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THE APPALACHIAN ADULT EDUCATION CENTER:
PURPOSE, POLICIES, AND PROJECTS

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PURPOSE, POLICIES, AND PROJECTS

This paper, a description of the Appalachian Adult Education Center, is divided into three major parts:

- (1) *PURPOSE*--history and setting, objectives, and organization
- (2) *POLICIES*--educational concepts and strategies
- (3) *PROJECTS*--past, present, and future

History and Setting

Under the authority of the Adult Education Act of 1966, the Appalachian Adult Education Center began work in 1967 as a special project to develop, test, demonstrate, and disseminate improved adult education practices: programs, materials, facilities, teaching techniques, and educational technology for undereducated adults. The Center is essentially a catalyst for improving living through education, and its goal is to improve adult education practices throughout the nation as a result of work in one specific geographic region: Appalachia.

The Center is located on the campus of Morehead State University in Eastern Kentucky, the heart of the Appalachian region. The region consists of the mountain counties of thirteen states, and the cultural, economic, and physical isolation of many undereducated adults in Appalachia pose a unique challenge to adult education. While undereducation and poverty in rural areas are often overshadowed by the problems of the cities, those problems are nonetheless worthy of national attention.

Morehead State University is dedicated to service to the Appalachian region and its people. MSU's President, Dr. Adron Doran, was instrumental in the development of the Appalachian Regional Commission, and hosted Congressional Hearings in Morehead which led to the enactment of major adult education legislation and to the development of the AAEC.

Objectives

The overall objective of the Center is "to effect significant improvement in the efficiency and quality of adult basic education throughout the nation as a result of developmental program activities focused, generally, upon a geographic region encompassing all of Appalachia."

The AAEC divides that general objective into twelve components for study:

- * Adult Learners
- * Business and Industry
- * Client Participation in Planning and Management
- * Counseling
- * Delivery Systems
- * Follow-Up
- * Interagency Cooperation
- * Placement
- * Recruitment
- * Retention
- * Services: Methods, Materials, Diagnosis, Instruction
- * Staff Development

In its projects, the AAEC is less concerned with isolating components for research than with studying the developmental process of effective adult education practices. The AAEC, therefore, attempts to look at all these components in all its projects, focusing upon one component for closer study. In the developmental process, however, that focus may change. Success in the first AAEC projects involving interagency cooperation, for example, was observed to be dependent on one person's capability to interrelate services. The realization that the problems and needs of human beings--particularly the disadvantaged--are too complex to be met adequately by any one person, agency, or institution led the AAEC to study more closely how to coordinate just two institutions, adult education and the public library. AAEC work with public libraries illustrates a major shift in focus within objectives as a result of needs observed in the developmental process.

Organization and Administration

A Regional Structure. The AAEC unites federal, state, and local governments in a partnership that serves as a model for other regions with unique populations. As a regional center, the AAEC is able to circumvent the constraints of political and geographic boundaries. The AAEC works with the region's state directors of adult education and libraries to identify regional problems; the Center then conducts projects at the local level that test possible solutions to those problems, decreasing the amount of time and money the states must spend to reach solutions. Knowledge gained from the project then goes back to the state directors for use in their programs. The involvement of adult

education and library leadership in identifying problems and providing state and agency resources toward solutions helps to create openness to the application of new and improved practices in their programs.

In Kentucky, for example, the need was seen for individualization of instruction through learning centers, as opposed to traditional classroom instruction. The AAEC, with multiple agency support, demonstrated one learning center project. Its success in serving adult students encouraged the state leadership to develop learning centers statewide. Later AAEC demonstrations studied the delivery of adult education by paraprofessionals in home instruction, and Kentucky has also adopted that system, assigning paraprofessionals to provide outreach services from the developing learning centers.

Support for AAEC activities has come from many sources. The table on page 5 shows the sources and titles of AAEC grant awards by year.

Local Projects. At the local level, AAEC projects are organized and administered through three basic steps:

- (1) community assessment--a review of demographic information, and community needs and resources;
- (2) the setting of objectives--in a planning session with the AAEC, project staffs, and community policy makers; and
- (3) management by objectives--a detailed work statement outlining specific goals, activities, responsibilities, knowledge needs, and documentation for evaluation.

AAEC FUNDING SUMMARY 1967-1974

GRANT PERIOD	AUTHORITY	TITLE (S)
1967-1974	Adult Education Act of 1966 (as amended), Special Experimental and Demonstration Projects, P.L. 89-750 Section 309(b)—P.L. 91-230	Demonstration, Development and Research Project for Programs, Materials, Facilities and Educational Technology for Disadvantaged Adults (1967, 1978, 1968, 1970) A Practical Assistance Center for Adult Education Demonstration Programs Through Inter-agency Funding and Cooperation (1971) Community Education: Comparative GED Strategies (ETV, Home Study, Learning Centers and Job Sites), Career and Parent Education (1972) Community Education: Comparative GED Strategies (1973)
1968-1970	Adult Education Act of 1966 (as amended), Institute for Training in Adult Basic Education, P.L. 89-750 Section 309(c)	Characteristics of the Appalachian Disadvantaged Adult (1968) Individualized Instruction for Teachers of Rural Adults—Reading (1969) Individualized Instruction of Reading and Mathematics for Trainers of Teachers (1970)
1969	Commonwealth of Kentucky, Division of Adult Education	An Evaluation of the Kentucky Adult Basic Education Program
1969	Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Region IV—"Small Contracts," Regional Research	A Dialect Survey of the Appalachian Region
1969-1972	Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Adult Education Act of 1966, Section 309(c)	Staff Development
1969	Commonwealth of Kentucky, Commission on Aging	Information Referral for the Aging, Institute on Aging
1970-1972	Commonwealth of Kentucky, Division of Adult Education	Morehead State University Learning Center (1970-continuing)
1970	Appalachian Regional Commission	Cable Television in Central Appalachia: A Feasibility Study
1971-1973	Bureau of Libraries and Learning Resources, Title II, Part B, Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329 (as amended)—DEMONSTRATION	Interrelating (Coordination) of Library and Basic Education Services for Disadvantaged Adults: A Demonstration of Four Alternative Working Models... 1972, 1973: Continuing Demonstration of State-wide Awareness and Implementation.
1972 & 1973	Division of Library Programs, Title II, Part B, Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329 (as amended)—TRAINING	Expanding Public Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults (An Institute for Training in Librarianship)
1971-1973	National Right to Read Effort, P.L. 92-318, Part A. Title III, Section 303	Appalachian Community Based Right to Read Programs, (Home Instruction Project)

The AAEC Staff. AAEC staff members help the local project design objectives, monitor the progress of projects, disseminate project findings and based upon those findings, offer technical assistance to programs in and out of the Appalachian region.

The central AAEC staff, though assigned by job description to major responsibility in one or two proposals, serve as an interdisciplinary resource to all AAEC projects. The staff varies from year to year depending on funding and scope of work, but usually consists of eight professionals, including adult educators with national and international experience. In addition to the executive director, who is responsible for the total operation and the integration of its various components, the AAEC has employed specialists in evaluation, training, learning centers, public libraries, research, reading, curriculum, and media, as well as an administrative assistant, a writer, and secretaries. The central staff is also supported by professionals from the University's Department of Adult, Counseling, and Higher Education, graduate assistants and students, and consultants and specialists in areas of AAEC concern.

POLICIES

Four major concepts guide the work of the Center:

- (1) that educational programs must be designed in terms of the characteristics and needs of the people to be served;
- (2) that education for adults must stress not only the development of basic skills but also the application of those skills to the business of everyday living;

- (3) that adults are most effectively served through cooperative planning and sharing of resources among all the institutions, agencies, and organizations that are concerned with the education and welfare of the people in the community, and
- (4) that demonstration projects should (a) be capable of replication; (b) continue after the demonstration period; and (c) disseminate their findings.

Different Designs for Different Needs

A major AAEC concept and strategy is that educational programs be designed in terms of the characteristics and needs of the people to be served, i.e., the 57 million adults in the U. S. with less than a high school education. Rather than characterizing that target population in terms of ethnic or geographical differences, however, the AAEC finds it more useful to look at the target population in terms of their varying degrees of educational and economic disadvantage. The AAEC believes it has identified four groups of people that require different kinds of designs for educational and other services. The groups are based on individual characteristics; members of different groups can be found in the same family.

Group I. The AAEC calls "Group I" those people who have less than a high school education, but who are economically and personally secure, and who believe in education, libraries, and other services. They are relatively easy to recruit, to teach, and to serve. They can be recruited through the media, can learn in lectures and classes, and are, therefore, economical to serve.

Group II. Those in Group II have suffered some discomfort from their undereducation, such as continuous underemployment, or being unable to help their children with school work, but they are also relatively easy to reach and to serve. They show large, quick gains in achievement and dramatic changes in life style, but they are second lowest of the four groups on an index of need. The chief adjustment needed in services for this group is a time adjustment--flexible hours that fit in with work schedules and family responsibilities.

Group III. Those in Group III have a long way to go to high school equivalency, and to a living wage. If they have been employed, it has been sporadically, in low-paying, dead-end, short-term jobs. But they, too, still believe there is a return to be had from public services.

The outstanding service need of Group III persons is for individualization. The AAEC studies have shown unequivocally that this group can be reached only through one-to-one recruitment (either door-to-door or agency referrals) and one-to-one services (although well-designed media campaigns do lend credibility to personal recruiters).

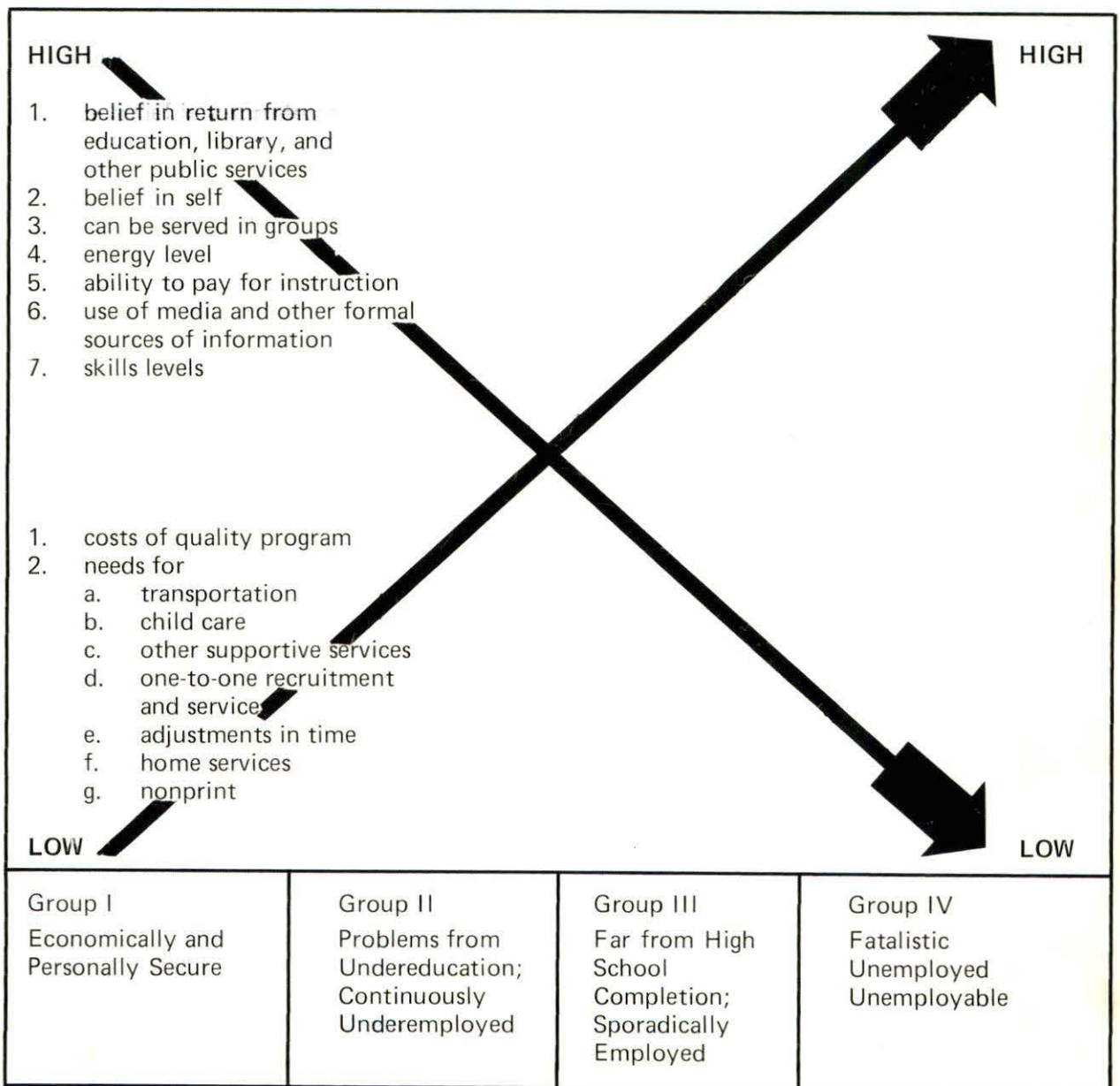
Group IV. Group IV is the smallest group, yet highest in priority on an index of need. Often referred to as the "hard core," "stationary poor," this group is so fatalistic that they do not believe that they can have any control over their own futures.

A review of the literature on the delivery of health services, food stamps, services to the aged poor and preschool, library services, and ABE leads to the same conclusion: Group IV can only be served in their homes, at least initially. They use the little energy available

to them on survival, not on what they appear to consider futile attempts at changing the status quo. Yet AAEC studies have shown that individuals from this group can show significant gains in learning and changes in behavior when approached through the proper delivery system--home instruction.

Figure 1

Relationship Between Individual Characteristics of Adults with Less Than High School and the Design of Delivery Systems of Public Services



Basic Skills and Coping Skills

The AAEC contends that those concerned with the education of adults should encourage not only the development of basic skills but the application of those skills to problems of everyday living. That application requires a series of skills, which the AAEC calls coping skills.

The abilities:

- (1) to define a problem as a need for information;
- (2) to locate the needed information in the community;
- (3) to process the information (to read or hear it with comprehension, to relate it to other knowledge, to accept or reject the information, and to review its uses); and
- (4) to apply the information to the problem.

The development of those skills in adults is a complex process, and requires more resources and reinforcement than most adult education programs can provide alone.

Interagency Cooperation

The multiple problems that accompany poverty and undereducation, the need for coping skills development, and the need to upgrade services for the undereducated while avoiding the costly duplication of services, lead to the third AAEC position: that undereducated adults are most effectively and efficiently served through the cooperative planning and sharing of resources of all the institutions, agencies, and organizations in the community that are concerned with the education and welfare of adults.

The Purpose of Demonstrations

The AAEC holds three positions in regard to demonstrations. The first is that the expenditure of tax dollars for demonstration should point the way for large scale improvement in the public service fields. The settings of demonstrations cannot be so unique nor their techniques so expensive that they cannot be replicated elsewhere, and whether successful or unsuccessful, they should provide guidance in implementing programs in other settings.

A second AAEC position strives for the continuation of demonstration activities after the demonstration ends. Part of the demonstration is incomplete if the service does not continue on its own merits, and the new service is not likely to be successfully replicated elsewhere without tested methods of institutionalization. (More than eighty percent of the AAEC demonstration projects do continue after AAEC support ceases.)

The AAEC holds a third position: that the generation of new knowledge must be accompanied by systematic dissemination of that knowledge. The AAEC disseminates its findings through print, nonprint, personal contact, and technical assistance. As a result, AAEC projects have been replicated in states across the Appalachian region and the nation.

PROJECTS

The following briefly describes some AAEC projects, past, present, and future.

Past Projects

The AAEC has conducted more than 100 projects since 1967, a few of which are listed below:

Development of Rural Community Schools

Support of School Officials
Use of Typewriters for Motivation
Teacher-made Supplementary Reading Materials
Learning Centers
Home Study
Parent Training for Pre-school Education
Three-year Follow-up Study
Computer-assisted Instruction
Cooperation of Public Service Agencies
Driver Education for ABE
Adult Student Assessments
Use of Counselor-aides
Self-instructional Packages for Teachers
Effect of Methods of Literacy Training on Self-concept
Involvement of Business and Industry
Recruitment Methods
Use of Teaching Machines
Use of Video-tape Recording Instruction
Change in Aspirations of Graduates Trained as Professional Teachers
Use of Volunteer Recruiters and Teachers
Use of Mobile Learning Center
Low Readability Newspaper
Characteristics of Good ABE Teachers
Use of Cable Television in Community Education
Study of the Ability of Literacy Programs to Meet Legislative Goals and the Goals of Adult Students

Study of the Appalachian Dialect

Study of the Relationship of Literacy to Mining Accidents

Study of Changes in Alienation with Literacy Training

Study of the Nutrition Habits of Undereducated Adults

Study of Recruitment Techniques

Cooperation of Literacy Programs with Vocational Agricultural Education

Some of the major findings of those projects were:

- (1) Salaried, former successful adult students make the best recruiters.
- (2) All people--from the state director to the ABE student--need to be involved in the initial definition of needs and the development of behavioral goals for successful programs.
- (3) Drop-outs decrease with the use of individually prescribed instruction and flexible times and places that fit in around adult responsibilities.
- (4) Placement--low literates have more trouble getting employment because of bad work records than because of lack of skills or a diploma. World-of-work skills are needed. Too many programs advertise that ABE will help with job-getting and keeping when no placement services are offered.
- (5) A three-year follow-up study of 85 ABE graduates found an annual return to the economy of \$400,000, and that 80 percent of a random sample of their children were achieving better in school.
- (6) The most useful evaluation design includes:
 - (1) an intensive two-day planning session to involve all administration, instruction personnel, and students to design
 - (2) specific objectives, activities to meet those objectives, and ways of documenting those objectives;
 - (3) a folder system for keeping track of all students;
 - (4) criterion reference tests

that hook development of skills to application of skills, and (5) frequent reviews of progress for (6) program adjustment. Systematic evaluation should look at not just program evaluation, i.e., test scores, but also at the individual students and teachers. The bulk of work on evaluation must occur in the planning stage.

Present Projects

Currently, the AAEC is concentrating its efforts in five major areas summarized below:

1. demonstrations of the use of trained indigenous paraprofessionals taking ABE instruction to the homes of clients;
2. demonstrations of rural and urban community education projects;
3. a study of the effectiveness of a televised adult secondary education series, alone and in combination with support systems;
4. demonstrations of coordination of services between ABE and the public library; and
5. assistance to public libraries in expanding services to all disadvantaged adults.

Home Instruction

AAEC home instruction projects are demonstrating the use of trained ABE graduates, natives of the service area, delivering ABE instruction to the homes of the clients.

The target population for home instruction is the stationary poor, those who need basic education but who cannot or will not come in to more formal adult education programs, because they lack the time, transportation, the energy, or the self-confidence to do so.

Learning needs and other needs are diagnosed before instruction begins and throughout the course of the instruction. Diagnostic pre-tests determine the grade level at which the individual needs to begin work in each subject area.

Individual counseling and the instructors' observations in the home point to other needs and problems. The instructor then moves to help solve those problems to allow the client to begin learning. The instructor may refer the client to a service agency and deliver easy-to-read materials that deal with the problem.

The curriculum is individually prescribed basic skills instruction in the areas and at the levels indicated for the individual client by the diagnostic pre-test. Instruction progresses at the student's individual learning rate and changing needs are periodically assessed.

The intent of the AAEC projects is to demonstrate ways of reaching those undereducated adults not being reached by other educational offerings. The goals of individual clients in home instruction vary widely, however, from "to get a high school equivalency diploma" to "to learn to write my name" or "to learn to read better." Home instruction helps the individual meet his or her own goal.

Instructional interaction is one-to-one, individualized instruction in the home of the client. Each instructor works with 15-30 families at a time, visiting each client at least once a week.

The TABE measures learning gains, and instructors' logs record observed changes in the client's behavior and home life.

Community Education

Four community education projects, two urban and two rural, are demonstrating the efficient use of school facilities and other community resources to meet community needs.

The target population of community education projects is the entire community--all ages, all income levels, and all educational levels.

Community education projects conduct community needs assessments, surveying the community to determine its educational and recreational needs and wants.

Programs, therefore, vary from one community to another, but they are likely to include adult basic education classes, adult education home instruction, evening and weekend offerings in sports, drama, music, business, cooking, consumer education, and health.

Programs are planned and implemented through interagency cooperation, flexibility, and planning, with technical assistance from the AAEC.

Adult Education Television Instruction

The AAEC is studying the effectiveness of an adult education television series aimed at helping adults prepare for the GED test, the qualifying test for high school equivalency. To learn how adult education can use television most effectively, the AAEC is comparing test scores among clients preparing for the GED test under three conditions:

- (1) viewing the TV series;
- (2) viewing the series and receiving support;
- (3) studying in one of those support systems, without TV.

The support systems are home study, traditional classroom, learning center, telephone contact, and public library.

The population of the study are adults all over Kentucky who watch the series or are enrolled in one of the educational support systems.

The AAEC is pre-testing and post-testing the subjects to gather data for comparison among the instructional delivery systems.

Demographic information on the subjects will allow the AAEC to analyze instructional effectiveness in relation to age, family size, income, education, and employment.

The television series was developed by Kentucky Educational Television with developmental funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission, production funds from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and input from adult education leadership, including the AAEC. The curriculum is designed to prepare adults for the GED test.

Adult Basic Education and Public Libraries

Seven two-year projects, four urban and three rural, have shown the possibilities of coordinating the services of adult education and the public library to provide better services to disadvantaged adults.

In each project AAEC works with ABE teachers, the public library staff, and community personnel using AAEC community planning procedures.

ABE and library staffs then work together to fill the needs of adult clients--designing outreach services, selecting materials with easily read or nonprint information useful to everyday problems, orienting clients to library materials and services, providing information and referral services, conducting library tours, setting up small collections

of materials in the community, delivering materials to ABE class sites, and providing ABE in the library.

The intent of the projects is to help ABE clients learn to apply basic skills to coping skills, and to use the library as a resource for problem solving and continuing education.

The effect of the project on the clients is difficult to measure, since the objective is to help clients develop a lifetime habit of information seeking for solving problems. Case studies or vignettes of clients compiled by project staff show convincingly the desired behavioral changes.

Expanding Public Library Services to Disadvantaged Adults

Based on its experiences of the ABE-public library projects, the AAEC works with public libraries (78 library systems in 9 states) helping the local library design and carry out, in cooperation with other educational and service agencies and institutions, a plan for expanded services to that community's disadvantaged adults.

To identify the library's target population for the purpose of program planning, the AAEC helps the library take a close look at its community; the people--their incomes, educational levels, cultural backgrounds, and information and services needs; the community's resources--educational institutions, service agencies, and other organizations; and at the library's own services and materials.

The library staff, then, with representatives from the AAEC and from as many community resources as possible, plan, an intensive two-day

planning session, specific services based on that community's needs and resources.

The AAEC assistance to the library takes several forms: AAEC guidance and recommendations for assessing community needs and resources; AAEC help in conducting the two-day planning session, continued assistance as needed throughout the implementation period; visits to the AAEC library-ABE demonstration sites; and a written series of 35 library service guides on expanding public library services to disadvantaged adults.

The Future

Although AAEC funding from year to year is always uncertain, at this time the Center plans to write proposals in the following areas:

- * higher education and in-service training for adult education personnel via satellite
- * continued library training institutes in two more Appalachian states
- * demonstrations of rural information and referral services in libraries in four Appalachian states
- * community education through schools, public libraries, and the YMCA
- * a Right to Read study of the connection between the development and the use of reading skills