military literacy program, reach the largest number of people, between two to three million (Kozol, 1985, p. 41). Altogether, the programs enroll from 2 million 70 thousand to 3 million 70 thousand out of 60 million people who need survival reading skills. These four basic literacy programs

just reach two to four percent of all illiterate adults
(Kozol, 1985, p. 90).

Problems of Existing Programs

Inadequate Recruitment

Since millions of adults who should be in literacy
programs are not, recruitment is a major problem (Fingeret,
1982, p.1 3). Fingeret believes recruitment for literacy
programs is often ineffective because educators assume that
most illiterates want to read and write, an assumption that
causes literacy groups to fail to motivate potential clients.
She says that literates think everyone associates "reading
and writing with baseball and apple pie, as unquestionably
'good things,' woven into the fabric of middle American life"
(1982, p. 3). Fingeret conducted a study in which she
discovered that some illiterate people "share a concept of
themselves as having 'common sense' while literate, educated
people have book 'learning'" (1982, p. 10). These
illiterates who view educated people as lacking in common
sense then "desire literacy skills only instrumentally"
(Fingeret, 1982, p. 10). Literate people recruit on the
basis that people want to learn; recruiting those who do not
is a far more difficult and challenging task.

Limited Number of Adults Served

Perhaps the task of recruitment would be easier if the
existing programs were successful, but often they are not.
The fact that the present programs "reach" or "serve" a small

percentage of illiterates does not mean the illiterates learn
to read as a result. Adult Basic Education, the largest
literacy program, had one third of its enrollees from 1968 -
1970 drop out annually (Weber, 1975, p. 155). Forty percent
of those who enter Adult Basic Education today will drop out
(Kozol, 1985, p. 41). If only a small percentage of adult
illiterates enter literacy classes and a large number of
those who do eventually drop out, then these public
educational programs are severely limited in the total number
of adults that they serve.

Goals Not Met

The high rate of dropouts in literacy programs is
"apparently related to the instructional quality of the class
attended" (Balmuth, 1988, p. 621). The content of the
programs simply fail "to produce the life-changing
improvements in reading ability that are often suggested by
published evaluations of these programs" and the illiterate
adult "is still functionally illiterate by almost any
standard when he or she leaves training" (Diekhoff, 1988, p.
629). One purpose of Adult Basic Education programs is to
help people "get or retain employment" (Weber, 1975, p. 150).
Yet only 8.5% of ABE program participants are able to get
jobs or better jobs as a result of completing ABE, and less
than 2% vote as a result (Kozol, 1985, p. 43). No wonder
Jeanne Chall and John Carroll state in Toward a Literate

<u>Society</u> that "the amount of success in raising literacy through ABE .... has not been impressive" (1985, p. 26).

Inadequately Trained Volunteers

There are many reasons why present literacy programs are not very effective. One problem of volunteer programs such as Laubach and Literacy Volunteers of America is inadequate training of volunteers. Training sessions, if any, are short and poorly attended because many volunteers think that they know how to teach reading because they know how to read (Meyer, 1985, p. 707). As a result, some of these volunteers do more damage than good. One major area many of them do not understand is in learning disabilities. They are not trained to detect or to deal with learning disabilities (Meyer, 1985, p. 707). Volunteer programs also have retention problems -- not only with students, but also volunteer teachers. Volunteer groups say it takes two years of tutoring to help students read newspapers unaided. Volunteers and students don't usually last that long (Meyer, 1985, p. 707).

Inadequately Trained Personnel

Even literacy programs that have certified teachers don't always have teachers who understand teaching adults to read. In "Adult Illiteracy in the US," Weber says that next to financing, "finding qualified personnel has been the most pressing problem" for literacy programs (1975, p. 159). Few schools of education train teachers and administrators for adult literacy and no state offers certification in the field

(Chall, Heron, and Hilferty, 1987, p. 193). Other experts confirm the lack of adequately trained teachers. Park states that many "teachers in the literacy field are untrained in adult education" (1981, p. 282). Otto and Ford support that viewpoint by saying that "teachers having the requisite training for basic reading instruction are usually neither trained to nor interested in teaching adults" (1987, p. 41). Teachers of adult illiterates need to have training in how to teach adults, not children. They also need "special abilities" to deal with adult learning problems (Kavale and Lindsey, 1977, p. 373).

Two constant problems in ABE programs are "low attendance and quitting" (Weber, 1975, p. 154). Often ABE students quit "because the instructor does not relate to their needs" (Newman, 1980, p. 73). Weber proclaims that the "most persistent weakness in literacy instructional programs is that, few have hardly departed in any significant way from the objectives and curricula of children's reading programs" (1975, p. 154). The teachers who are untrained in teaching adults are often trained in teaching children and do not realize the need for different attitudes and course content. In 1926 William S. Gray said that a problem in using elementary school teachers to teach adult illiterates is that they have a "tendency to carry over day-school attitudes and methods which are not suitable for adults" (p. 16). The problem still exists today. One major reason for the problem

is that "most of ABE's 41,000 paid instructors are elementary and secondary school teachers by day and work with ABE adult participants by night, although they have no special training in teaching adults" (Skagen, 1986, p. 51).

Part-Time Work Force

Eighty percent of ABE teachers work part-time (Hunter and Harmon, 1979, p. 68). They generally have little in-service training. Most of their training time is not spent in learning how to teach the adult illiterate or how to teach reading to adults, but in how to teach methods and materials (i.e. Laubach or LVA or phonics). These teachers are usually paid for teaching time only; thus "they have little time (or money) for professional development" (Chall, Heron and Hilferty, 1987, p. 193). Since the teachers are part-time, they often leave the program to either get a full-time job or to devote more energies to the full-time job they already have. Staff turnover in ABE programs is high -- "Like many of their students, they are a migrant workforce -- underpaid and without job security" (Chall, Heron and Hilferty, 1987, p. 193). Since these teachers are just part-time personnel, they often lack the time or motivation to devote to the improvement of their adult literacy classes.

Inadequate Administration

The people who are responsible for hiring and training ABE teachers, selecting materials, designing literacy programs and establishing policies are ABE administrators who

often have little or no training in reading education. An
opinion survey by Robinson in 1974 revealed that 65 out of 83
ABE administrators who responded had no teaching experience
in reading at any level (cited in Kavale and Lindsey, 1977,
p. 373). Kavale and Lindsey ask, "If an administrator has no
experience in teaching reading, how can this individual
possibly take the initiative?" (1977, p. 373). State offices
of education don't seem to be much help to ABE administrators
or teachers except through funding. Hunter and Harman state
that they "act as conduits for funding rather than as leaders
in adult basic education practice" (1979, p. 65). They
further add that although it may be legitimate to ask why so
many illiterates do not attend ABE classes, "It is equally
legitimate; however, to ask teachers, administrators, and
policymakers about their motivations" (1979, p. 20).

Scarcity of Adult Literacy Research

The plight of teachers and administrators could be
improved if reading personnel would spend more time
researching adult literacy and promoting the results. In
1977 Kavale and Lindsey noted that there were "few research
studies generating new knowledge about the nature of the
illiterates' reading process" (p. 368). In 1986 Harmon found
that most of reading research "has been conducted on school
children, usually, six-year-olds" (p. 65). In 1987 Bowren
lamented the meager amount of research on adult illiteracy,
stating that it has caused the teaching of the adult

illiterate to flounder "as an educational stepchild" (p. 208). The studies that have been done have not been enough and have not given enough guidelines for teaching the adult to read. Norman and Malicky says that there is "little direction from research regarding how illiterate adults may best be taught to read" (1984, p. 91). If the people who direct the literacy programs and those who are experts in the field of adult literacy don't push for innovative programs, how can the part-time (which sometimes means low-paid) instructor of adults do so?

Unsuitable Materials

Literacy programs could also be more successful if the materials for adults were more interesting and the methods used were more suitable. Laubach reading materials are prevalent in many ABE classes and other literacy programs. Although Laubach materials have been successful in teaching reading to people for whom English is a second language, "the Laubach approach cannot meet all needs and will not do the total job of teaching any illiterate adult to read" (Bowren and Zintz, 1977, p. 113). Laubach did not devise his materials for use with students who live in an industrial society; thus the skills he taught are too simple for the American adult reader (Skagen, 1986, p. 52). Many of the Laubach readers are boring and written in stilted language such as, "This is a man. This is a woman. This is a tent. This is a river. This is a valley" (Laubach, 1981, p. 10).

Adults need to be able to handle much more sophisticated

materials than these. Since many adult readers are similar

to Laubach, no wonder Richardson and Harbour complain that

"many published or commercial books are not compatible with

an adult's interests" (1982, p. 19).

Unsuitable Methods

Besides having uninteresting stories, many

commercialized materials rely on methods that are not

appropriate for adults. Phonics is taught extensively in

adult books, making it difficult "to distinguish the pages of

these adult materials from those of workbook pages for first

graders" (Rigg and Kazemek, 1985, p. 727). Yet, according to

Bowren and Zintz, few adults "will tolerate a laborious

synthesis approach to decoding" (1977, p. 97). Researchers

have recommended many approaches to teaching reading for

adults. Many of the ABE and other literacy instructors,

however, continue to use phonics and materials that are

boring and stilted.

Programs Not Motivating

The authors of <u>Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report</u>

<u>of the Commission on Reading</u> have summarized recent research

in reading and implications for reading instruction. One of

the key concepts presented is common knowledge among teachers

-- "motivation is one of the keys to learning to read" (1984,

p. 14). How can adults who may perceive learning to read as

a questionable goal anyway be motivated by people who lack

expertise in the field, using monotonous, stilted, often
nonsensical materials based on methods that they failed to
learn to read by previously? Adult reading programs need a
lot of revision in order to become more motivating.

Inadequate Funding

Add inadequate funding to the problems already mentioned
and success of any kind becomes a miracle. Kozol said in
Prisoners of Silence that "the current federal allocation
amounts to only one dollar for each illiterate adult" (1980,
p. 4). Sticht says that "adult literacy programs limp along
at less than 1 percent of the funding for school-based
programs" (1980, p. v). In 1987, Chall, Heron and Hilferty
claim that the amount of federal funding for literacy
programs has increased to $160 per year student, yet that
some programs spend as must as $2500 a year per student (p.
193).

Inadequate Spending

Although adequate funding is imperative for improving
literacy, there is also a need for more cost-effective
spending in literacy programs. Most literacy classes contain
a hodge-podge of materials -- textbooks, workbooks, readers -
- which many programs provide free of cost or at minimal cost
to students. One North Carolina ABE program at a large
community college spends approximately $10,000 per year on
consumable materials for adult beginning readers. Most
series designed for adults are not reusable because workbook

exercises are interspersed with the reading stories. If the majority of adults who need literacy improvement enter, the existing programs would probably not be able to afford the expense of giving each student these combination readers/workbooks. Having students pay for their own materials is an equitable idea, but impractical because the cost to the individual student would be higher than most are willing or able to afford.

One way to cope with such rising costs would be to separate the literature from the exercises. This idea originated in elementary schools with the advent of basal reading series. Basal series have hardbound readers which contain the literature or stories to be read. Accompanying these readers are workbooks and exercise books which are consumable. By having a set of reusable books, educators may be able to eliminate some of the cost of adult literacy materials.

The Adult Learner

Adults Not Bigger Children

In order to overcome the many problems that plague existing literacy programs, it is important to examine the adult as a learner. Since many educators or adults have been viewing adults as bigger children, the programs that have been offered to adults are those based on research concerning the learning process as it relates to children. Malcolm Knowles was not the first educator to recognize that adults

are different learners than children, but he was the first to
promote the term "androgogy," which refers to the science of
adult learning (1978, pp. 48-49).

Knowles bases much of his theory of adult learners on
educators from the past who realized that adults differ from
children in the type and amount of experiences they have.
These unique experiences should be the basis for educational
experiences the adult needs to encounter. Knowles lists five
concepts of the adult learner which were written by Edward C.
Lindeman in <u>The Meaning of Adult Education</u> in 1926. These
following concepts which are far from outdated give an
excellent description of the adult learner:

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience
    needs and interests that learning will satisfy;
    therefore, these are the appropriate starting point
    for organizing adult learning activities.
2. Adult's orientation to learning is life-centered;
    therefore, the appropriate units for organizing
    adult learning are life experiences, not subjects.
3. Experience is the richest resource for adults'
    learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult
    education is the analysis of experience.
4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing;
    therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in a
    process of mutual inquiry with them rather than to
    transmit his or her knowledge to them and then
    evaluate their conformity to it.
5. Individual differences among people increase with
    age; therefore, adult education must make optimal
    provision for differences in style, time, place, and
    pace of learning (1978, p.31).

These concepts clearly delineate the differences in learning
between children and adults. Since there are differences,
then it should be evident that the same methods effective
with children "may not, and most likely will not, be

effective if used with adults" (Cass, 1960, p. 87). Adult

educators can plan effective learning programs for adults if

they use the concepts as the basis for instruction.

According to Bowren:

> When educators can begin to build materials, programs,
> and instructional methods specifically based on adult
> research models and andragogical principles rather than
> modifying the strategies which are useful in the
> education of children, adult basic education will take a
> giant step forward (1987, p. 212).

Adults are not larger versions of children; therefore, they

should not be taught in the same manner.

Self-Directed Learning

Although adults are often more self-directed than

children, their needs and interests are all-too-often

overlooked in literacy classes. When adults enter classes

expressing the desire to improve reading or to learn to read,

they are usually given textbooks aimed at improving

generalized reading skills. Many of these adults, however,

have specific materials which they want to learn to read or

specialized reading skills they need to know. In one adult

basic education classroom, an elderly woman may be found

reading Golden Books, story books written for children. The

only reason she entered the class was to become able to read

well enough to read the Golden Books which she had purchased

to her grandchildren. Forcing adult students to learn to

read by using material written for children is not

educationally sound; however, letting them learn to read from

such materials when they have expressed the need and desire to do so is excellent policy.

Many adults, like the elderly woman, come into literacy programs with a definite idea of what they want to learn. Knowles contends that "people become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems" (1980, p. 44). Some ABE students just want to learn to read the Bible. Others need to read better to perform their work tasks. One 29-year-old maintenance worker who had dropped out of one literacy class because Laubach was used as the only teaching tool reluctantly entered another at his boss's request because the plant where he was working was going on a computer system. Instead of being told his job duties daily such as "Sweep the floors in Plant A today," he would have to be able to read them on a computer. He needed to read because he would have a problem doing his job if he didn't. Newton says that "the adult's orientation to learning is here and now and problem centered" (1980, p. 4). Not only does that explain this student's motivation to learn, it also reveals the text of what he needed to learn. When the second teacher began using a job-related terms as part of the reading curriculum, the student learned how to read. According to Harmon, "People are generally successful in acquiring the information and skills that are significant in their lives" (1986, p. 16).

What these examples emphasize is that adults are more successful as learners when they can take part in the educational planning process. After all, "the heart of adultness is independence and self-direction" (Newton, 1980, p. 3).

Using Experiences of Adults

Along with self-direction, adults have vast experiences which can be an aid to learning. They have a "fuller, richer, more stable and autonomous sense of self than children do, and a repertoire of experiences from which to draw as they read, discuss, create, and experiment" (Gross, 1977, pp. 58-59). Since they have such rich experiences, "greater emphasis can be placed on techniques that tap the experience of the adult learner" (Knowles, 1980, p. 50).

These life experiences may be used in a number of ways. Encouraging adults to compare the similarities of their own experiences with experiences of others is just one of them. Another important way is through group discussion. When teachers become as concerned with the adults' ability to connect experiences they read about to their own and discuss how to apply them to future situations as they are with a student's ability to answer "Who? What? When? Where?" questions, then literacy instruction will become more meaningful. Since "people attach more meaning to learning they gain from experience than those they acquire passively,"

helping adults associate learning with their experiences makes sense (Knowles, 1980, p. 44).

Using Adults in Planning Curriculum

Since mature individuals have "a storehouse of codified experiences," strategies must utilize adults' input into learning (Newton, 1980, p. 4). In order to obtain such input, educators must involve these students in goal-setting, material choosing, and method planning tasks. The key words for adult instruction should be that the instruction is "relevant, interesting, and motivating" (Murphy, 1975, p. 56). If adults are involved in the task of choosing what they want to learn as well as how they will learn, then their instruction should accommodate all three criteria.

Capitalizing on Adults' Motivation

Most adult learners generally are highly motivated to learn; otherwise, they would not be in a instructional setting. They are noticeably different from many traditional students in their strong desire to learn as well as in their readiness to learn (Buchana and Sherman, 1981, p. 3). They demand relevancy in education because the typical adult learner wants "to learn today what he can apply tomorrow" (Buchana and Sherman, 1981, p. 3). Therefore, adult learners may increasingly "question the quality of teaching and the relationship of faculty to students" (Apps, 1981, p. 12). They want to learn, but not necessarily what is taught in traditional classrooms or in the same mode. Educators would

be wise to alter traditional programs so that such motivation is enhanced, not destroyed.

Accommodating Physical and Other Limitations

Adult learners often share many of the same problems which interfere with their education even if the program has been based on theories of the adult learner. Such problems may be physical in nature; adults often suffer from "health and nutritional problems, neurological inadequacies, auditory and visual problems and motor limitations" (Bowren and Zintz, 1977, p. 30). Their problems may also be emotional ones such as poor self-image or unrealistic goals. Also, they may have social and familial difficulties (Apps, 1981, p. 49). They may share similar mental or education-related problems such as inability to organize study time, lack of concentration, and slow reaction time (Apps, 1981, pp. 45 & 40). Programs that do not take all of these possible problem areas into consideration will probably be ineffective in dealing with adults.

One major constraint placed upon adult students is time. They are bound by outside influences such as family, social and job responsibilities than are children and often are limited in the amount of time they have to devote to literacy classes. It is not uncommon for literacy instructors to hear that an adult has to miss class or be late because of one of the following reasons:

    I have to work overtime.
    My daughter is having a dance recital.

It is my son's birthday.
I have to go to church.
I have to go to PTA.
My church circle is having a covered dish supper.
I can't get a babysitter.
My husband/wife/son/daughter/mother/father/is sick.

Literacy programs must be flexible enough to accommodate for adults' limited amount of time for education.

Helping the Adult Learn Quickly

Even though many adults have limitations on their time and abilities, they have a great need to accomplish goals as quickly as possible. "Adults' sense of urgency is different; they want faster results because of all the conflicting demands on their time" (Gross, 1977, p. 59). Furthermore, the adult learner "wants to apply tomorrow what he learns today" (Knowles, 1978, p. 58). Instructional programs that provide concrete ways to show improvement from the very beginning will not only attract more adults, but also retain them longer.

Methods of Teaching Adult Beginning Readers

Sight Words/Phonics

Once educators have familiarized themselves with the adult learner, they then need to study the basic methods for teaching reading to adults, methods such as phonics and sight words. There has been great controversy among reading educators as to whether a sight word or phonetic approach is the best way to teach beginning reading, yet both methods are necessary. Sight words are advantageous because they show results faster -- teach a student "sweep," "plant," "floor,"

"today" in one class period and that student can read, "Sweep the floor in Plant A today." Sight words are also necessary because there are many words in the English language which are irregular and thus cannot be decoded by phonics. Learning words from basic word lists for adults can facilitate an adult's need to function in society quickly. Drilling adult beginning readers on words like "men" and "women" can produce instant results. After introducing these two words to a group of adults, a teacher heard the following comment: "Now I don't have to be afraid to go alone to a public restroom."

Phonics, though slower, is also important. Students who learn basic phonics rules do not have to memorize every single word in the English language. Instead, they can sound out unfamiliar words. However, there are several problems with the use of a total phonetic approach to teaching adult beginning readers. One is that the usual phonics textbooks "frequently represent symbols of failure for students" (Rauch, 1985, p. 4). If they didn't learn in school through a phonetic approach, chances are they will fail again. Another problem with phonics is that it is a slow approach to teaching reading and most adults want to learn quickly. Jones points out that "the learning of phonics can be much more difficult undertaking for the beginning reader than is generally supposed" (1981, p. 105). A third problem with phonics instruction is that it typically fails "to provide

the well-written and interesting stories that global learners require" (Carbo, 1987, p. 199). It is a necessary learning tool, but it needs to be only a part of reading instruction for adults, not an entire program.

Silent/Oral Reading by Students

Another controversial area in the teaching of reading centers around whether to emphasize oral or silent reading by students. Since much oral reading is found in reading programs for children, many adult educators have incorporated it into programs for adults. Although some oral reading by students is needed for diagnostic purposes and keeping up with student progress, it is not a skill that many adults need to become proficient in. Those who have envisions of public speaking career -- preachers, teachers, actors, actresses, or radio and television broadcasters -- may need to spend time perfecting oral reading skills. Cass reports that most adults do their reading silently and thus emphasis should be "placed upon this type of reading as soon as feasible" (1960, p. 407). Shohen also believes materials "should be read silently, not orally" (1986, p. 40).

Most adults do need to know how to read silently with comprehension. The major reason most adults need to learn how to read is that they need to understand printed materials. The problem with trying to understand any material that is read aloud is that oral reading actually detracts from comprehension. Bruder and Biggs say that oral

reading is "a very specialized ability which may have little or nothing to do with reading comprehension" (1988, p. 737). Therefore, a greater emphasis should be placed on silent reading in adult programs than on oral reading.

Another problem with oral reading is the same problem often connected to the phonics approach -- oral reading may produce fear and anxiety and feelings of failure. Adults often have horror stories of how they have been ridiculed in the past for their poor oral reading skills. In a study of 125 literacy students in a major metropolitan area of Western Pennsylvania, 56% "described reading aloud in school as a negative experience" (Bruder and Biggs, 1988, p. 737). One of the first questions that many prospective literacy students will ask is if they have to read aloud. It would seem more reasonable, therefore, to place a greater emphasis on silent reading than oral reading.

<center>Oral Reading to Students</center>

Oral reading to students, however, is another issue. Adults who cannot read need quick access to the printed page and reading aloud to students provides that access (Richardson and Harbour, 1982, p. 18). Forester encourages teachers to "model fluent reading" and encourage students to read along (1988, p. 611). A teacher in one ABE class read to her students every night for one full year. At the end of the year she was getting discouraged because the students did not seem to be overly-interested in the oral reading segment

of the class. She had to miss a class to attend a conference so she got a substitute. She told the substitute that she did not have to read aloud to the class because the class could miss that at least one night. When the substitute tried to start class, however, the students refused to work until she read something to them orally. The students later confided to the teacher that the oral reading to them was their favorite part of the class.

Language Experience Approach

Out of all the research for teaching reading to adults, one approach -- the language experience approach --is mentioned by the most experts as the best method for teaching adult beginning readers. The use of this method, which uses sentences and/or stories dictated by students as the basis of reading material, is widely encouraged by reading and adult learning experts. Newton claims it seems to have "greater merit than others in light of andragogical theory" (1980, p. 5). Knowles, the "father of androgogy," says that "Andragogues convey their respect for people by making use of their experiences as a resource for learning" (1978, p. 56). Padak and Padak state that it facilitates learning since "dictated accounts contain the learner's own use and language patterns" (1987, p. 492). Jones concurs that the use of the language experience approach helps the "remedial reader learn and reinforce words that are important to him" (1981, pp. 90-91). Shohen describes language experience as an approach

that "has been used by teachers for years," one that can be "very successful with older, disabled readers" (1985, p. 43). If numbers of proponents aptly reveal benefits, the language experience approach may be touted as one of the most successful methods for teaching adult beginning readers.

Cloze

A method often used in conjunction with the language experience approach is the cloze technique. Material which students have written or read are rewritten with key words and/or every fifth word or more deleted. Students are then asked to fill in the blanks with the missing words (which are sometimes provided in list form). Exact words of the author as well as synonyms are counted as correct. Students who can read and comprehend the story can usually fill the correct words in most of the blanks. Cloze exercises enhance a student's comprehension and raise awareness of sentence structure. Padak and Padak describe cloze activities, especially those "developed from dictated accounts" as being excellent for giving "additional practice in both comprehension and word identification" (1987, p. 494). The cloze procedure is used best as an adjunct to other methods. It enables readers to check their comprehension skills.

Group/Programmed Instruction

Once a literacy instructor has selected the method(s) of teaching reading, the next question is whether to use group or programmed (individualized) instruction. Research is not

clear as to which is better, but some studies do indicate that individualized seems better for the adult beginning reader (Chall, Heron, and Hilferty, 1987, p. 195). Some experts disagree: Shohen says individualized is "strongly recommended" (1985, p. 36) whereas Cass says that experience shows small group instruction is best (1960, p. 89). As in the sight words/phonics debate, this issue does not have to be an either/or situation.

Rate Development

Although issues like group versus individualized instruction are found frequently in articles on beginning reading instruction, few authors mention rate of reading. Yet some experts are concerned about the extremely slow rate of adult illiterates (Bristow and Leslie, 1988, p. 213). Keefe and Meyer suggest using a technique called "alternate model reading" which requires learners to read faster by reading alternately with a tutor (1988, p. 618). Some adults read so slowly that by the time they finish reading a sentence, they cannot remember the words at the beginning of the sentence. This is obviously a detriment to comprehension. Bristow and Leslie conclude that "fluency training should be added to instructional programs for illiterate adults" (1988, p. 200).

Vocabulary/Comprehension Development

Two key methods of teaching adult beginning reading involve the development of vocabulary and comprehension.

Both elements are crucial to an adult's becoming a reader
rather than just a decoder. Without a basic understanding of
what words mean or what they mean when grouped together in
phrases or sentences, an adult can pronounce, but cannot
understand. Unfortunately, "the portrait of the adult basic
reader that emerges from the literature is one of a word
caller or decoder" (Padak and Padak, 1987, p. 491). Yet
Rauch believes that "reading is more than the ability to
pronounce words correctly" (1985, p. 3). It is the ability
to understand those words and understand what they mean in
the context of sentences and paragraphs. Methods for
vocabulary and comprehension development are an essential
part of every reading program, particularly those for adults.

Functional Reading

One method that is widely praised by experts is the use
of functional reading, using real-life materials in the
classroom. Feathers and Smith advocate such reading by
saying that "model classroom instruction mirrors real world
uses of informational material" (1987, p. 507). Adult
educators stress the fact that adults generally know what
they want to learn when they walk into a classroom. Many
want to be able to read such things as menus, recipes,
advertisements, job applications, health forms, newspaper or
magazine stories, and job-related materials. Using these
functional materials gives these adults the opportunity to
help select the reading content which is most applicable to

their lives. Many textbooks for adults contain functional

reading materials, but the use of materials that the students

bring to class to read or those collected from the students'

own environment may help the adult learners believe that what

they are learning is "real."

In a national survey conducted from April to November of

1971, 5,073 adults aged 16 and over were asked to rate the

importance of reading tasks that they encountered. They

listed the following:

1. price, weight, and size information
2. street and traffic signs
3. main news in newspapers
4. writing on packages and labels
5. manuals and written instructions
6. forms, invoices and accounting statements
7. tests, examinations and written assignments
8. letters, memos, and notes
9. order forms
10. local news in newspapers
11. school papers and notes
12. bills and statements (Murphy, 1975, pp. 50-52).

Good instructors would definitely use such a list to discover

new and different materials for reading instruction. Mail-

order catalogs or "wish books" have much to offer in

developing skills of vocabulary, classification, critical

reading, and location and research skills in these areas

(Kamil and Moe, 1979, p. 159). Telephone company pamphlets,

newspaper articles and magazine articles may be used for

comprehension and rate training (Smith and Dulin, 1971, p.

65).

Recreational Reading

Often overlooked in reading programs for adults is recreational reading. Recreational reading, however, is extremely important because it can instill lifelong reading habits in students. Many adults today are not illiterate, just aliterate, meaning that they can read, but do not. The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them" (cited in Braude, 1965, p. 80).

Recreational reading encompasses not only what adults want to read, but also what adults should be exposed to read -- good literature. Kamil bemoans the fact that poor illiterates are taught "how to read a bus schedule, but the rest get liberal arts" (1981, p. 286). Rigg and Kazemek suggest using poetry as a basis for promoting adults' desire to want to read. They comment that reading poetry "helps them see the difference between knowing how to read and wanting to read to understand themselves and their world better" (1986, p. 219). In order to promote lifelong reading, recreational reading is an issue that has to be addressed in literacy programs.

Materials for Teaching Adult Beginning Readers

Adequate methods of teaching adult beginning readers would help. So would adequate instructional materials. Chall and Carroll in Toward a Literate Society recommend that instructional materials be developed especially for adults (1975, p. 37). Gray in 1926 recommended using a basal reader

with adult stories (p. 39). Fifty years later we still do not have an appropriate one to use. Basal readers, readers with many exercises and selections of literary value written on different grade levels, are used as the basis for reading programs in grades kindergarten through six, but they are not used for beginning adult readers. A basal reading series based on observations by those who teach adults and researchers in the field of adult reading may improve success and retention rates in adult reading classes, particularly adult basic education classes.

A basal reading series for adults will expose adult beginning readers to suitable, interesting material of literary value.

Summary

There are programs in existence to raise literacy levels in the United States, but these programs share many problems such as funding and personnel training and competency. Quantitative programs do reach more people, but qualitative ones teach more people to read. When educators institute quality reading programs for adult beginning readers, then literacy, rather than illiteracy, may be transmitted to future generations of Americans.

Research on appropriate methods and materials for teaching adult beginning readers should be utilized in planning the curriculum of literacy programs. Experts could design an effective reading program based on such research

that would facilitate the jobs of the many

underprepared/overworked teachers of adults. A basal reading

series for adults is needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study, adult basic education teachers in the North Carolina community/technical college system were surveyed to determine methods and materials they use and rate as important in teaching adult beginning reading, methods and materials they perceive their students as liking or disliking, reading interest areas of students, and the educational backgrounds and preparation time for teachers. The researcher also examined available published reading series for adults and rated them on a scale of poor to excellent, using twenty components of a good reading program as a guideline. Finally, a sample unit plan for teaching adult beginning reading was designed, a unit based on research in adult reading.

Subjects

For this study, adult basic education instructors who teach adult beginning readers, zero to fifth grade reading levels, in the technical/community college system in North Carolina were surveyed. Since the North Carolina Department of Community College does not have a listing of all Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructors, three to five surveys were sent with a cover letter explaining the purpose and

significance of the study to all 58 directors of ABE in the system (See Appendices A & B for the letter to ABE directors and the survey). The directors then distributed the surveys to the appropriate ABE instructors. Each survey was attached to a cover letter explaining the study to the instructors and self-addressed, stamped envelopes which would permit the instructors to mail their completed surveys directly to the researcher, thus preserving anonymity. Appendix C is the letter to ABE instructors (See Appendix C).

The instructors were asked not to sign their names on the surveys, but they did identify their schools so the percentage of schools represented by the results could be determined. Mailing the surveys to the ABE instructors directly would have been preferable, but obtaining their names and addresses would have been a difficult task. Most ABE instructors in North Carolina are part-time employees who teach in a variety of locations throughout each county, not just at the technical/community colleges. The number of these instructors who teach from quarter to quarter fluctuates because ABE classes are taught on a basis of need. If a complete list of instructors from each ABE director had been obtained, thus determining the exact population size, the size of the population would probably have been different by the time the surveys were mailed. The ABE directors were needed to reach the entire population. ABE instructors were chosen as the population because they are the largest group

of people teaching adult beginning readers in North Carolina; therefore, the response rate would be higher than any other literacy program in the state.

Instruments

Type of Instruments

Two instruments were designed for the study. The first is the survey sent to the ABE instructors and the second is a checklist for evaluating beginning reading materials for adults (See Appendices B & D).

Rationale for Survey Questions

In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked to identify their institutions by name; to indicate their educational background, including degrees held and majors; and to list their preparation time, if any. The review of the literature revealed that many ABE teachers have elementary and secondary teaching degrees with little to no preparation time. It also revealed that many reading experts encourage teachers of adult beginning readers to focus less on published materials and design their own materials and use innovative methods. Mezirow, among others, claims that "while teachers are almost universally encouraged to prepare their own materials relevant to the learner's lives, little time is actually allotted for such efforts (1975, p. 26).

Besides not having the time to design materials, these teachers often do not have the expertise. Asking the exact amount of preparation time and the educational backgrounds of

the respondents would help ascertain how much help, if any, ABE teachers in North Carolina need from reading experts in creating and/or locating appropriate materials for adult beginning readers.

<div align="center">Rationale for Survey Methods Section</div>

Ratings for Methods

In this section 14 methods for teaching reading to adults were listed and teachers were asked to rate those methods according to their usage (Don't Use, Use Some, Use a Lot), student opinions (Don't Like, Like Some, Like a Lot), and teacher perception of importance (Of Little or No Importance, Average Importance, Extremely Important). The 14 methods included on the survey are those recommended by reading experts in teaching adult beginning readers.

Sight Words/Phonics

The first two methods on the survey are sight words and phonics. Since research indicates that the teaching of phonics may be a "slow" approach for teaching adults to read and sight words a "faster" approach, the researcher wanted to compare the usage of the two. Reading experts say that while children may docilely complete page after page of phonics drills even when they already know the skills, that adults don't have the time nor inclination to do repetitive drills.

Sight word advocates promote the use of sight words by basic sight word lists for adults. Some of the lists are generic in nature, based on common nouns or words used most

in the English language, and some contain functional words such as "danger," "dead end," "women," and "men." Phonics advocates promote the teaching of reading through letter/sound associations and the memorization of phonetic rules. Even though research favors the sight word approach for adults, phonics advocates, such as Rudolph Flesch, the author of <u>Why Johnny Can't Read</u>, have been extremely vocal in promoting phonics. Finding out which approach teachers favor may indicate where they obtain their information about teaching reading to adults.

There is also a possibility that teachers have a tendency to teach the way in which they learned. Asking teachers to rate sight words and phonics may indicate more than which method is preferable; it may indicate which has been learned by the teacher, thus revealing as much about the making of a teacher as well as the making of an adult reading program. Can teachers adapt to their students' learning styles which may be different from their own styles? The survey would not prove this, but may indicate whether or not this is happening.

<u>Oral Reading/Silent Reading</u>

The same concerns could be raised by comparing the results of the next two items on the survey, oral reading by students and silent reading by students. The researcher wonders if teachers are aware of the importance researchers place on silent reading. If it is not emphasized as much as

oral reading, then there is a possibility that teachers may be teaching reading the way they learned -- through round-robin oral reading.

If teachers do, in fact, teach the way they are taught, the researcher would question the seemingly lack of emphasis placed on oral reading to students in ABE classes. Therefore, the researcher placed oral reading to students, another method praised by experts, next on the survey. Teachers may feel that such an activity does not help students learn to read faster; therefore, they may view it as important, but not use it.

Language Experience/Cloze Exercise

The next two methods on the list were selected because they are relatively "new" approaches to teaching reading, the language experience and the cloze approaches. The language experience approach (LEA) was documented as early as 1966 as producing satisfactory and, in some cases, superior readers among elementary school children (Stauffer, 1966, pp. 18-24). As early as 1963, Lee and Allen listed basic concepts of this approach which have been used since then for both children and adults (1963, Chapter 1). In 1953 Wilson Taylor introduced the cloze procedure for teaching and for comprehension assessment (pp. 415-433). These two approaches then are certainly not "new," but definitely not as well entrenched in the teaching of reading as phonics or even sight words. The researcher is interested in noting the

usage of both methods as well as the significance placed upon them by the instructors.

Group/Programmed Instruction

Two other items on the survey are group and programmed instruction. Most elementary classrooms have traditionally used the group method for teaching beginning reading, but the researcher's experience in teaching ABE classes leads to the assumption that programmed instruction is easier because of the rapid turnover of ABE students and the vast differences in their reading grade levels. Many ABE classes serve students reading from zero to eighth grade levels, making grouping difficult. One class may only have five students, each reading at a different level. Even if a group is established, members may drop out of the class before the group can complete exercises on one story. Including these items could reveal as much about class structure as teachers' opinions.

Rate Development

Another item listed is one rarely mentioned in research for teaching adult beginning readers - rate development. The researcher noted after 4 years of teaching ABE students and 17 years of teaching remedial reading to college students that rate plays a key role in reading comprehension. Many students can pronounce words, but mere pronunciation alone is not enough. As recent research notes "accurate word recognition is only one aspect of the process, since the

automaticity theory also suggests that word recognition should occur quickly and without conscious thought (Stoodt, 1981, p. 125). Reading words is not enough -- reading them fluently may be the key to greater understanding. The survey may give clues to the ABE teachers' knowledge of the importance of rate development.

Vocabulary/Comprehension Development

The author included vocabulary and comprehension development because they, too, are critical in the process of learning to read. Students progress in reading by not only the amount of words they learn, but also the way they can connect those words to make meaning. Whatever other methods are used, vocabulary and comprehension need to be stressed; thus their inclusion in the survey is really mandatory.

Functional Reading

Since adult educators and reading experts stress the use of "real-life" reading for adults, the researcher feels it is also necessary to include functional reading in the survey. The researcher explains the term functional by putting "want ads, recipes, etc." in parentheses below the term. This is another newer method for teaching adults to read, but one the researcher believes to be widespread in usage and appeal.

Recreational Reading

When time is as all-important as it is in adult reading classes and teachers are trying to overcome years of deficiency quickly, the researcher wants to know if the

instructors place emphasis on the development of life-long

reading strategies such as recreational reading. Therefore,

the last method added was recreational reading. If ABE

teachers think it is an important aspect of teaching adults,

but do not use it often, then time-management in ABE

classrooms may be an important issue.

Rationale for Survey Materials Section

Five reading series were added to the survey along with

the 14 methods -- Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series, Plato

Reading System, Laubach reading series, LVA materials and

Sullivan's Programmed Reading for Adults, materials which the

researcher judged to be basic ones in North Carolina ABE

classes. Teachers were also asked to rate these materials

according to their usage (Don't Use, Use Some, Use a Lot),

student opinions (Don't Like, Like Some, Like a Lot), and

teacher perception of importance (Little or None, Average,

Extremely).

The Laubach series was included because of its

popularity nationwide and in North Carolina. After talking

to ABE directors and instructors at statewide conferences,

the researcher noted that Laubach seemed to be the most used

set of materials for teaching adult beginning readers in ABE

classes. In all conversations, no one criticized Laubach --

it was generally accepted by directors and teachers, yet the

researcher found the material to be disliked not only by

herself, but also by her students due to the stilted language

and boring stories. Research also indicates that there has been a heavy reliance on the Laubach method in the past which seemed to be in direct conflict with other research that indicates that an over-reliance on phonics and child-like exercises is not the best way to teach reading to adults. The researcher decided to document the usage of Laubach and the importance teachers place upon it.

The state legislature of North Carolina purchased one million dollars in the Plato Reading System and distributed the computers and software to all 58 technical/community colleges. A survey of materials used in North Carolina would not be complete without adding the Plato system.

In reviewing articles on reading instruction for adults, the researcher noted the use of materials from Literacy Volunteers of America and the Steck-Vaughn Company. When the survey was presented to several ABE instructors for examination, the researcher was also told that Sullivan's Programmed Reading was used a lot in North Carolina. These three series were then added to the survey. Although other materials are used in ABE classes, the researcher only included those which were supposedly total reading programs.

Rationale for Interest Areas

The third part of the survey is a listing of general reading topics, such as "politics," "religion," and "romance," which respondents were asked to rate according to their perception of student interest on a scale of 1-5 (1

being little or no interest and 5 being very much interest).
This section was based on an adult reading interest survey
developed by Heathington and Koskinen in 1982, a survey
printed in the Journal of Reading. The authors developed
their survey to be administered orally to students so that
instructors could determine types of materials students
wanted and needed to read. Any company developing a basal
reading series for adults would need to be cognizant of
student interest areas. Even if the instructors' judgment of
student interests are not totally accurate, this section
could help authors, publishers and educators in the selection
of reading materials for adults.

The researcher chose the Heathington/Koskinen interest
inventory for this survey section because it is based on
interests expressed by literacy students. They discovered
that there is limited research on programs for adult
beginning readers, especially "information on methods for
systematically determining their interests" (1982, p. 252).
In order to develop their inventory, they talked to 91
students ages 16 to 76 who read below the fifth grade level
(1982, p. 253). Responses from these students about their
interests led the authors to list 16 topics under a section
labeled "I would like to read about..."

The researcher changed two topics in order to make them
more general -- using "cars/racing" instead of "auto
mechanics" and "biographies" instead of "famous people."

Three topics were omitted from the Heathington/Koskinen list -- "child care," "law," and "sewing." The researcher thought that these topics were too narrow and chose to use more general ones. If students did have interests in specific areas, the ABE teachers could list those under a section for other interests.

Two interest areas were added to the survey -- "local news" and "business." Although local news isn't a topic that could be readily used by publishers in producing adult literacy material, it could be an important way to make reading more real for adults. Including "local news" as a topic could reveal to publishers the significance it has for students. The topic of "business" was added because of the increasing concern over literacy in the workplace. If literacy students are interested in reading about business, then more workplace materials could be published.

Rationale for Evaluation Form for Reading Series

The second instrument used in this study is an evaluation form for adult reading materials. A checklist of 20 items was devised to rate materials on a scale of 1-3 (1 = Excellent, 2 = Average, 3 = Poor). The items in the checklist were adapted from Stoodt's evaluation of basal readers, changing the checklist to be more applicable to adult reading materials (1981, pp. 230-231). This checklist was used to determine which materials had the best comprehensive reading programs.

One major complaint of reading materials for adults is that the content and style are not suitable for adults. The researcher, thus, included the following areas to rate the materials on their appropriateness for adult readers: "adult format and appearance," "appropriate adult interest level," "attractive and suitable illustrations," "style of type pleasing and appropriate for adults" and "realistic patterns of speech and natural sentence structure."

Another complaint is that some adult reading series contain stories that have not been updated to avoid stereotyping, particularly of women. The Laubach series, for instance, has a story about a woman who has to ask her husband's permission to bake pies for extra money. In order to detect such biases, the researcher added two categories -- "unbiased presentation of different races and ethnic groups" and "unbiased presentation of females."

Two other problem areas expressed by some reviewers of adult reading materials are the lack of different types of literature and selections of literary value. The components included to judge materials on these areas are "literary merit of selections" and "balanced representation of different types of literature."

A further complaint is that recreational reading is often neglected. The researcher concluded that a good series would, at least, encourage recreational reading and perhaps even list supplementary books for such reading. Another

component was added to the list -- "encouragement of independent and recreational reading."

In order to match students to appropriate materials, one key question is the reading grade level of the materials. Often publishers include a grade level range for their materials, but teachers sometimes find these stated levels to be under-exaggerated; they find that the books are harder than the suggested reading grade range indicated. Experienced teachers can often detect such differences between stated levels and actual levels by examining word usage and sentence structure. The researcher used this method in conjunction with the Frye readability formula in order to check the level. This was reflected in the component "appropriate readability level(s)."

The Commission on Reading urges that all language arts be incorporated into a total reading program -- speaking, reading, writing and listening (1984, p. 79). The researcher added "incorporation of all language arts" to check this important aspect of reading programs.

In order to have a balanced reading program, literature also suggests the inclusion of the teaching of basic reading skills such as phonics, word recognition, context skills, vocabulary and comprehension development. It is not only important that these skills are included; they must also be introduced, reinforced and retaught properly and in proper sequence. The following areas were added to reflect

adherence to these concepts: "introduction, reinforcement and reteaching of reading skills," "logical sequence of skills," "appropriate amount of phonics," "appropriate amount of context skills," and "attention to different levels of comprehension."

The last area added, "adequate guides for teaching material" could have been expanded to judge the value of the guides, but the researcher could not adequately complete an in-depth study of teaching manuals because many series do not even have manuals. The researcher just added the general guide category in order to judge all materials equally. Teachers' guides are important because they help teachers adjust the materials to their students; therefore, this was determined to be a significant component of good reading material.

<div align="center">Design and Procedure</div>

<div align="center">General Design</div>

The design of the study -- surveying ABE instructors for their perception of students' interests as well as the methods and materials used for teaching reading and the evaluation of published reading materials for adults -- enables the researcher to answer the research questions regarding appropriate materials and methods for teaching adult beginning readers.

The questions are:

1. What methods and materials do teachers of adult beginning readers use?

2. What methods and materials of beginning reading instruction do teachers judge to be best liked by students?
3. How do the teachers rate the methods and materials they use?
4. What are the reading interests of adult beginning readers?
5. What methods and materials commonly used in the North Carolina technical/community college system are judged to be suitable in content and interest levels for adults according to research?
6. What might be included in a unit of instruction for adult beginning readers?

Survey Design and Procedure

The survey sent to ABE instructors in North Carolina had three major parts to it. The first part asked questions about their educational backgrounds and amount of preparation time. The second listed 14 methods and 5 materials for teaching adult beginning reading with columns for teachers to rate these according to their usage as well as student and teacher opinions of them. The third section contained 15 interest areas in reading which teachers were asked to rate on a five-point scale (ranging from very little or no interest to very much interest) according to their perceptions of students' likes and dislikes.

Several ABE instructors reviewed the survey to assist the researcher in refining the instrument. To provide confidentiality, teachers were asked to return the surveys directly to the researcher. Although the instructors were notified that the state ABE coordinator had approved of the survey, they were also told that she just "encouraged" their

response. Responses that were volunteered, not required,
were preferable.

The major flaw in the design of the survey is that
instructors are asked to judge student opinions. Surveying
the students for their own opinions would be far more
accurate, but also more difficult because adult beginning
readers would have to be surveyed orally. Although some of
the judgments in this section may not totally reflect actual
student opinions, it does give a general idea of student
likes and dislikes.

Another problem in this section of the survey is that
instructors were given only three options for each area. A
greater range of responses may have insured a more detailed
representation, but would have made final tabulations
extremely time-consuming and complex. This section of the
survey was designed to get a general idea of usage and
teacher and student opinions.

Evaluation Checklist Design and Procedure

The second part of the study is the examination of
reading materials for adult beginning readers. The
researcher will use the checklist of 20 components of good
reading series to rate as many series as possible. The
researcher will examine teachers' manuals and tables of
content to see overall skills taught. The selected exercises
for each reading skill will be carefully examined. Each book
in the series will be checked for overall appearance and

content, and the examiner will read at least three selections from each book.

The reader should note that the materials were evaluated by the researcher based on the following criterion:

1. adult format and appearance
2. appropriate adult interest level
3. attractive and suitable illustrations
4. appropriate readability level(s)
5. literary merit of selections
6. balanced representation of different types of literature
7. unbiased presentation of different races and ethnic groups
8. unbiased presentation of females
9. style of type pleasing and appropriate for adults
10. realistic patterns of speech and natural sentence structure
11. incorporation of all language arts
12. introduction, reinforcement, and reteaching of reading skills
13. encouragement of independent and recreational reading
14. adequate vocabulary introduction
15. balanced approach to word recognition
16. logical sequence of skills
17. appropriate amount of phonics skills
18. appropriate amount of context skills
19. attention of different levels of comprehension
20. adequate guides for teaching material

To avoid problems related to bias, the researcher designed this lengthy evaluation form so that materials could be judged in more than one or two areas.

Sample Basal Reader Unit Design and Procedure

In the final section of the study, a sample unit for teaching adult beginning readers was written. The researcher tried to combine the recommendations of ABE instructors and their students with suggestions from reading experts to

construct a unit which would be interesting to adult readers. The different methods of teaching reading listed on the survey were incorporated in the unit. The unit was also based on the premise that reading and writing should be integrated and that reading instruction should utilize the experiences of the adult student. Although each reading teacher should work with students to create their own materials, most of them do not have the time or the expertise to collect or create their own materials. A well-planned, interesting basal reader series for adults, based on research and considering suggestions from instructors and students, may create greater opportunities for reading success and foster reading and writing as worthwhile, pleasurable goals. The unit is just an example of how materials may be designed for beginning adult readers.

How easy it is to pick up Laubach, help someone read, "This is a girl. The girl has a bird. The girl has a bird in her hand" (1981, p. 4). A basal reading series could be just as easy to use and a lot more interesting.

Summary

This study of North Carolina technical/community college ABE instructors was conducted in order to determine the educational backgrounds and preparation time of adult beginning reader teachers, methods and materials both students and teachers think are effective, and teacher perception of student interest areas. Present reading series

were also examined and rated according to their overall
effectiveness in fulfilling 20 components of excellent
reading programs. A sample unit for teaching adult beginning
reading, based not only on survey results but also on reading
research, was written as an example of the type of material
that may be included in basal reading series.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This study examined methods and materials for teaching adult illiterates. The methods include phonics; sight words; oral and silent reading by students; oral reading to students; language experience approach; cloze procedure; development of rate, comprehension and vocabulary; functional and recreational reading; as well as group and programmed instruction. The major materials studied are Laubach, LVA, Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series, Plato and Sullivan's Programmed Reading. The researcher surveyed ABE teachers in all 58 technical/community colleges in North Carolina to determine usage and opinions of these methods and materials.

The majority of technical/community colleges in North Carolina responded to the survey of adult basic education teachers. The surveys revealed the amount of preparation time, if any, educational degrees and majors, plus teacher opinions of methods and materials and student interests.

The researcher examined 28 beginning reader series for adults and rated them on a three-point scale ranging from excellent to poor according to an evaluation form based on 20 components of a good reading series. Finally, the researcher

devised a sample basal reading unit to be used with adults
reading on a 2.0 and 2.5 grade level.

Profile of Respondents

Two hundred and seven surveys were sent to ABE directors
at all 58 technical/community colleges in North Carolina.
There were 114 surveys received from 41 different
institutions with a 55% return rate from at least 71% of all
technical/community colleges (Appendix E lists the schools
alphabetically by name and gives the number of surveys
returned from each). Nine respondents omitted the name of
the institution from the survey forms; therefore the total
percentage of schools represented by the survey could
possibly be higher that 71%. Also, two teachers jointly
completed one survey. Their responses were counted once, but
both of their educational degrees were included in the data.

Of the 41 schools responding 12 schools returned 1
survey, 11 returned 2 surveys, 10 returned 3 surveys, 6
returned 4 surveys, 1 returned 5 surveys and 1 returned 12
surveys. The mode is 1 survey per school and the average is
2.78 surveys.

Educational Levels of Respondents

Comparison of Degrees

In the second part of the survey, teachers were asked to
list their educational levels and majors (Appendix F gives a
breakdown of specific degrees and majors as well as the
number and percentage of respondents for each degree and

major). One respondent omitted the section on educational background. Figure 1 compares the degrees of all respondents by percentages with BA/BS degrees, MA degrees, EdD degrees, associate degrees and no degrees listed.

Figure 1. Breakdown of bachelor's, master's, doctorate and other degrees held by respondents.
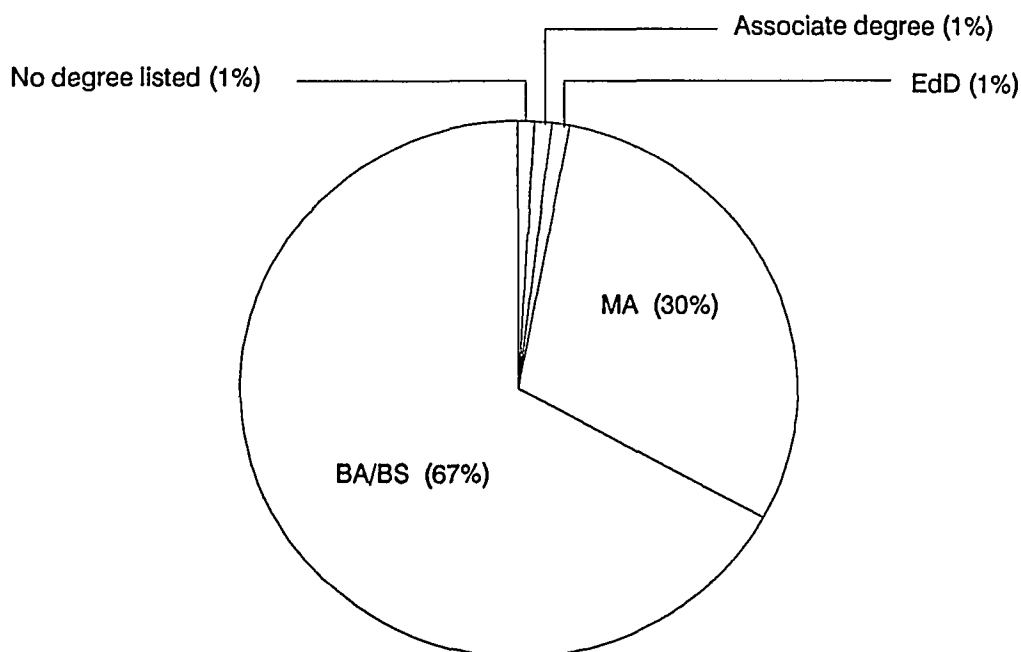
Distribution of Degrees
(n = 115)

BA/BS Degrees

The number of respondents who checked that their highest level of educational achievement is the BA/BS degrees is 77 (67%). Of those, 2% majored in art education; 3% in business; 30% in elementary education; 10% in English; 4% in

home economics; 3% in math/sciences; 1% in nursing; 3% in
physical education; 9% in social sciences; and 1% in speech
communication.   Figure 2 shows the number and percentage of
respondents with bachelor degrees in each major subject area.
Figure 2.   Distribution of BS/BA degrees by major subject
areas.

SUBJECT AREAS
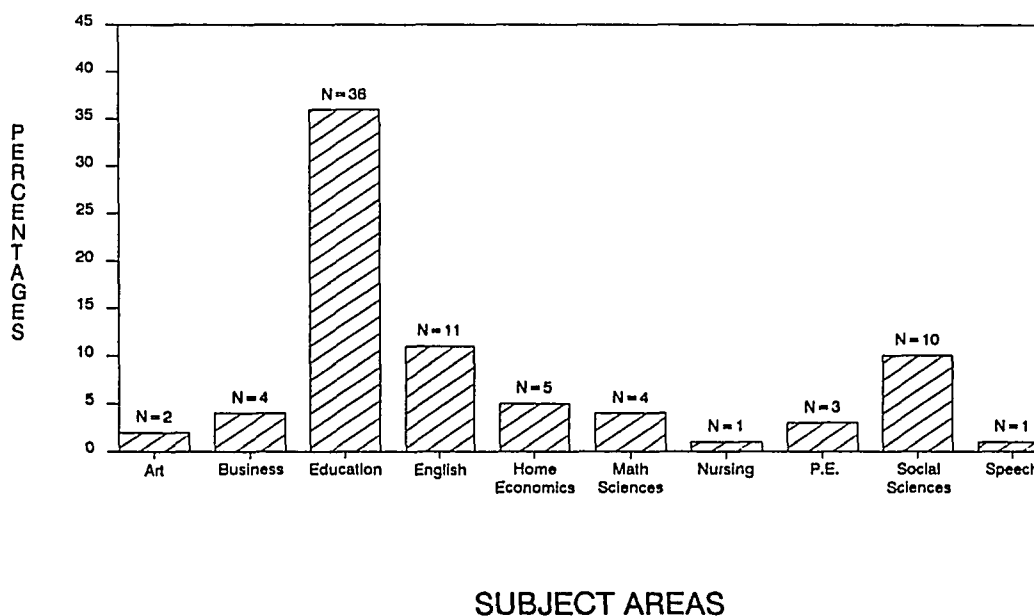
Majors for BS/BA Degrees
(n = 77; 67%)

MA Degree

Thirty-five respondents (30%) checked their highest
degree as being on the master's level. Of those, 1% listed
no major; 1%, child development and family relations; 8%,
education; 3%, English; 1%, guidance and counseling; 1%,
history; 1%, industrial organizational psychology; 1%,

library studies; 13%, reading; and 1%, teaching. The number
and percentage of respondents majoring in each area is
depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Distribution of MA degrees by major subject areas.

SUBJECT AREAS
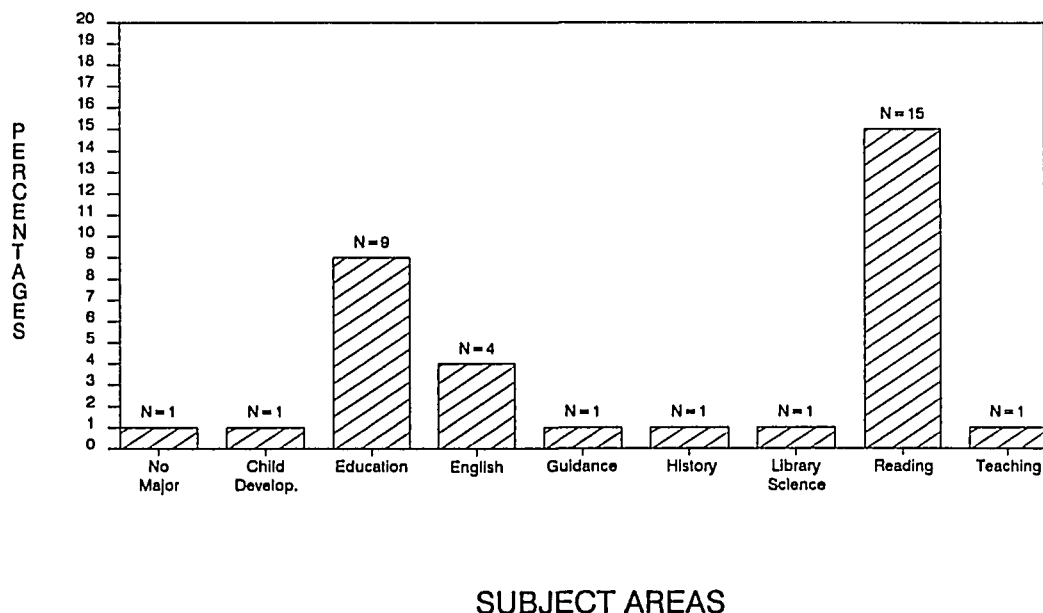
Majors for MA Degrees
(n = 35; 30%)

Of the respondents who hold master's degrees, the
largest numbered majored in reading. The respondents were
not asked to specify whether these degrees were in elementary
reading or adult reading; therefore, it would be difficult to
ascertain the significance of the reading degrees to the
teaching of adult reading. The second largest number (8%)
responded that their degrees were in education. Out of this
total, only 2 respondents (2%) majored in adult education.

Other Degrees

One respondent (1%) did not check any degrees but listed majors beside the BA/BS, MA, PhD/EdD degrees. The last major beside the PhD/EdD level was listed as administration. Two respondents (2%) indicated that they are working on and EdD degree. One respondent (1%) listed as the only degree an Associate in Arts in Early Childhood Education. One respondent stated, "Most teachers locally have never had any college education."

Preparation Time of Respondents

The next section of the survey deals with preparation time. In answer to the question, "Do you get paid for preparation?", 12 respondents (11%) checked "yes" while 101 respondents (89%) checked "no" and one respondent (1%) did not check either (See Figure 4).

In answer to the question, "If 'yes,' how many hours per week?", 2 respondents (2%) list 2 hours; 1 (1%) listed 5 hours; 1 (1%) listed 6 hours; 1 (1%) listed 8 hours; 1 (1%) listed 9 hours; 1 (1%) listed 10 hours; 1 (1%) listed 15 hours; 1 (1%) listed 25 hours; and 2 (2%) stated that they were "full-time employees," and 1 (1%) gave no amount of time, but indicated that he/she is paid for "workshops for staff development." Appendix G is a listing of the answers to the questions about preparation time in a table form.

<u>Figure 4</u>. Bar graph of respondents' answers to the question, "Do you get paid for preparation time."

RESPONSES
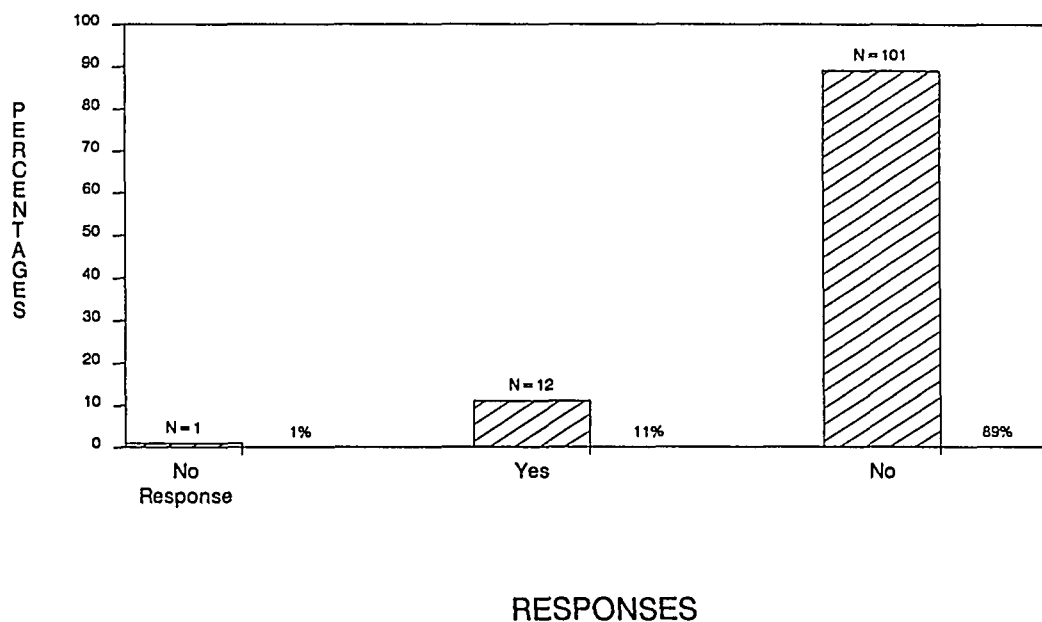
Preparation Time of Respondents
(n = 114)

Respondents' Ratings of Methods and Materials

<u>Overall Ratings for Methods and Materials</u>

In the next section of the survey, teachers were asked to rate 19 different methods or materials for teaching beginning readers according to their usage of the materials, their students' opinions of the materials and their rating of importance (Appendix H is a listing of the number and percentage of respondents who checked each area of this section of the survey). The majority of the respondents checked the columns "Use Some," "Like Some," and "Extremely"

more than any others. Some respondents omitted some sections
of this survey, particularly the sections on student
opinions. Others omitted various items throughout this
section, and a few checked two items in each section.

One major variable that was not controlled for was that
the teacher perceptions of student interest might not be
totally accurate. The only way to assure that the interest
levels determined are more representative of the students
would be to survey the students directly, but such a survey
would not be as feasible as surveying instructors due to
factors such as the fluctuation of class size and attendance
and the time-consuming aspect of surveying students orally.
Some of the respondents omitted the student opinion sections
because they did not feel they could adequately judge their
students' interests and opinions.

Usage of Methods and Materials

The section on usage of methods and materials in the
survey was designed to find the answer to the first research
question, "What methods and materials do teachers of adult
beginning readers use?" Respondents were asked to check one
of the following columns for each method and material listed
on the survey: "Don't Use," "Use Some," "Use a Lot."

Least Used Methods and Materials

The least used methods indicated in the survey by
checking the "Don't Use" column are cloze exercises (32%),
rate development (29%), and language experience stories

written by students (28%). The least used materials are Sullivan's Programmed Reading (62%) and LVA materials (51%).

Most Used Methods and Materials

The methods most used, indicated by the "Use a Lot" column, are comprehension development (74%), phonics (70%), oral reading by students (64%) and vocabulary development (61%). The materials most used are Laubach reading series (68%), Plato Reading System (36%) and Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series (33%).

Methods and Materials Used Some

The methods that had the largest number of respondents check as "Use Some" are oral reading to students (68%), language experience stories (66%) and recreational reading (61%). The materials rated highest as "Use Some" are the Steck-Vaughn (33%) and Plato (32%).

Teacher Assessment of Student Opinions of

Methods and Materials

The second research question is "What methods and materials of beginning reading instruction do teachers judge to be best liked by students?" They were asked to assess their students' opinions by rating each item in this section of the survey as one that students "Don't Like," "Like Some," or "Like a Lot."

Least Liked Methods and Materials

The respondents checked that 18% of their students don't like language experience stories; 13%, cloze exercises; 11%,

rate development; and 10%, silent reading by students. The
materials that instructors perceived their students liked the
least are Sullivan's Programmed Reading (7%), Plato (4%),
Steck-Vaughn (4%), and LVA (4%).

Most Liked Methods and Materials

The methods teachers checked that their students like
most are oral reading by students (52%), functional reading
(52%) and group instruction (48%). The materials with the
highest ratings in this section are Laubach (56%) and Plato
(42%).

Teachers' Ratings of Importance of

Methods and Materials

The next research question deals with teachers' ratings
of methods and materials according to the importance they
place on each. Respondents checked either the "average" or
"extremely" columns more than the "little or none" column.

Low Ratings

Thirteen percent of the teachers rated cloze exercises
and oral reading to students as having little or no
importance. Eight percent of the respondents checked the
same column for the Plato series and six percent checked it
for Sullivan's Programmed Reading.

High Ratings

The methods checked as being the most important
according to the respondents are phonics (78%), comprehension
development (78%) and vocabulary development (77%). The

materials with the highest ratings of importance are Laubach (69%) and Plato (35%).

<p style="text-align:center">Overall Comparison of Survey Items</p>

<p style="text-align:center">on Methods and Materials</p>

Generally, teachers had a tendency to perceive students' opinions of methods and materials as similar to their own. They also had a tendency to check that they use the methods and materials they rated highest and felt students liked best more than they use others. Figures 5 and 6 graphically depict this tendency. Figure 5 compares the percentage of respondents who checked the columns "Use a Lot," "Like a Lot," and "Extremely Important" for each method on the survey. Figure 6 does the same for each material listed.

Figure 5. Comparison of methods by percentage listed in the "Use a Lot," "Like a Lot," and "Extremely Important" Columns.

<p style="text-align:center">METHODS
Ratings For Methods In
Used Most, Liked Most, Most Important Columns</p>

—— Used a Lot   -l- Liked a Lot (Students)   ◇ Extremely Important
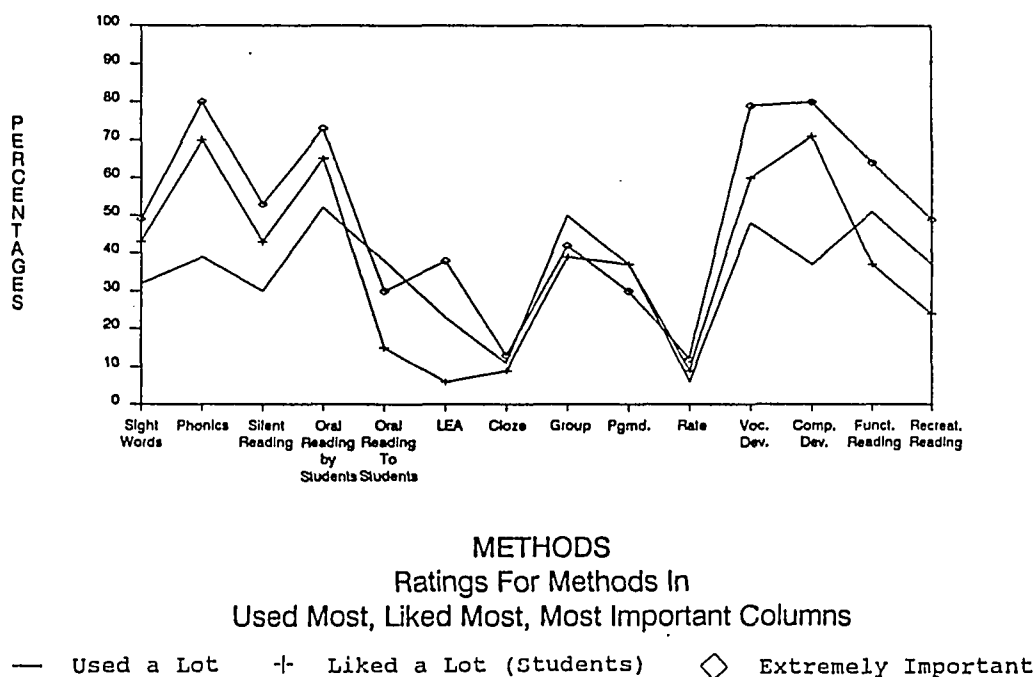
Figure 6. Comparison of materials by percentage listed in the "Use a Lot," "Like a Lot," and "Extremely Important" columns.

```
  100 ─
P  90 ─
E  80 ─
R  70 ─
C  60 ─
E  50 ─
N  40 ─
T  30 ─
A  20 ─
G  10 ─
E   0 ─┴──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬─
S
     Steck-Vaughn    Plato      Laubach      LVA      Sullivan's
                                                       Reading
```
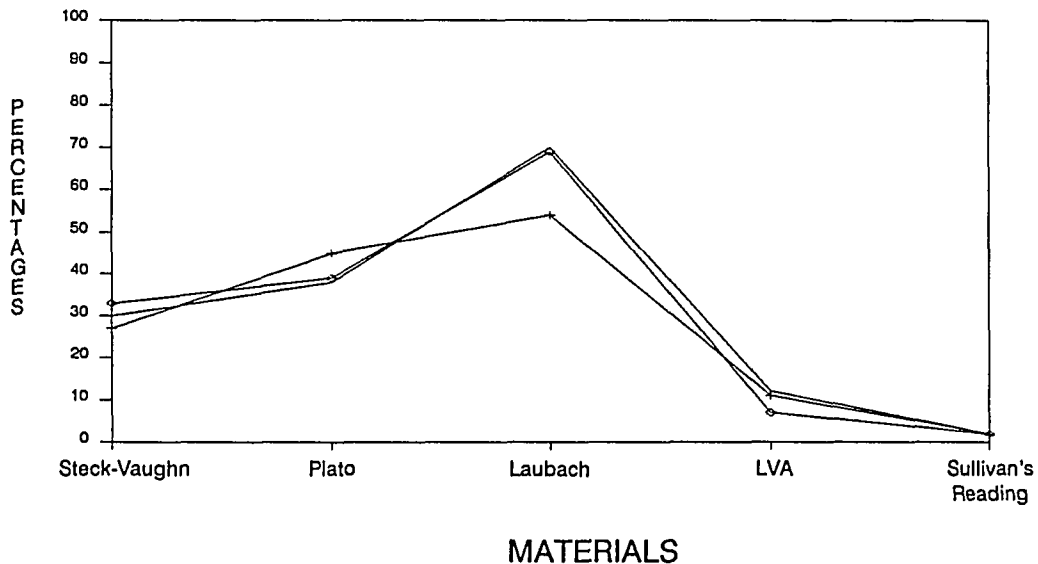
MATERIALS

Ratings for Materials in Used Most,
Liked Most, Most Important Columns

—— Used a Lot

-|- Liked a Lot (Students)

◇ Extremely Important

If teachers rated materials or methods as being extremely important and claimed to use them a lot, they also rated them highly according to student perceptions with a few exceptions. There were no discrepancies as far as the materials are concerned, but there were three for the methods. The exceptions were with oral reading to students,

the language experience approach (LEA) and comprehension
development. In oral reading to students and LEA, teachers'
usage fell below student and teacher opinions. The teachers
rate the usage as being low -- only 14% use it a lot, yet
they claim that 37% of their students like it a lot and 29%
of teachers think it is extremely important. Thirty-eight
percent described LEA as being extremely important, yet only
21% perceived their students as liking it a lot and only 5%
claim to use it a lot. Sixty-six percent did state, however,
that they use it some. The other discrepancy is in
comprehension development which most teachers use and like
yet only 36% perceive their students as liking it a lot.

Some of the items may be compared to each other for more
insight into teacher opinions. By comparing the sight words
and phonics responses, teachers perceive phonics as being
used more, liked more and more important than sight words.
In the comparison between oral and silent reading by
students, oral reading is used more, liked more and of more
value than silent. Although group and programmed instruction
are used about the same, group instruction rated higher in
student and teacher opinions. Vocabulary and comprehension
development received approximately the same high ratings in
usage and teachers' ratings of importance; teachers rated
vocabulary as being more liked than comprehension. The two
major materials that rated the highest in all three areas are

Plato and Laubach as opposed to LVA and Sullivan's Programmed
Reading which rated the lowest.

Other Methods and Materials Listed by Teachers

Teachers also had the opportunity to list other
materials and methods which they use (See Appendices I & J
for all other materials and methods listed by the teachers).
Thirteen teachers listed 16 different methods, many of which
included functional reading methods. Thirty-four respondents
listed 53 different types of materials. Most of the
materials were listed by titles, but others were just listed
according to type or publishing company. Many teachers made
additional comments about the various items in this section
(Appendix M has a listing of all additional comments made in
this section).

Misunderstanding of Survey Sections

One problem which surfaced upon examination of the
completed surveys was teacher misunderstanding of some parts
of the survey. Some of the instructors failed to list the
technical/community college that employed them and listed
instead either the college/university they attended or the
elementary/high school where their ABE classes are located.
Two of the instructors commented that they did not understand
the term "Rate Development."

Respondents' Rating of Student Interest Areas

The research for this present work considers the
interests of adult beginning readers as essential for a

successful literacy program. The fourth research question is "What are the reading interests of adult beginning readers?" In the student interest area section which lists topics students may be interested in reading, respondents were asked to rate their students' interest in 15 different reading areas by circling responses of 1 to 5 for each area (1 represented little or no interest and 5 represented very much interest) (Appendix K has a listing of the number and percentages of respondents who checked each area of the survey).

This section is based on teacher judgment of interest areas, not on actual student interest areas; therefore, the results may not be totally accurate. The results may have been more meaningful if the researcher had asked for specific information about the composition of the classes, i.e. race, sex, and age of students.

Highest Ratings for Interest Areas

The top four choices for interest are religion (36%), local news (26%), tv/movie stars (25%) and sports (24%). Adding columns four and five together did not change the top four ratings or their order -- the combined responses are religion (65%), local news (58%), tv/movie stars (47%) and sports (46%). The combined ratings did change the order of some other areas. The most significant of these were romance which increased from 7% to 36% and travel which increased from 10% to 34%. (Figure 7 shows the percentage of

respondents rating each topic area with a number five (very much interest) as well as the percentage that rated the topics either four or five combined).

Figure 7. Percentages of respondents rating students' interests in topics as being low.
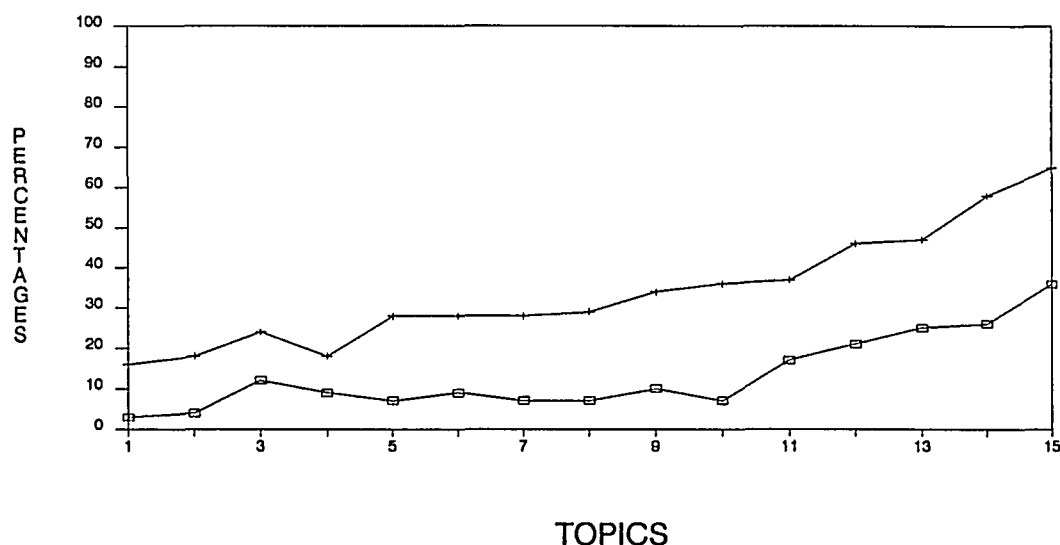
TOPICS

Areas of Interest Ratings for Column 5
(Very Much Interest) and Columns 4 & 5 Combined

☐ Column 5   ＋ Columns 4 & 5

*Key for Topics:

```
1 = Science Fiction   6 = Cars/Racing   11 = Cooking
2 = Business          7 = Animals       12 = Sports
3 = Biographies       8 = Mystery       13 = TV/Movie Stars
4 = Politics          9 = Travel        14 = Local News
5 = History          10 = Romance       15 = Religion
```

Lowest Ratings for Interest Areas

The lowest ratings by examining column one are business (21%), and science fiction (20%), politics (18%), and biographies (16%). Again, by combining the two lowest

columns, ratings 1 and 2, business still had the lowest

(48%), science fiction and politics tied for the next lowest

rating (42%), and biographies were next (34%). The rating

which changed the most was for the category "animals" which

increased in lack of interest from 5% to 28% (Figure 8 gives

the percentage of respondents who rated the topics the lowest

as well as the lowest and next to the lowest combined).

Figure 8. Percentages of respondents rating students'

interests in topics as being high.
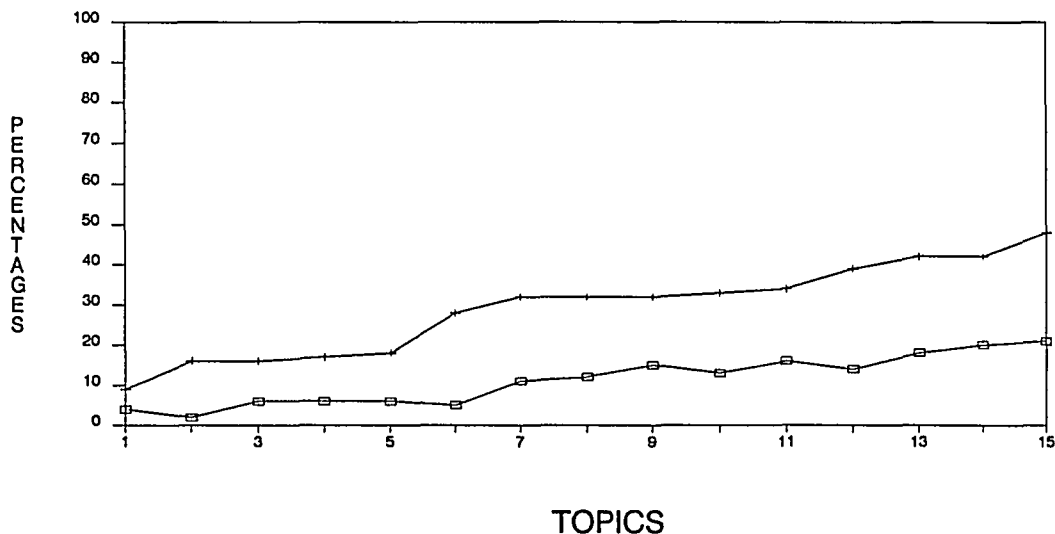
TOPICS

Areas of Interest Ratings for Column 1
(Little or No Interest) and Columns 1 & 2 Combined

☐ Column 1   + Column 1 & 2 Combined

*Key for Topics:

1 = Local News	6 = Animals	11 = Biographies
2 = Religion	7 = Travel	12 = Cars/Racing
3 = Sports	8 = History	13 = Politics
4 = Cooking	9 = Romance	14 = Science Fiction
5 = TV/Movie Stars	10 = Mystery	15 = Business

Average Ratings for Interest Areas

Except for business, local news, religion and romance, all topics had higher average ratings (in column three) than any other. The highest average ratings are cooking (44%), animals (38%) and history (35%) with sports (34%) as a close fourth.

Other Interest Areas Listed by Teachers

Respondents also had the opportunity to list and rate other interest areas. Twelve respondents listed 28 different areas (See Appendix L for a listing of other areas). Three did not rate these areas; the rest rated them as 4's and 5's (mainly 5's). Some respondents did not complete this section, and two gave comments about what types of students could be interested in each area (See Appendix M). One wrote a note attached to the survey, stressing the importance of using pre-primers and primers. The second wrote about students' enjoyment of using the dictionary and stressing the need for a "colorful, simply written yet comprehensive set of encyclopedias done on an adult level." Another pleaded, "Please, we are in need of much more recreational and functional reading materials on a beginning reader level."

Researcher's Evaluation of Adult Reading Series

Materials Evaluated

The fifth research question deals with methods and materials commonly used in North Carolina that are judged to be suitable in content and interest levels for adults

according to research. The researcher evaluated 28 series of
beginning reading materials for adults in this section.
(Appendix N, "Evaluation of Reading Materials for Adults,"
lists the following information for each of the 28 series:
rating, name, author, publisher, copyright, grade level, and
researcher's comments). It would have been impossible for
the researcher to include an evaluation of all reading
materials for adult beginning readers. Also, most literacy
programs have limited access to materials. Therefore, the
researcher selected the 28 most readily available series.

Only four of the five series listed on the survey were
evaluated. The one series which was not evaluated was
Sullivan's Programmed Reading For Adults. Although several
ABE teachers had indicated to the researcher before the
construction of the survey that this series was a major one,
very few schools actually use it according to the completed
surveys. Since the researcher could only locate a revised
edition of the series, it was determined that the expense
involved in locating the actual edition used would not be
worthwhile since the series had been changed. The evaluation
of the materials was not intended to be a comprehensive
review of all available reading materials for adults -- just
a survey of some of the major materials on the market today.

Twenty-eight books or series were examined and rated
according to 20 separate components of a good reading
program. Then a mean rating was found for each one. The

three major adult beginning reader materials -- Steck-Vaughn, Laubach and LVA were located by the researcher. Three to four stories in each book in the comprehensive series and one to two stories in each book in the supplementary series were read carefully. Other selections from each series were skimmed and each exercise carefully examined. Teachers' manuals were checked for further guidelines and exercises.

Recreational materials were reviewed as well as comprehensive ones, but more emphasis was placed on the comprehensive ones. The evaluation checklist devised was based on comprehensive series; therefore, the ratings established for the recreational series are not totally valid. In order to compensate for this situation, comments were added about most of the series (See Appendix N).

Comprehensive Ratings

The lower the score on the overall ratings, the more the series is in compliance with the 20 components of good reading series. The mean score for all series is 2.03, the mode is 1.95, and the median is 2.025. Half of the ratings fall above the mean; the other half, below. Most of the fourteen series rated in the bottom half (3 = Poor) fall closer to the mean than those above (1 = Excellent). The range of ratings is 1.45 (highest to 2.35 (lowest). Figure 9 shows the range and frequencies of ratings as well as the

ratings relationship to the mean, median and mode. Table 1

lists the titles and ratings of all materials surveyed.

Figure 9. Combined ratings for all 20 components of good

reading series for each adult reading series evaluated.
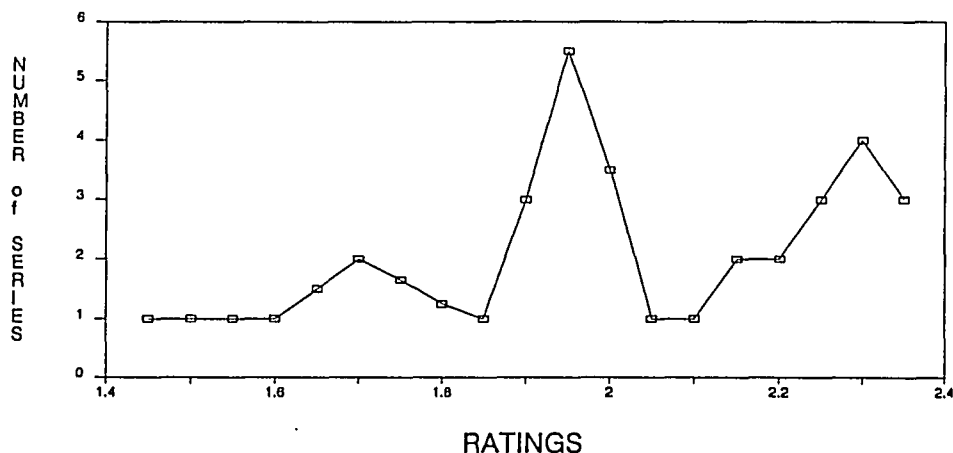
RATINGS

Ratings of Adult Reading Series

Explanation of Individual Ratings

The highest rated comprehensive series is the Challenger

series by the New Reader's Press. That series was rated as

excellent in 13 of the 20 areas, average in 5 and poor in 2

(encouragement of independent and recreational reading and

appropriate amount of context skills). The books have an

adult format and an excellent teaching guide. Vocabulary

introduction is limited in the books to a listing of the new

words, but the manual gives more instruction for vocabulary

introduction. The stories are interesting and cover fiction

and nonfiction. Critical reading, writing and reasoning are

stressed throughout the series. This series received a 1.45

rating.

Table 1.
Ratings and Titles of Adult Reading Series

Rating	Series
1.45	Challenger
1.55	Adult Reading: Comprehension
1.60	Bestellers
1.70	Adult Literacy Series; Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading
1.85	A Need to Read
1.95	Adult Learner Series; Laubach Way to Reading; Sportellers; Talespinners I; World of Vocabulary
2.00	Laura Brewster Books; Plato Basic Skills Reading Series; Specter Series
2.05	Read On!
2.10	Applying Reading Skills
2.15	Jim Hunter books; Sundown books
2.20	Pacemaker True Adventure; Archie Series
2.25	Creative's Superstars; Rock N Pop Stars
2.30	Creative Education Early Sports Books; Lifeline; Reading and Spelling Via Phonics; Turk Tonell Series
2.35	Building Basic Skills in Reading; Stars of Stage and Screen

(n = 28)

The next highest rated series is the Scott Foresman

Adult Reading: Comprehension (Messages, Cultures, Coping,

People). This series lacks introduction, reinforcement, and

reteaching of reading skills, adequate vocabulary

introduction, balanced approach to word recognition and an

appropriate amount of phonics and context skills. It had

just an average score on logical sequence of skills, but

rated excellent in all other areas. The total score for this

series is 1.55.

The series with the third highest rating (1.60) is Fearon

Publishers Bestellers. This series is weak in word

recognition, particularly phonics skills. It also lacks a

balanced representation of different types of literature, but it was intended to be just a book of mysteries.

Two series scored 1.70, the <u>Adult Literacy Series</u> by Cambridge (LVA) and the <u>Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series</u>. The Cambridge/LVA series was rated highly because the manual gives directions on how to make and use cloze exercises, language experience stories and other exercises for reading comprehension as well as a list of suggested readings. Despite the high ratings for the materials, the series seems to be lacking in an adequate amount of word attack skills, and some of the stories could be offensive to many adults due to subject matter and language used. The Steck-Vaughn series focuses too much on phonics in the lower books, but does have one book, <u>Reading 1300</u>, that is interesting and useful for beginning readers.

The next highest rating, 1.85, is on Globe Book Company's <u>A Need to Read</u>. This book has short, interesting stories, but lacks adequate word recognition skills.

Five series were rated 1.95. Of these series, only the <u>Laubach</u> by New Reader's Press is a comprehensive reading series. Its weak areas are an over-emphasis on phonics and the exclusion of other word-attack skills, selections that are not appropriate for adult interest levels and stilted speech and sentence patterns. The teacher's manual is an excellent source for teaching cloze and language experience stories.

The next series rated is 1.95 is Globe Book Company's
World of Vocabulary, Books 1, 2, and 3. This series is not
intended to be comprehensive and lacks adequate word attack
skills, but it is pleasing to adults in format, appearance
and interest levels.

The next three series rating 1.95 are Adult Learner
Series by Jamestown, Sportellers by Fearon Education and
Talespinners I by Pitman Learning. These are not intended to
be complete reading programs, but recreational reading
materials. The stories are easy to read and interesting.

Several of the other series which did not receive the
highest ratings, but are good supplementary reading materials
are: Archie Series (Dynamic Programs), Lifeline (Fearon
Pitman), Specter Series (Pitman Learning) and Sundown Books
(New Reader's Press). These books range in reading grade
level from one to six with Lifeline being the easiest. All
of these series would be good for recreational reading for
beginners.

The two major comprehensive series surveyed which
received approximately average ratings are Read On! (LVA) and
Basic Skills Reading Series (Plato Educational). The LVA
series lacks an appropriate blend of word attack skills and
rates average to poor in format and content of readers. The
Plato system also lacks an appropriate amount of word attack
skills and focuses on grammar skills more than reading
skills.

Sample Reading Unit for Adult Beginning Readers

Development of Unit

Perhaps the most meaningful of the research questions looks to what might be included in a unit of instruction for adult beginning readers. Thus the next section of the study, a sample unit for adult beginning readers, was designed on approximately the 2.0 to 2.5 reading grade level, entitled "Finding Good Things on Bad Days." In the unit different types of word attack skills, such as phonics, structural analysis, and context clues were incorporated. Individualized and group work, functional reading and rate development were also included as well as cloze exercises and language experience approach. The unit has comprehension and vocabulary development as well as a section on recreational reading. In the unit the teacher reads to the students as an introduction and students read both orally and silently. The unit was written using all 14 methods of teaching reading included on the survey. The 20 guidelines for a comprehensive reading section taken from the checklist for evaluation of reading materials were also followed.

Sample Unit

The following is the sample unit for adult beginning readers:

Grade Level: 2.0 - 2.5

Unit Length: 3 to 5 days or sessions

Topic: Finding Good Things on Bad Days

First Session:

TO THE TEACHER;

Read aloud to the class the children's book <u>Alexander</u>
<u>and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</u> by Judith
Viorst. Tell them you are reading them a book about a
child's bad day. Ask them to imagine, as you read, bad days
that they may have had as a child and anything that might
have happened to make them feel better.

Have the group discuss the book when you finish.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

1. Have the class make up a story together about a
   child or an adult's "terrible, horrible, no good,
   very bad day."

2. Write the story on the chalkboard as they dictate it
   to you.

3. Read the story aloud to the class.

4. Ask the class members to read to you the line they
   like best in the story.

5. Ask the students to read the story silently.

6. Have them make a list of the words in the story they
   do not know.

7. Have them write down sentences or dictate sentences
   with the words they do not know.

8. Copy down the story and have it typed for
   distribution next class period.

TO THE TEACHER:

Read each of the following vocabulary words aloud to the students. Have them practice reading the sentences using the vocabulary words silently to themselves. Tell them if they need help with any word to ask you or another student.

VOCABULARY WORDS AND SENTENCES:

alarm   toast

clock   doughnuts

shower   finally

terrible   yelled

horrible   burned

<u>alarm</u>

1. The fire <u>alarm</u> went off in the school.

2. She set her <u>alarm</u> for 6:30.

3. I heard the <u>alarm</u> go off, but was to sleepy to get up.

<u>clock</u>

1. The <u>clock</u> says 12:00.

2. I set the alarm on my <u>clock</u> for 7:00.

3. My <u>clock</u> does not work.

<u>shower</u>

1. Do you like to take a bath or a <u>shower</u>?

2. The water in the <u>shower</u> became cold.

3. I have two <u>showers</u> in my house.

<u>terrible</u>

1. She makes <u>terrible</u> grades in school.

2. Her son is in the <u>terrible</u> two's.

3. These shoes feel <u>terrible</u>.

<u>horrible</u>

1. I feel <u>horrible</u> when I cry.

2. The fire was <u>horrible</u>.

3. My son thinks eggs are <u>horrible</u>.

<u>toast</u>

1. Do you eat <u>toast</u> for breakfast?

2. I like <u>toast</u> with butter.

3. The <u>toast</u> is not good.

<u>doughnuts</u>

1. Do you like to eat <u>doughnuts</u>?

2. She got the <u>doughnuts</u> at the store.

3. We ate the <u>doughnuts</u> for breakfast.

<u>finally</u>

1. Are you <u>finally</u> ready to go?

2. Everyone was <u>finally</u> quiet.

3. She is <u>finally</u> here.

<u>yelled</u>

1. She <u>yelled</u> at her children to come home.

2. I don't like to be <u>yelled</u> at.

3. He <u>yelled</u> at his sister to get out of the street.

<u>burned</u>

1. I <u>burned</u> both legs in the fire.

2. Did you <u>burn</u> the toast?

3. He <u>burned</u> his hand on the hot stove.

<u>Second Session</u>:

TO THE TEACHER:

Have the students read silently the story they wrote as a group. Have them also review the vocabulary words from that story that they do not remember and the ones from the new word list.

Tell them you then want them to read a story to themselves about a mother's "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day," entitled "Carol's Bad and Good Day." Tell them as they read you want them to think about things that Carol could have done to make the first part of her morning better.

Students who finish first should be given the opportunity to do some recreational reading.

<div align="center">CAROL'S BAD AND GOOD DAY</div>

Carol had set her clock to alarm at 6:30, but it went off at 7:00. She jumped out of bed and fell over her shoes. She could tell it was going to be a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

She woke up Carrie and told her to take a bath. Then she took a shower. Just as she was washing her hair, the water became very, very cold. "Stop running the hot water!" she yelled to Carrie. Carrie did not hear her.

She got out of the shower quickly and dressed. Then she went to the kitchen to cook breakfast. There was no milk.

Someone had eaten all the doughnuts. While she cooked the eggs, she burned the toast. She could tell it was going to be a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

She went to the bathroom. "Hurry up!" she told Carrie. Carrie did not hurry up.

She went to Kellie's room. "Get up!" she told Kellie. Kellie did not get up.

She went to Chad's room. "Get up!" she told Chad. Chad did not get up.

She went to each room again and yelled this time. Carrie hurried, and Kellie and Chad got up.

"Yuck!" said Chad as he looked at the burned toast.

"Yuck!" said Carrie as she looked at the eggs.

Finally, after a long time, they were all ready to leave. Carol gave each child some lunch money and saw she did not have any left for her own lunch.

Finally, after a long time, they got in the car.

"It was my turn to sit in the front," Chad yelled to Kellie who was sitting there.

"No, it's not; it's my turn!" yelled Kellie.

"Be quiet, please," said Carol.

"Chad hit me!" yelled Kellie.

"Did not!" Chad yelled back.

"Did, too!"

"Be quiet!" Carol yelled at both of them.

They started to leave for school. Chad said he left his coat in the house. Carrie said she left her books in the house. Kellie said she needed Carol to write a note saying she knew Kellie made an "F" on a test.

Carol was glad to get to Chad and Carrie's school. Chad kissed Carol goodbye and Carrie said, "I love you, Mama."

Carol took Kellie to her school. "You look pretty today," said Kellie as she got out of the car.

It had been a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad" morning for Carol. She would even be late to work.

Carol looked at the sun shining brightly in the sky. Suddenly the day was as beautiful as the smile on Carol's face.

CLOZE EXERCISE:

TO THE STUDENT:

Fill in the blanks in the story below with the following words:

smile   love   hurry   beautiful
kissed   get   cold   pretty
milk   lunch   horrible

Carol was having a terrible, _____, no good, very bad day. She had to take a _____ shower. There was no _____ for breakfast. Her children would not _____ up or _____ up. She gave them money and had no money left for her _____. Chad _____ his mother. Carrie told her, "I _____

you." Kellie said, "You look _____ today." The day

became as _____ as the _____ on Carol's face.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What happened to Carol in the shower? Why did that upset
   her? Describe an incident that upset you.

2. What did Carol say to Kellie and Chad when they argued
   over whose turn it was to sit in the front seat of the
   car? What did she way when they argued over whether or
   not Chad hit Kellie? Why do you think she said "please"
   the first time and then yelled "please" the second? Have
   you ever tried to be patient and then lost your temper?

3. What did Carol's children say to her as she dropped them
   off at school? Why did that make her smile and the day
   seem beautiful? Have you ever had a bad day turn good
   for you? When?

4. Could Carol have prevented some of her bad morning from
   happening? How?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

1. Describe Carol. What type of a mother is she?

2. Describe Carol's children. What do you know about them
   from the story? What type of children do you think they
   are?

3. Why don't Carol's children do what she tells them the
   first time? Could she have done something or said
   something better to them to make them get up or hurry up
   than yell?

4. Why didn't the author just say the day became beautiful?

    Why did she connect the beauty of the day to the smile?

    Why do authors sometimes use comparisons instead of

    telling you just what they want?

Third Session:

TO THE TEACHER:

Show the following words to the students:

woke   made   love   late

write   note   smile

Tell the students that these words come from the story they
read during the last session.

Ask the students how these words are alike. (They all
have two vowels; one is the final "e".)

Ask them if the first vowels have long or short vowel
sounds. (long)

Ask them what sound the "e" has in each word. (silent)

Have them list other words that are like these.

Ask them to make up a rule that tells you what sound the
first vowel has when the second vowel is the final "e." (the
first vowel is long and the second is silent)

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

1. Read the folk tale "It Could Always Be Worse" to your

    students and have them think of how their lives could be

    worse.

2. Read the lyrics of the song "These Are A Few of My

Favorite Things" to your students and have them make

lists of things that make them feel better.

3. Have students imagine a bad day at home, school or work.
   Have them write or dictate a story, making the ending
   come out good! Divide students into groups to read the
   stories to each other. Have each group choose a story to
   share with the rest of the class.

4. Talk about the good things people have in family or work
   situations. Explain that the prefix "bene" means "good."
   Ask them to talk about or write about the benefits of
   their family or job. Ask them to think of other words
   that begin with "bene."

5. Have students time themselves on reading the first two
   paragraphs of the story, "Carol Bad and Good Day."
   Discuss the ways they could read the paragraphs faster
   such as not whispering the words or moving their lips.
   Have them time themselves again to see if they can read
   the story faster.

6. Have a selection of books, magazines, short stories, and
   poems in the class that are on easy-to-read levels. Let
   students choose some materials to read for their own
   recreation. Take them to a local library to find more
   recreational reading materials.

Summary

According to survey results, the majority of ABE

teachers in North Carolina have a bachelor's degree with the

most prevalent major being education. Very few of the teachers have degrees in reading or adult education. A large percentage of these teachers have no preparation time. Generally, methods and materials the teachers perceive as being important are the ones they use a lot. They also perceive their students to like these methods and materials a lot. The ABE instructors rated student interest in most reading topics as average. The topic they most often chose as the one students like the most is religion.

Out of the 28 reading series examined by the researcher, the Challenger series by New Readers Press rated the highest as the best comprehensive series.

The researcher designed a reading unit to illustrate how reading should to taught to adults. This unit was based on reading research as well as the 20 components of a good reading series.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

One aspect of literacy programs that needs to be evaluated carefully is personnel competency. Although the survey results reveal that most ABE teachers in North Carolina do have college degrees, it also shows that most are not trained to teach adult beginning reading. As a result, they often rely on many methods and materials that are more suitable for children than adults. A basal reading series designed by reading experts and based on adult reading research would help alleviate the problems caused by lack of training and preparation time.

Importance of a Literacy Network

Surveys were received from 41 out of 58 technical/community colleges in North Carolina. The high response rate may be partially due to the fact that the researcher had met many ABE personnel through professional associations. For the last four years the researcher has been active in the North Carolina Association of Developmental Studies (NCADS), a statewide group of people concerned with remedial education. NCADS began holding joint conferences with the North Carolina Community College Association of Educators of Adults (NCCCAEA), a group which

consists of all types of ABE personnel -- including secretaries, instructors, directors, and state community college staff. Since both groups are concerned with literacy, the conferences became places to share joint problems and goals. Professional meetings are not just places where people learn new techniques and trends; however, they are also vehicles for forming professional bonds with other people.

The researcher was able to form such bonds at these conferences. The director of ABE programs in North Carolina agreed to sanction the survey, not only because she thought the survey would be a good idea, but also because she had met the researcher at one of the conferences. When the ABE directors were asked to distribute the surveys, the researcher knew it would be an inconvenience. Many ABE classroom sites are not located on technical/community college campuses -- they are in locations in one or more counties. Since the researcher had met many of the directors, they were more willing to distribute the surveys than they might have been for someone whose name was not familiar or someone who had no ties to the technical/community college system.

Surveys were received from the largest community college in North Carolina -- Central Piedmont in Charlotte and from schools located in the mountains and the Piedmont (central North Carolina) and the coast. The researcher's own school

in Lexington sent in one of the highest response rates -- 4,
but the technical college in the researcher's hometown,
Randolph Technical College in Asheboro, sent the highest
number of all --12. The first recommendation, then is for
people who are involved in literacy improvement to become
involved with others who have the same concern.

Personnel Competency

Educational Degrees of Respondents

Kavale and Lindsey claim that one variable which has
contributed to the lack of success of ABE programs is
"personnel competency," that "ABE teachers are generally
volunteers with training and expertise limited primarily to
secondary education" and that "80% of those attending in-
service training are from the elementary level (1977, p.
373). The survey of ABE teachers supports the claim that
most teachers are from the elementary and secondary levels.
43% of all respondents have degrees in secondary education,
and 43% have them in elementary education while only 4% have
degrees in adult education. (Ten percent of the respondents
did not indicate whether their degrees were in elementary,
secondary or adult education). Although 13% responded that
they have obtained master's degrees in reading, they
generally made no distinction whether the degree was in
elementary, secondary or adult reading education.

Even if the respondents had listed their exact majors,
there would still be little insight into the number of

reading courses that the respondents took or their
application to teaching reading to adults. The researcher
received a master's degree in English from a North Carolina
state-supported university in 1970, even though the major was
reading specialist in the secondary school. At the time,
North Carolina did not recognize a master's degree in
reading; therefore, people wanting training in reading had to
major in another area, splitting their time equally between
reading and the other area or taking a few more courses in
the other area. Future researchers could develop more
insights into the applicability of educational background to
teaching adult reading by focusing on titles and/or content
of reading courses taken by ABE teachers, not just degrees
held which may give a somewhat distorted view.

In-Service Training of Respondents

Most ABE directors train ABE teachers by having
workshops prior to their teaching and on a periodic basis
afterwards. Researchers could also focus on the content of
those workshops. The survey reveals that ABE instructors
react more strongly to materials rather than most methods.
This may be due to the fact that many of the training
sessions for ABE instructors are material-specific, such as
ways to teach Laubach or LVA or Steck-Vaughn and not method-
centered. Because of the funding situation for ABE programs
and the number of ABE courses taught, it would be almost
impossible to hire only certified adult reading specialists

as teachers. Those reading specialists; however, could
provide in-service training for the ABE instructors. The
State Department of Community Colleges could hire a team of
specialists to conduct state-wide reading workshops, to
survey adult reading materials and produce lists of suitable
materials for adults. They could also provide aid to ABE
directors in all aspects of setting up quality reading
programs. Setting up numerous ABE classes will not
necessarily alleviate the problem of illiteracy in our
society; setting up quality reading programs may better
achieve that goal.

<center>Importance of Preparation Time</center>

The results of the survey on the question of preparation
time overwhelmingly substantiate the belief that most ABE
instructors are part-time employees with little or no paid
preparation time. Another worthwhile study in this area
would be one that determines how many ABE instructors have
full-time jobs and if those full-time commitments are jobs
like teaching that require outside preparation. Preparation
time is important in all teaching jobs -- if it is not paid
for, it may get slighted or totally neglected.

<center>Importance of Using Appropriate Methods/Materials</center>

Although there is not total agreement among adult
reading experts concerning materials and methods, there are
two aspects that many of them are in agreement with each

other about. The first is that most published adult literacy materials are unsuitable for teaching reading to adults. Rigg and Kazemek claim that materials used today "are the same kinds of material with which many adult nonreaders have been unsuccessful for years" (1985, p. 727). The second is that procedures and methods for teaching children do not always work for adults. Mocker says that "procedures used in teaching children, although frequently used with adults, do not serve the best interest of the adult student" (1975, p. 440). The study reveals that many ABE instructors are using the same type of methods and materials with adult illiterates that have been used for years with children.

Methods

Sight Words/Phonics

The first two items on the survey are sight words and phonics. Many adult educators have promoted the use of sight word instruction with adults because it is a faster way of learning to read than a lengthy phonics approach. Yet the survey reveals that ABE instructors place more emphasis on phonics instruction. Only 48% of the respondents rated sight words as extremely important while 78% rated phonics as extremely important. Rigg and Kazemek say that many published materials for adults are not suitable because they focus on word recognition and word attack skills. They claim: "Quite often one is hard pressed to distinguish the pages of these adult materials from those of workbook pages

for first graders" (1985, p. 727). Bowren and Zintz call
adults "learners in a hurry" who will not tolerate an
elaborate synthetic approach to word decoding (1977, p. 97).
Adult reading experts view most published materials as
unsuitable because of the phonics approach used; however, the
majority of ABE instructors who completed the survey do rely
heavily on phonics and materials that emphasize phonics.
More studies need to be conducted to determine which method
is more beneficial for teaching adult readers.

Silent and Oral Reading by Students

ABE instructors agreed on the next two sections on the
survey -- "silent reading by students" and "oral reading by
students." They concurred that they use oral reading more
than silent, that students like oral reading more and that
they feel oral reading is more important than silent. More
claimed that they don't use silent reading than oral, that
more students don't like silent reading and that they don't
see the benefits of silent reading. Richardson and Harbor
stress the view of many reading educators that although oral
reading by students is important, it should be limited and
silent reading should also be stressed. They claim that it
is never appropriate to have students read orally for an
entire session because comprehension is actually decreased by
oral reading (1982, p. 19). They say that "all reading
instruction should include silent reading as an important
part of _every_ session" (1982, p. 18). One reason they cite

for teachers not stressing silent reading with beginning readers is that some teachers feel uncomfortable when their students are reading silently because they don't feel they are helping them (1982, p. 18). Most adults who learn to read though literacy classes will probably not be asked to read orally very much. They need the practice of silent reading, reading that will resemble their reading needs of the future. Future research may be beneficial by comparing the actual time students spend reading orally in ABE classes to the time they spend reading silently. Reading gains could also be compared for those who spend time reading orally to those who do more silent reading.

Oral Reading to Students

The next item is oral reading to student. According to Richardson and Harbour, "Every new or inexperienced reader needs exposure to the model of a good reader, someone who enjoys sharing a reading experience" (1982, p. 18). The majority of the respondents use oral reading to students some, claim their students like it some and rate it as average importance. Reading experts need to stress oral reading to students more. They need to provide ABE instructors with oral reading lists, lists of appropriate materials to be read aloud to adults.

Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach is recommended highly by many reading experts as an excellent way to teach beginning

adult readers. The language experience approach is the use of stories dictated by students individually or in groups. This approach has many benefits, especially for adults. Newman claims that the LEA helps adults relate learning to life experiences (1980, p. 65). Educators of adults stress the need of having learning experiences for adults as relevant to their lives. Rigg and Kazemek say that "All instructional activities must begin with the student's point of view, his or her particular schemata -- experiences, knowledge, language -- and build both inward and outward from there" (1983, p. 28). When students write their own stories, they base them on their experiences, knowledge and language. The stories have meaning to them. Hunter and Harman claim that "student achievement seems to be higher when maximum use is made of materials prepared by the students themselves" (1979, p. 69).

Another benefit of the LEA is that it integrates the activities of reading and writing. The Commission on Reading, after examining research in the field, strongly emphasize the significance of the integration of reading and writing activities (1984, p. 79). Chall and Carroll support that view: "A good reading program teaches literacy in the context of other language skills" (1975, p. 31). The LEA combines the language arts of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Even though the LEA is highly recommended by reading experts, 28% of the respondents do not use it at all

and only 5% use it a lot. The LEA takes time -- specifically time outside of the class typing or printing and xeroxing stories. ABE instructors may avoid using the LEA because they do not have the time for its use. Reading experts could help instructors by compiling easy-to-use handbooks for LEA.

Cloze Exercises

Cloze exercises are designed to help students enhance their comprehension skills. Although cloze exercises may be phrases or sentences with word(s) deleted, many cloze exercises are longer, written in paragraph form. Students read the paragraphs and fill in the blanks. Richardson and Harbour call the cloze procedure "the most useful format for most skills work" (1982, p. 19). The majority of the respondents use the cloze some (56%) and think it is of average importance (57%), but 32% don't use it at all and 13% don't use it at all and 13% see it as having little or no value. Unless the cloze exercises are incorporated into reading materials as part of lesson plans, the cloze exercises, like the LEA, will probably be neglected.

Group and Programmed Instruction

The next two items on the survey, group instruction and programmed instruction, are both recommended by experts as viable methods, but many think that group instruction is more appropriate for adults. Bowren and Zintz say that "as a basic approach to beginning reading, it (programmed instruction) becomes very lonely learning" (1977, p. 98).

Smith and Dulin encourage teachers to "provide plenty of
reading dialogue" (1971, p. 62). Although programmed and
group instruction ranked approximately the same in usage,
teachers perceived their students as liking group instruction
more (48% to 37%) and more of them rate group instruction
over programmed instruction as extremely important (43% to
32%). Group instruction is difficult in ABE classes because
of the range of reading abilities. Often students reading
zero to eighth grade levels are grouped in one class. ABE
instructors may value group instruction and perceive that
their students like it, but how they could accomplish using
it would be an area worth studying.

<u>Rate Development</u>

Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they do
not use rate development at all, 39% said that they use it
some, and the majority (42%) listed it as average importance.
Yet Robinson added it as the fifth major aspect of reading to
Gray's four major categories -- word perception,
comprehension, reaction and assimilation (1966, pp. 22-32).
There is a possibility that some of the instructors did not
understand this term, equating it instead with speed reading
and justifiably thinking that speed reading, reading at
excessively high rates, has no place in beginning reading
instruction. Researchers could help broaden instructors'
knowledge about rate instruction in beginning reading by
studying the types of rate instruction used with beginning

adult readers. For example, researchers could study the method of rereading to improve reading rate and determine the benefits of using such a technique.

Other Methods

Most ABE instructors value functional and recreational reading. They also place a great emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension development. Future research could focus on the specific methods and materials ABE instructors use to teach these areas of reading. Functional reading instruction to an ABE teacher could mean having students complete exercises on reading want ads in reading series or it may mean having students bring in materials from their everyday lives that they need to read. Recreational reading may be defined by ABE instructors as giving students time to read News for You, a popular newspaper written on easy-to-read levels and widely available for ABE classes, or it may be having students choose easy-to-read books from a wide selection of supplementary materials. Although vocabulary and comprehension are emphasized, instructors may just be using exercises in published materials and not using real-life materials. Researchers need to take each component of reading programs for adults and determine if they are appropriate for adults.

More Emphasis on Methods, Not materials

Most of the ABE instructors who responded to the survey are aware of the 14 different methods listed for teaching reading and do use those methods to some degree. With the exception of comprehension and vocabulary development and functional reading, they have a tendency to place more value on materials rather than methods, particularly the Laubach and Plato materials. Because of their limited educational experience in reading, most ABE instructors need extensive training on how to teach reading to adults. They need to be aware of all methods and materials presently available for teaching reading in order to have a balanced program of reading instruction. They need training from experts in the adult reading field, not just materials workshops.

Content of ABE Classes

Further research in the actual content of ABE classes would enable ABE directors and reading experts to determine weak areas in the reading programs by discovering any discrepancies between what skills teachers think they are teaching and what they actually are. Such research could also compare methods and/or materials to determine which ones cause higher gains in reading abilities.

Adult Interest Areas

More research would also help publishers in determining what types of topics adults are interested in reading. A survey of adult students using an expanded version of the

Heathington/Koskinen interest survey would help publishers develop more suitable materials for adult beginning readers. Although there are some interesting series, more of them need to be written on beginning reader levels.

Teachers responding to the survey had a tendency to judge most student interests as midrange, checking column three more often than the others, which may suggest that they do not feel comfortable selecting student interest areas. This may be due to the fact that while 50% of the teachers view recreational reading as extremely important, only 26% use it a lot and 61% use it some. In the evaluation of reading series, the researcher did not find many recreational series written specifically for adults. Some of those series were written for high school or junior high students although the interest range included adults. Thus research needs to discover adult reading interests before more suitable materials for recreational reading may be published.

Also, in order to better predict the interest areas of ABE students, more research needs to be done in determining the basic composition of ABE classes according to age, sex and race of students. Career goals and/or present occupations as well as hobby areas may need to be ascertained for the average ABE student. When these factors are determined, publishers may be able to produce better materials for adults.

Books, short stories, and newspapers have been designed specifically for adult beginning readers. What the researcher did not locate, however, was a magazine written on the level of these adults. Also, it was difficult to find much poetry for beginning adult readers. Publishers need to explore the possibility of using different types of literature plus different types of materials for adults.

Basal Reading Series

Because ABE instructors have little to no preparation time and their backgrounds in reading are limited, reading experts and publishing companies should develop basal reading series for beginning adult readers. A complaint of basal reader series is that they stifle creativity, force teachers to follow others' plans, and don't take into consideration individual differences and backgrounds of students. Yet how does a person, no matter how creative, who has an associate's degree in early childhood with no preparation time cope with having to teach 10 to 15 students, reading on a grade level range from zero to eight? A basal reading series could make a difference in the lives of as many as 60 million people in the United States today.

Summary

To have quality literacy programs for adult beginning readers, researchers need to study carefully all aspects of present programs, concentrating on methods and materials used, teacher competency and student background. Unless ways

can be found to improve funding, hire better qualified ABE teachers or offer them adequate training, and pay teachers for preparation time, then a basal reading series is needed to help institute quality programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter to ABE Directors

May 6, 1986

Dear A.B.E. Director:

For my dissertation in reading education at UNC-G, I am
surveying teachers of beginning adult readers in the North
Carolina community/technical college system. I have talked
to Florence Taylor, A.B.E. coordinator with the Department
of Community Colleges, about this survey, and she encourages
all A.B.E. instructors to participate because she thinks the
results will be a "valuable contribution."

Enclosed are survey forms I would like for you to give your
instructors who teach adult beginning readers, 0 to 5th
grade levels. A letter explaining the survey accompanies
each form as well as an envelope for its return. (I will
send you more surveys if you need them.)

The survey will help me ascertain educational backgrounds
and paid preparation hours of instructors to determine the
need of help from reading researchers. The survey basically
asks what materials and methods teachers are currently using
that they think are important and students like. I also ask
teachers to rate students' interest about reading topics.
Respondents should not sign the surveys.

Please have each instructor return the surveys to me by
Friday, May 30, 1986. I will send you a summary of the
results.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Randy Branson, Coordinator
Instruction Center

Appendix B

Survey of ABE Instructors

School:_____

Educational Background: ____ BS/BA Major:_____   ____ MA   Major:_____   ____ PhD/ Major:_____
                         ____ Other Major:_____   Please List: _____   EdD

Do you get paid for preparation time? ____yes ____no

If "yes," how many hours per week? _____

Directions: Rate the following components of adult reading reading programs according to how much you use them as well as your opinion of their value and your students' opinions of them.

	USAGE			STUDENTS' OPINIONS			TEACHER'S RATING OF IMPORTANCE		
	Don't Use	Use Some	Use A Lot	Don't Like	Like Some	Like A Lot	Little / None	Average	Extremely
sight words									
phonics									
silent reading by students									
oral reading by students									
oral reading to students									
language experience stories written by students									
cloze exercrses (word deletion paragraphs)									

	USAGE			STUDENTS' OPINIONS			TEACHER'S RATING OF IMPORTANCE		
	Don't Use	Use Some	Use A Lot	Don't Like	Like Some	Like A Lot	Little / None	Average	Extremely
group instruction									
programmed instruction									
rate development									
vocabulary development									
comprehension development									
functional reading (want ads, recipies, etc.)									
recreational reading									
others -- please list									
Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series									
Plato Reading System									
Laubach Reading Series (New Streamlined English)									
Literacy Volunteers of America materials									
Sullivan's Programmed Reading for Adults									
Others: Please list									

Directions: Rate the following topics according to your students' interests in them:

	No Interest or Very Little				Very Much Interest
politics	1	2	3	4	5
religion	1	2	3	4	5
animals	1	2	3	4	5
biographies	1	2	3	4	5
sports	1	2	3	4	5
local news	1	2	3	4	5
business	1	2	3	4	5
travel	1	2	3	4	5
tv/movie stars	1	2	3	4	5
cars/racing	1	2	3	4	5
cooking	1	2	3	4	5
history	1	2	3	4	5
mystery	1	2	3	4	5
romance	1	2	3	4	5
science fiction	1	2	3	4	5

Others: Please list and rate

Appendix C

Letters to ABE Instructors

May 6, 1986

Dear A.B.E. Instructor:

Attached is a survey form which I would like for you to complete about methods and materials for adult beginning readers. Florence Taylor, A.B.E. coordinator with the Department of Community Colleges, encourages all A.B.E. instructors to participate because she thinks the results will be a "valuable contribution."

My goals are to determine the educational backgrounds of A.B.E. instructors and their amount of paid preparation time to determine how much help, if any, is needed from reading researchers; to determine which methods and materials A.B.E. instructors use and feel are important and those students like; to determine students' interest in reading. My goal for the dissertation is to have publishers review the data I collect and respond more to the needs and interest of adult illiterates and the expertise of not only reading researchers, but the instructors who teach the illiterates. The survey is not mandatory, but the more responses I receive, the better my chances will be for convincing publishers that they should listen to adult illiterates and their instructors.

If you teach adults to read 5th grade reading level or below, please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to me by Friday, May 30, 1986. An envelope is attached for your convenience. Do not sign your name to the survey, but do write the name of your school. Results will not be identified with schools; I just need the schools' names to determine which areas are represented by the survey.

I will send a summary of the results to each A.B.E. director.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Randy Branson, Coordinator
Instruction Center

Appendix D

Evaluation of Reading Materials for Adults

Title of book or series_____

Publisher:_____

Copyright:_____

Author(s):_____

Grade Level(s):_____

Directions: Rate each of the following areas using 1 for
             excellent, 2 for average, 3 for poor.

____ adult format and appearance

____ appropriate adult interest level

____ attractive and suitable illustrations

____ appropriate readability level(s)

____ literary merit of selections

____ balanced representation of different types of
     literature

____ unbiased presentation of different races and ethnic
     groups

____ unbiased presentation of females

____ style of type pleasing and appropriate for adults

____ realistic patterns of speech and natural sentence
     structure

____ incorporation of all language arts

____ introduction, reinforcement and reteaching of reading

skills

___ encouragement of independent and recreational reading

___ adequate vocabulary introduction

___ balanced approach to word recognition

___ logical sequence of skills

___ appropriate amount of phonics skills

___ appropriate amount of context skills

___ attention of different levels of comprehension

___ adequate guides for teaching material

Appendix E

Number of Surveys Returned From
Community/Technical Colleges

Name of Community/Technical College	Number of Surveys
1. Anson TC	2
2. Asheville-Buncombe TC	2
3. Bladen TC	1
4. Caldwell CC/TI	3
5. Cape Fear TI	1
6. Catawba Valley TC	4
7. Central Carolina TC	2
8. Central Piedmont CC	4
9. Coastal Carolina CC	2
10. College of the Albemarle	3
11. Craven CC	2
12. Davidson County CC	4
13. Edgecombe TC	2
14. Fayetteville TI	2
15. Guilford Technical CC	5
16. Isothermal CC	3
17. James Sprunt TC	1
18. Johnston TC	2
19. Martin CC	3
20. Mayland TC	1
21. McDowell TC	3

Name of Community/Technical College	Number of Surveys
22. Mitchell CC	3
23. Pamlico TC	1
24. Piedmont TC	1
25. Randolph TC	12
26. Richmond TC	2
27. Roanoke-Chowan TC	2
28. Robeson TC	1
29. Rowan TC	1
30. Sampson TC	1
31. Sandhills CC	1
32. Southeastern CC	3
33. Stanly TC	3
34. Surry CC	1
35. Technical College of Alamance	3
36. Tri-County CC	1
37. Vance-Granville CC	2
38. Wake TC	4
39. Wayne CC	4
40. Western Piedmont CC	3
41. Wilson County TI	4

9 respondents omitted the names of their institutions on the survey.

Appendix F

Educational Background

		Number of Respondents	Percentage
I.	NO DEGREE/MAJOR CHECKED	1	1
II.	BS/BA	77	67
	A. ART EDUCATION	2	2
	1. Art Education	1	1
	2. Art Education/Psychology	1	1
	B. BUSINESS	4	3
	1. Accounting	1	1
	2. Business Administration	1	1
	3. Business Education	2	2
	C. EDUCATION	36	31
	1. Early Childhood	10	9
	2. Education	7	6
	3. Elementary Education	10	9
	4. Elementary Education with Braille Trans. Certification	1	1
	5. Elementary Education (Industrial Arts/Social Studies/History)	1	1
	6. Elementary Education/ Music Education	1	1
	7. Exceptional Children	1	1
	8. Intermediate Education	1	1
	9. Learning Disabilities	1	1
	10. Primary/Grammar Education	2	2
	11. Speech & Hearing Education	1	1
	D. ENGLISH	11	10
	1. English	6	5
	2. English/Reading	1	1
	3. English/Religion	1	1
	4. English/Social Studies Education	1	1
	5. Literature	2	2

Educational Background

E.	HOME ECONOMICS	5	4
	1. Food Science & Technology	1	1
	2. Home Economics	4	3
F.	MATH/SCIENCES	4	3
	1. Biology	2	2
	2. Math/Science (graduate work in Special Education)	1	1
	3. Science Teaching	1	1
G.	NURSING	1	1
H.	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	3	3
	1. Health/Physical Education	1	1
	2. Physical Education	2	2
I.	SOCIAL SCIENCES	10	9
	1. Criminal Justice/Psychology	1	1
	2. Human Services/Sociology	1	1
	3. Industrial Relations/History	1	1
	4. Political Science/History	1	1
	5. Psychology	1	1
	6. Social Studies (1 respondent also is certified special education teacher)	3	3
	7. Sociology	1	1
	8. Sociology/Anthropology	1	1
J.	SPEECH COMMUNICATION	1	1
III.	MASTER'S	35	30
A.	NO MAJOR LISTED	1	1
B.	CHILD DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY RELATIONS	1	1
C.	EDUCATION	9	8
	1. Adult Education	2	2
	2. Early Childhood Education	1	1
	3. Educational Administration	1	1

Educational Background

	4.	Elementary Education	3	3
	5.	Intermediate Education	1	1
	6.	Severe/Profound Special Education	1	1
D.	ENGLISH		4	3
E.	GUIDANCE & COUNSELING		1	1
F.	HISTORY		1	1
G.	INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION PSYCHOLOGY		1	1
H.	LIBRARY STUDIES		1	1
I.	READING		15	13
J.	TEACHING		1	1
IV. EdD/PhD			1	1
A.	ADMINISTRATION		1	1
V. OTHER DEGREES - ASSOCIATE IN ARTS			1	1
A.	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION		1	1

Appendix G

Preparation Time

Do you get paid for preparation time?

Yes	No	No Response
12 (11%)	101 (89%)	1 (1%)

If "yes," how many hours per week?

Number of Respondents	Hours or Explanation Listed
2	2
1	5
1	6
1	8
1	9
1	10
1	15
1	25
2	full-time employee
1	workshops for staff development

Components of Adult Reading Programs

	USAGE			STUDENTS' OPINIONS			TEACHER'S RATING OF IMPORTANCE		
	Don't Use	Use Some	Use A Lot	Don't Like	Like Some	Like A Lot	Little / None	Average	Extremely
sight words	3 3%	62 54%	49 43%	3 3%	67 59%	37 32%	3 3%	56 49%	55 48%
phonics	3 3%	29 25%	80 70%	9 8%	53 46%	43 38%	2 2%	18 16%	89 78%
silent reading by students	6 5%	55 48%	49 43%	11 10%	61 54%	34 30%	5 4%	46 40%	58 51%
oral reading by students	4 4%	36 32%	73 64%	10 9%	35 31%	59 52%	3 3%	23 20%	82 72%
oral reading to students	19 17%	78 68%	16 14%	5 4%	48 42%	42 37%	15 13%	54 47%	33 29%
language experience stories written by students	32 28%	75 66%	6 5%	21 18%	44 39%	24 21%	8 7%	45 39%	43 38%
cloze exercises	36 32%	64 56%	9 8%	15 13%	56 49%	11 10%	15 13%	65 57%	14 12%
group instruction	18 16%	51 45%	43 38%	5 4%	33 29%	55 48%	9 8%	45 39%	49 43%
programmed instruction	15 13%	51 45%	42 37%	6 5%	44 39%	42 37%	4 4%	60 53%	36 32%
rate development	33 29%	44 39%	11 10%	12 11%	36 32%	8 7%	7 6%	48 42%	12 11%
vocabulary development	2 2%	39 34%	69 61%	3 3%	47 41%	50 44%	0 0%	19 17%	88 77%
comprehension development	2 2%	28 25%	84 74%	2 2%	58 51%	41 36%	0 0%	20 18%	89 78%

	USAGE			STUDENTS' OPINIONS			TEACHER'S RATING OF IMPORTANCE		
	Don't Use	Use Some	Use A Lot	Don't Like	Like Some	Like A Lot	Little / None	Average	Extremely
functional reading (want ads, receipes, etc.)	5 4%	59 52%	45 39%	4 4%	38 33%	57 50%	1 1%	30 26%	73 64%
recreational reading	8 7%	69 61%	30 26%	8 7%	48 42%	43 38%	1 1%	46 40%	57 50%
Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading Series	20 18%	38 33%	38 33%	4 4%	33 29%	31 27%	2 2%	36 32%	33 29%
Plato Reading System	20 18%	37 32%	41 36%	5 4%	26 23%	48 42%	9 8%	33 29%	40 35%
Laubach Reading Series (New Streamlined English)	9 8%	26 23%	78 68%	2 2%	28 25%	64 56%	1 1%	20 18%	79 69%
Literacy Volunteers of America materials	58 51%	17 15%	10 9%	5 4%	9 8%	11 10%	5 4%	15 13%	14 12%
Sullivan's Programmed Reading for Adults	71 62%	9 8%	1 1%	8 7%	8 7%	1 1%	7 6%	14 12%	1 1%

Appendix I

Other Methods Listed By Respondents

Number of Respondents	Methods
1	word games -- scrabble, crosswords
1	lots of simple work problems -- particularly serial ones; also shopping trips during sales
1	small group instruction
1	with students who can't remember the sounds -- use whipped cream to make letters; then eat results (put on miniature pies)
1	also cover letters (large size) with push pins and feel the shape of letters on small bulletin board
2	puzzles
1	professional persons to come in to talk to class
1	field trips
1	personal data
1	know name, telephone number
1	reading lists important daily life, etc. (filling out applications, signs, directions, manuals)
1	technical vocabulary -- basic science
1	language activity
1	book reports
1	library reference materials
1	individualized instruction

Appendix J

Other Materials Listed By Respondents

Number of Respondents	Materials Listed by Publishing Companies &/or Titles
1	Adult Reader Series (Steck-Vaughn)
1	Alphabetization (computer software by Milliken)
2	Amsco materials
1	AVT Learning Systems in Reading
1	Barnell Loft reading materails
1	BER
4	Building Basic Skills Series
2	Challenger Series (New Reader's Press)
1	Cloze Plus (computer software--lower level)
2	Comprehension -- Language Experience (Follett ABE)
2	EDL
1	English 2200
2	Entering the Reader's World (Cambridge)
1	Firm Foundations
1	From Picture to Passages (Contemporary)
1	Improving Your Vocabulary
1	Jamestown literature (chapters & short stories)
1	Laubach Way to English
1	Laubach Way to Reading
1	Living in the Reader's World (Cambridge)
1	New Beginnings in Reading (Contemporary)
1	New Practice Readers (McGraw-Hill)
1	Phonics (Continental Press)
1	Phonics We Use
1	Picture Perfect Phonics (teacher's own system)
1	Power Words Program
1	Practice in Survival Reading (New Reader's Press)
2	Pre-GED & GED Series (Cambridge)
1	Rally Readers (Harcourt)
1	Reader's Digest
1	Reading Attainment System (Educational Design Company, Inc.)
1	Reading, Comprehending, Understanding (Mott)
1	Reading 2000 Series
1	Reading for Understanding
2	Recipe for Reading

Materials (con't)

Number of Respondents	Materials Listed by Types
4	Science Research Associates materials
4	Scott Foresman series
3	Six-Way Paragraphs
3	Specific Skills Series (Barnell-Loft)
1	Specific Skills Series (no publisher listed)
1	Specific Skills Series (SRA)
2	Target Spelling (Steck-Vaughn)
1	Dolch Sight Word List
1	readers from the public schools -- stories with comprehension questions (high interest -- low vocabulary)
1	mind-tapes (for phonics)
1	Bible, telephone directory, newspaper, NC drivers manual, contracts, etc. that the students bring in -- magazines etc. ad infinitum, ad nauseaum
1	teacher utility program using Laubach word charts (computer software)
1	comic books
1	personal phonics method
1	adult readers in library
2	newspapers

APPENDIX K

Rating of Students' Interests by Numbers and Percentages

	No Interest or Very Little				Very Much Interest
	1	2	3	4	5
politics	21 (18%)	27 (24%)	32 (28%)	17 (15%)	10 (9%)
religion	2 (2%)	16 (14%)	17 (15%)	33 (29%)	41 (36%)
animals	6 (5%)	26 (23%)	43 (38%)	24 (21%)	8 (7%)
biographies	18 (16%)	21 (18%)	37 (32%)	14 (12%)	13 (12%)
sports	7 (6%)	11 (10%)	39 (34%)	28 (25%)	24 (21%)
local news	4 (4%)	6 (5%)	32 (28%)	36 (32%)	30 (26%)
business	24 (21%)	31 (27%)	29 (25%)	17 (15%)	4 (4%)
travel	12 (11%)	24 (21%)	30 (26%)	28 (25%)	11 (10%)
tv/movie stars	7 (6%)	14 (12%)	35 (31%)	25 (22%)	29 (25%)
cars/racing	16 (14%)	28 (25%)	32 (28%)	22 (19%)	10 (9%)
cooking	7 (6%)	12 (11%)	50 (44%)	23 (20%)	19 (17%)
history	14 (12%)	22 (19%)	40 (35%)	24 (21%)	8 (7%)
mystery	15 (13%)	23 (20%)	34 (30%)	25 (22%)	8 (7%)
romance	17 (15%)	20 (18%)	32 (28%)	33 (29%)	8 (7%)
science fiction	23 (20%)	25 (22%)	36 (32%)	15 (13%)	3 (3%)

Appendix L

Other Interest Areas and Ratings

Listed by Respondents

No. of Respondent(s)	Interest Area (Rating)
1	adventure (no rating)
1	arts (5)
1	child care (4)
1	community resources -- hardware stores, Chamber of Commerce, public libraries, grocery stores
1	community unity projects
1	dance (4)
1	encouraging stories (5)
1	exercise (5)
2	family life (5,5)
1	farming (4)
1	finances (5)
1	fishing (no rating)
1	funny stories (5)
1	gardening (4)
2	health care (4,5)
2	hunting (5, no rating)
1	idea or invention that worked (5)
1	knit/painting (5)
1	mechanics (4)
1	real life adventure (5)
1	realistic & contemporary (5)
1	science (astronomy, anatomy, geology, metereology, ecology -- (no rating)
1	short stories (5)
1	singing (5)
1	success stories -- fact or fiction; people who have overcome/survived/adapted (5)
1	technology -- what is new & how it relates to me, my work & my future (5)
1	western magazines (4)

Appendix M

Comments by Respondents

Comment

COMMENTS ABOUT MAJORS &/OR DEGREES:

Most teachers locally have never had any college education.

Mostly learned from experience as aide plus teaching in public schools.

COMMENTS ABOUT PREPARATION TIME:

workshops for staff development

sometimes there is additional time for preparation, but rarely

(listed 15 hours preparation time) a lot used for paper work for DCET & conferences with DCET staff

COMMENTS ABOUT SIGHT WORDS:

major cause of illiteracy

only teach most common words the, and, this in this way

survival type -- ex. men, women, stop

COMMENTS ABOUT PHONICS:

of the 137 comparative studies, all show phonics superior

sold on phonics method including dictation

COMMENTS ABOUT SILENT READING:

after second grade level

Comments by Respondents (con't)

Comment

COMMENTS ABOUT ORAL READING BY STUDENTS:

> always under third grade level
> don't use -- only <u>one</u> class, very small
> amount of time, don't like with certain
> groups; little or none importance -- maybe
> can stimulate interest in reading

COMMENTS ABOUT LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH:

> students write, but they must spell their
> own words
>
> no time; once in a while I have a student
> who wants to write

COMMENTS ABOUT CLOZE EXERCISES:

> promotes guessing, results of
> psycholinguistics/increased illiteracy
>
> don't have time in class for
>
> no opinion; haven't used
>
> contact time is so short we do not do this
> as regular classwork

COMMENTS ABOUT PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION:

> some don't like; some like a lot
>
> helpful when students are out of
> Laubach & Plato

COMMENTS ABOUT RATE DEVELOPMENT:

> comes only after accuracy
>
> not sure what this is

Comments By Respondents (con't)

Comments

COMMENTS ABOUT RATE DEVELOPMENT:

don't understand the question

when they are ready

COMMENTS ABOUT VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT:

very little in isolation

COMMENTS ABOUT COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT:

word analysis is first

most of my students are still struggling
with the phonics but I try to build in
instruction about main idea and picking
out details

COMMENTS ABOUT FUNCTIONAL READING:

labels, instructions, applications,
contracts, evaluative reading of
advertisements

COMMENTS ABOUT RECREATIONAL READING:

encourage

some don't like; some like a lot

as they have enough skill

COMMENTS ABOUT STECK-VAUGHN MATERIALS:

for students over fifth grade level with
Plato

COMMENTS ABOUT PLATO READING SYSTEM:

for students over fifth grade level with

Comments by Respondents (con't)

Comments

Steck-Vaughn; for students under fifth
grade level with Laubach

some classes

some students use some; other students
use a lot

have not used yet, but plan to

a favorite

students enjoy

little or no value for beginners; average
value after BR 4 Laubach, middle level
students do not like it

COMMENTS ABOUT LAUBACH READING SERIES:

focus on phonics

Laubach materials go with the Stech-Vaughn
materials very well

COMMENTS ABOUT LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MATERIALS:

Do not have this material, but like
very much what I have seen

COMMENTS ABOUT READING INTERESTS:

I cannot answer this. Instead I have
indicated which students have a particular
interest. (politics -- older students, all
African students; religion -- older
students; biographies -- youngish males;
sports -- young males; business --
ambitious males; cars/racing -- young
males; cooking -- we talk about foreign
& romances -- young females)

Comments by Respondents (con't.)

Comments

sports -- male students; mysteries --
many love mysteries

politics -- recent local elections

OTHER COMMENTS:

I also incorportate pre-primers and primers
with the phonics work of some students.
Many did not fail to learn to read in
school simply because phonics wasn't taught
them, as is commonly asserted. Most, I
believe, simply fell behind and gave up.
Given the same materials they used
originally and more individual instruction,
they can learan perfectly well.

For all students that read below 5th grade
level I have a volunteer that spends 1 1/2
hours each day tutoring the students. We
are using 8 volunteers that work with 2
students a day.

Enjoyed it!

With some students phonics seem to be
another removal in the symbolism --
these students do no get phonics.

Many of my students enjoy exploring the
dictionary, especialy the colorfully
illustrated ones. I _long_ for a set of
colorful, simply written yet comprehensive
set of encyclopedias done on an adult
level. I read to them from Britannica.

Please, we are in need of much more
recreational and functional reading
materials on a beginning reader level.
Progress is slow for so many that it is
hard to wait for good materials. Also
something for mentally retarded adults &
emotionally dcisturbed on beginning levels.

Comments by Respondents (con't.)

Comments

Also need some very large print for those
with vision difficulties.
The majority of my students are senior
citizens. We do _very_ (some) little
creative writing.

I work in a lab setting rather than a
"traditional" classroom setting.

I teach mentally retarded adults --
very low level.

APPENDIX N

Evaluation of Reading Materials for Adults

RATING	TITLE OF BOOK OR SERIES	AUTHOR(S)	PUBLISHER/COPYRIGHT	GRADE LEVEL	COMMENTS
1	Adult Learner Series	Judith Green	Jamestown,1979	2-3	excellent; interesting
2	Adult Literacy Series	Cebulska, et.al.	Cambridge/LVA,1983	2-5	boring; possibly offensive
3	Adult Reading; Comprehension	Malone, Violet, ed.	Scott Foreman, 1982	2-6	good
4	A Need to Read	Rauch & Trocki	Globe Book Company, 1980	3-5	short, interesting stories
5	Applying Reading Skills	Dauzat	Steck-Vaughn, 1980	3-4	
6	Archie Series	Miller	Dynamic Programs,1976	3-6	interesting
7	Bestellers	Belina, et.al.	Fearson Publishers, 1979	1-3	more difficult than level indicated, but good
8	Building Basic Skills in Reading	Drazin, ed.	Contemporary, 1981	4-5	no teacher's guide
9	Challenger Series	Murphy	New Reader's Press, 1985	1-6	book V has rewritten class
10	Creative Education Early Sports Books	Smith, et.al.	Creative Education, 1974	3-4	
11	Creative's Superstars	Smith, et.al.	Creative Education, 1974	1-12	
12	Jim Hunter books	Butterworth & Stockdale	Pittman Learning, 1977	2-3	
13	Laubach Way to Reading	Laubach, et.al.	New Reader's Press, 1968	0=7	stories in first readers are boring; teachers manual is excellent
14	Laura Brewster Books	Eisenburg	Fearon Pitman, 1980	3-4	good for young, female adults

Reading Materials for Adults (cont.)

RATING	TITLE OF BOOK OR SERIES	AUTHOR(S)	PUBLISHER/COPYRIGHT	GRADE LEVEL	COMMENTS
15	Lifeline	Reiff	Fearon Pitman, 1979	1-2	good for beginners
16	Pacemaker True Adventure	Jerrome	Fearon Pitman, 1970		
17	Basic Skills Reading Series		Plato Educational, 1983	3-8	more grammar than reading
18	Read On!	Root	Literacy Volunteers, 1976	1-5	
19	Reading and Spelling Via Phonics	Simyak	SSS, 1977	1-3	mostly phonics
20	Rock N Pop Stars	Olsen, et.al.	Creative Education, 1975	3-8	
21	Specter Series	Jackson	Pitman Learning, 1979	2-4	thriller, ghost tales, good series
22	Sportellers	Tune, et.al.	Fearon Education, 1981	1-3	
23	Stars of Stage and Screen	Paige, et.al.	Creative Education, 1977	1-6	
24	Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading	Dauzat, et.al.	Steck-Vaughn, 1977	0-8	Reading 1300 is great for beginning readers.
25	Sundown Books	Hull, et.al.	New Reader's Press, 1982	1-4	good
26	Talespinners I	Tune, et.al.	Pitman Learning, 1981	4	interesting
27	Turk Tonelli Series	Richardson	Dynamic Programs, 1976	5-6	
28	World of Vocabulary, Books 1, 2, 3	Rauch & Weinstein	Globe Book Company, 1979	2-6	