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A STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN
THIRTY-SEVEN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN TEXAS



VENTERS

1951

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A STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THIRTY-SEVEN
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN TEXAS

by

Rufus Venters

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Science
in the
Graduate Division

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

August, 1951

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. D. S. Yarbrough, Mr. Thos. L. Holley and Miss Veida N. Williamson for their assistance in the development of this manuscript.

R. V.

To Mr. Thos. L. Holley
and Dr. D. S. Yarbrough

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Rufus Venters, was born the 28 of November 1924 at Navasota, Grimes County, Texas. My family moved to Corsicana, Texas, in 1926 and I have resided there ever since.

My formal education was begun at the Booker T. Washington Elementary School in 1931. I entered G. W. Jackson High School in 1935 and remained there until I graduated in May, 1943.

In June, 1943, I was drafted into the Army and served in the Field Artillery as a radio operator until I was discharged on the 21 of April, 1946.

My college training was begun at Tillotson College, Austin, Texas, in September, 1946. I remained at Tillotson until August, 1947.

In September, 1947, my marital status was changed from single to married.

January 30, 1948, I entered Prairie View A. & M. College and in May, 1950, I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Education.

Reentering Prairie View in July, 1950, I began working for a Master's degree in Sociology and History. My objective is to receive the Master's degree in August, 1951.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"There has always been some form of adult education. The nature of man was such that his environment, both natural and social became an educational force. This informal education was suitable to the simple and informed life of the past. But as society became more highly organized and complex, the gap between the informal education provided by the environment became wider and wider. The changes became so rapid and complex that even the formal education provided the youth was not adequate to the demands of adult life. So special agencies and programs were provided to supplement the education received by adults in their childhood and youth, and to provide retraining to meet the demands of an ever changing society".¹

Theoretical Statements and Researches of Other Scholars:

The Federal Government took an active role in adult education for Negroes when it passed the Federal Emergency Educational Program in 1933.²

¹ Ambrose Caliver, Trends in Adult Education, For Whom and For What, pp. 6-7.

² Emily Miller Danton, "The Federal Emergency Education Program", Handbook of Adult Education in the United States, p. 29.

Immediately Texas became interested in adult education for Negroes. Since 1936 the State Department of Education in Texas has shown a marked interest in public forums as a means of stimulating adult education for Negroes. The superintendents in the counties serve as forum counselors.¹

The special problems for Negroes are: 1. Educational Problems: high illiteracy, inadequate schooling, absenteeism; 2. Economic: skilled and unskilled occupational adjustment; technological changes; 3. Social: security and stability, home adjustment; 4. Personal: self-discipline, use of leisure time and minority status.²

The illiteracy rate for Negroes in Texas has shown a rapid decline since 1910 when the rate was 24.6, in 1920 it was 17.8, in 1930 it was 13.4³ and in 1940 it was 8.0.⁴

Mydral says there is "no spontaneous mass desire for knowledge as a means of achieving power and independence"⁵ among the Negroes and the adult educational movement is upheld by the concerted effort of the people themselves.⁶

¹ W. H. Gaumintz and H. L. Stanton, Supervision of Education for Out of School Youths and Adults, pp. 69-70.

² Ambrose Caliver, "Adult Education for Negroes", pp. 273-274.

³ Negro Year Book, 1937-1938, p. 163.

⁴ Ibid. 1941-1946, p. 80.

⁵ Gunnar Mydral, An American Dilemma, p. 713.

⁶ Ibid. p. 886.

Alonzo Grace says adult education should not be separate or apart from the whole educational program and the adult educational program should be built upon genuine interests, needs, and abilities of adults.¹

"Through a program of adult education, Negroes can be taught elements of the American culture and elements of vocational skills".²

The writer was unable to locate authentic statistics on adult education programs for Negroes prior to 1933. However, some few classes were being operated in isolated places for the purpose of reducing illiteracy.

During Roosevelt's first administration beginning in 1932, as a means of providing work relief for the white collar class of worker, a nation-wide adult education program was begun and sponsored by the Federal government. The agency that operated this program was known as the C.W.A. (Civil Works Administration), which was later changed to the F.E.R.A. (Federal Emergency Relief Administration) and was operated through the State Department of Education. Texas had a quota of 2,200 positions to be filled by whites and Negroes. There were nine white district supervisors and one Negro state supervisor under the immediate supervision of the state director. Thomas L. Holley was the first Negro state supervisor of the State-Federal adult education program (and is the source of the following information).

¹ Alonzo Grace, "Education of Adults", pp. 672-674.

² Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, p. 1272.

During this time there were 728 Negro teachers and local supervisors employed in 125 counties.

The F.E.R.A. was later changed to the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration). This program continued to operate primarily to reduce illiteracy in addition to providing employment for white collar workers in lieu of direct relief. Also to train unskilled workers in semi-skilled and skilled occupations.

Immediately prior to the beginning of World War II and the early part of World War II there occurred an acute shortage of manpower to carry out an all out war production program. In order to meet the needs for trained workers in essential occupations the W.P.A. adjusted its training program to meet this need by cooperating with the United States Office of Education in establishing in industrial areas in which war contracts were let, colleges and private vocational schools to train men and women in the occupations in which shortages existed. Immediately after completing these extensive training courses most of these trainees secured employment.

The socio-economic results of this training was reflected in almost complete intergration of many races in war and other industries with more Negroes receiving high wages for work than ever before during the duration of the war.

It also gave more Negroes an insight into the organization and operation of industries and pointed up the advantages of Negroes

learning skilled trades. Further, this situation gave the greatest impetus to adult education. It helped to remove the stigma that many adults felt were placed on adults attending school. The results of this program is a contributing factor to the expansion of adult education throughout Texas.

Following World War II, Federal legislation was enacted enabling World War II veterans to receive training in fundamental academic subjects, secondary, college and professional and technical training. At the peak of this program there were 257 public and private schools and colleges in Texas offering training to veterans. The peak enrollment was approximately 4,000 trainees. Many others preceded this group and completed their training. At this writing 88 such schools are still in existence.¹

Statement of Problem: The main problems of adult education for Negroes in Texas are educational, social, economic and personal and the most important feature of the adult educational program for Negroes is the learning activities provided. It is the purpose of this writer to present these learning activities.

Scope of the Problem: This manuscript is concerned with the education in kind and type and the educational facilities

¹ Recorded Interview with Mr. Thomas L. Holley, Prairie View, Texas, August 10, 1951.

offered to Negro adults in Texas. The study is principally concerned with the present status of adult education for Negroes in Texas.

Method and Sources: The data used in the development of this study were collected through the use of questionnaires and research in the W. R. Banks Library. The writer assimilated and compiled the materials collected. The data will be presented in a topical and statistical manner. A total of 88 questionnaires were mailed to the various institutions covered in the study; there was a return of 37 completed questionnaires.

Definition of Terms: The term adult education as used in this manuscript refers to formal instruction and aids to study for mature persons on a part-time, voluntary basis, below college level terminal courses by public or private agencies, with an organized program of study, accredited by the State Department of Education or some other accrediting agency.

Webster defines adult education as "formal education for adults. It included correspondence and lecture courses, worker's education, and folk schools whether cultural or vocational in nature".¹

¹ William A. Neilson, ed., Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition, p. 37.

In the dictionary of education, adult education is "any voluntary, purposeful effort toward the self development of adults conducted by public and private agencies".¹

In the social sciences encyclopedia, adult education is defined as "an inclusive term, which, as it is currently employed, embraces within its meaning the following varieties of activity: continuation education; corrective education; functional group education; and folk schools or people's college". The term adult education is ambiguous.²

¹ Carter V. Good, ed., Dictionary of Education, p. 13.

² Edwin R. A. Seligman, ed., Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. I, pp. 463-464.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF PROBLEM

In order to present a clear, concise interpretation of the study the following features in the adult education program for Negroes in Texas will be discussed as follows: types of schools offering adult education, sources of support for schools, courses offered, methods of instructions, qualifications of instructors and some other phases which provide the program of learning experiences.

All institutions studied in the survey are approved by the State Department of Education of Texas or the Veterans Administration.

Types of Institutions: The types of institutions offering adult education are trade schools, high schools, colleges and elementary schools.

The schools offering the most varied adult educational programs are the high schools at Houston and the Orange Independent School District, Colored Veterans School. Both offer accelerated high school programs. The Houston Schools also offer industrial and vocational education courses. The Orange School also offers a basic preparatory program,

There were not any adult educational programs reported at Sam Huston, Tillotson, Bishop or Butler Colleges.

The majority of the institutions offering adult education for Negroes are predominately located in the eastern portion of Texas (See Map 1, Page 10).

TABLE I -- Number and Per cent of Institutions Offering Adult Education by Type

Types of Institutions	Number Reporting	Per Cent
Vocational & Industrial	20	46.5
High Schools	14	32.6
Colleges	4	9.3
Elementary Schools	4	9.3
Extension Schools	1	2.3
TOTAL	43	100.0

The enrollment in the trade schools is almost exclusively veterans and a number of the trade schools are on the verge of closing because of the veterans' entitlements under the G. I. Bill are rapidly being exhausted. There is a total of 5,543 enrollees in the institutions, 3,944 of these are veterans. Fourteen privately owned trade and industrial schools listed schools six were owned by Negroes and represented a total value of \$225,000. These six schools were owned by individuals as contrasted with three schools controlled by white partnership.

TABLE II -- Value and Ownership of Private Schools

Value of Schools	Ownership		
	Negro	White	Partnership
\$ 3,000	x		
6,000		x	
6,000		x	x
10,000		x	
10,000		x	
15,000	x		
15,000		x	
15,000		x	x
20,000		x	x
30,000	x		
30,000	x		
35,000		x	
40,000	x		
107,000	x		
TOTAL	\$225,000	\$117,000	

Sources of Support: Support from the Negro Adult Educational Program comes largely from tuition paid by the students. Other sources of support are from the state, city, county and donations. Many of the schools depended on more than one source for financial funds for operation.

TABLE III -- Sources of Support for Negro Educational Programs

Sources Support	Number Reporting	Per cent
Tuitions	32	60.4
State	8	15.1
City	6	11.3
Others	5	9.4
County	1	1.9
Donations	1	1.9
TOTAL	53	100.0

From the total of 43 institutions covered none of them offered a free adult education program for Negroes.

Schedule for Operation of School: The adult education program is operated on a year round basis in a majority of the schools covered in the survey, with a small percentage of them operating only from September to May.

The season of highest attendance in the institutions is during the winter months.

TABLE IV -- Seasons of Highest Attendance in Adult Classes

Season	Number Reporting	Per cent
Winter	16	51.6
Fall	7	22.6
Spring	7	22.6
Summer	1	3.2
TOTAL	31	100.0

Enrollees are not permitted to enter at anytime, but during the beginning of each month or at the beginning of each new class.

Organization and Methods of Teaching Classes: All the activities in the adult education program are organized on a class basis, with the classes being organized on a group or individual instructional basis.

In the classes when minimum enrollment is required the distribution runs from 9 to 20, with 15 being the most popular minimum number required. Thirty-six per cent of the institutions required a minimum enrollment.

Methods of Recruiting Students: Various methods are used to recruit students for the educational program. The most popular used methods are announcements in churches, on the radio and in the movies, advertising in newspapers, the issuance of catalogues and other printed matter. Most of the institutions use a combination of methods to recruit students.

Only three schools secured a list of high school "drop-outs" for the purpose of inducing them to enroll in the adult education classes.

TABLE V -- Methods Used to Recruit Students

Methods	Number Reporting	Per cent
Announcements	33	36.7
Church		
Radio		
Movie		
Advertisements	22	24.4
Catalogue	18	20.0
Other Printed Matter	17	18.9
TOTAL	80	100.0

Schedule of Operation: The schedule on which the school operates is very important in the adult education program. It has to be arranged so as not to interfere with the work hours of its students. The majority of the classes are held day and night. A small per cent of the classes are held at night only, with a very few being held during the day only.

TABLE VI -- Time When Classes are Offered

Time	Number Reporting	Per cent
Day & Night	19	57.6
Night only	9	27.3
Day only	5	15.1
TOTAL	33	100.0

Courses and Methods of Teaching: The content of the courses offered in the adult education program are prescribed by the State Department of Education and the Veterans Administration. As a result of this the majority of the courses offered are similar to those used in high schools and colleges. Some few courses are organized by teacher-student agreement.

The principle methods of teaching are question-and-recitation, demonstration, lecture and supervised practice. In most of the adult education programs all the above mentioned methods are used with neither method predominating significantly, but varying only according to the objective of the class.

TABLE VII -- Methods of Teaching Used in Negro Adult Classes

Methods	Number Reporting	Per cent
Question & Recitation	30	26.8
Demonstration	29	25.9
Lecture	27	24.1
Supervised practice	26	23.2
TOTAL	112	100.0

The Instructional Staff: The preparation of the teaching staff in the adult education program for Negroes shows a high proportion of trained personnel. Very few instructors were employed who possessed no previous training.

TABLE VIII -- Preparation of Instructional Staff in the Adult Education Program

Preparation	Number Reporting	Per cent
Bachelor's Degree	34	42.5
High School Degree	15	18.8
Trade Certificate	9	11.2
Journeyman	9	11.2
Master's Degree	5	6.3
Business College	4	5.0
Junior College	1	1.2
None	3	3.8
TOTAL	80	100.0

Subjects Offered in the Adult Education Program for Negroes:

The subjects offered in the educational program for adults are trade and industrial courses, accelerated high school courses, basic elementary school courses, business education and beauty culture. The content of the courses are as follows:

Trade and Industrial Education	Per cent
Auto mechanics, body and fender	41.0
Cooking and Baking	
Shoe repairing	
Tailoring	
Upholstery	
Distribution and Salesmanship	

Accelerated High School 33.3

Same as prescribed by the State Department
of Education for public high schools.

Basic Elementary Subjects 15.4

Same as prescribed by the State Department
of Education for public elementary schools.

Business Education 7.7

Bookkeeping
Business English
Business Arithmetic
Personality Development
Shorthand
Spelling
Typing

Beauty Culture 2.6

Complete Beauty Course
Brush-up Course
Hair Weaving
Instructors Course

Discontinued Courses: Courses which have been discontinued
in the adult education program in some of the schools because of
lack of enrollees and by request of the accrediting agencies are
as follows:

Auto mechanics, body and fender
Body message
Cabinet making
Carpentry
Electricity
Plumbing
Radio repairing

The tabulation of subjects and sections listed above has been
grouped under the main headings for convenience, the classification
was determined by inspection of the course titles as listed on the
questionnaires.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

What adult education for Negroes is and what it comprises is essentially that with which this study is concerned. The descriptive list of adult education activities includes adult education in the colleges, trade and industrial schools, public schools and extension schools.

The presence of a number of illiterate Negroes, unemployed Negroes and Negroes employed in stereotyped occupations indicates a major need for adult education for Negroes and re-education to improve their vocational competency.¹

Sociological and economic changes make the problem of determining specific needs of Negro adults a continuous one. A look at the American economy will show that the results of increased mechanization and the complexity of social and economic conditions, that handicrafts and book learning are not sufficient as an adult education program for Negroes. The educational program for Negroes should provide adequately for their present and future needs.

¹ Negro Year Book, 1941-1946, pp. 144-152.

The trends of adult education for Negroes point toward a definite upgrade in kind and quality of education offered. Emphasis in adult education for Negroes tend to be toward industrial and vocational education.

The adult education program in Texas has the advantage of being superbly planned by the State Department of Education and in some instances by the Veterans Administration. Both agencies leave some flexibility in their programs so as to cover special needs or problems of individuals enrolled in adult education courses.

Only one school in the study made use of drop-out lists. These lists could be used for the purpose of inducing high youths to enroll in the adult classes.

The instructors for the adult classes tend to be well trained, their true effectiveness will be determined by the kind and quality of student they "turn out".

"Education is an open-end process. It can and should be lifelong, and schools should leave the door open to all who are eager to learn....adults as well as children".¹

¹ Homer Hemper and Grace S. Wright, 100 Evening Schools, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. A., 1949, p. ii.

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A P P E N D I X

P. O. Box 2423
Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas
January 10, 1951

Dear Sir:

The Texas Colored Teachers State Association is seeking information on the availability of adult education to the colored people of Texas. Will you cooperate with us by supplying the information requested in the enclosed questionnaire? This material will be useful to the Association in making recommendations for the expansion of day and evening programs in areas where none now exists.

All information furnished concerning your school will be held in strict confidence and will be used only in summary statements, and as such it will be impossible to identify your school. In order to further safeguard the confidential nature of your report, we are not asking for the name of your school on the form. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

/SIGNED/

Thos. L. Holley, Chairman
Adult Education Committee

TLH:vnw
Enclosures

P. O. Box 2423
Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas
February 13, 1951

Dear Sir:

During the first week of January we mailed to you a questionnaire requesting your cooperation in our effort to secure information on adult education programs throughout Texas. We need your report in order to complete this study which will be of great value to those who plan adult education programs in Texas.

Won't you please take a moment to complete the questionnaire and return it to us in the self-addressed, stamped envelope which was enclosed? If there are items on the form which you do not care to divulge, please give us as much information as you feel you can.

Again many thanks for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

/SIGNED/

Thos. L. Holley, Chairman
Adult Education Committee

TLH:vnw

SURVEY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Code No. _____

Location _____ Population total _____ Negro _____

Total enrollment _____ Number of veterans _____

Is school approved for veterans? Yes _____ No _____

Type of school: College _____ High School _____ Extension _____ Trade _____

How is school supported? State _____ County _____ City _____ Tuition Fees _____

Donations _____ Others _____

Does the school operate on a year round basis? Yes _____ No _____

Open only September to May? Yes _____ No _____

Season of highest attendance: Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

May students enter at any time? Yes _____ No _____

If not, when? _____

Methods of Recruiting Students

Do you publish a catalogue? Yes _____ No _____

Distribute other printed matter? Yes _____ No _____

Advertisement in newspaper? Yes _____ No _____

Announcements: Churches _____ Movies _____ Radio _____

Have you secured a list of high school "drop outs" for the purposes of inducing them to enroll in your school? Yes _____ No _____

Do you have both day and night classes? _____ Day only _____ Night only _____

In what building is school conducted? _____

If not public school, do you own your own building? Yes _____ No _____.

If rented, is landlord White or Colored? _____

For the Privately Owned School

Is the school individually owned? _____ Partnership? _____

Corporation? _____ All Negro owned? _____ Partly Negro owned? _____

Non-Negro owned? _____

Estimated value of school _____

Organization of Class

Group instruction _____ Individual instruction _____

Is minimum enrollment required? Yes ___ No ___. If so, how many? _____

Content of Courses

Prescribed by State Department: Yes ___ No ___ Veterans

Administration? Yes ___ No ___

Similar to that used in high schools or colleges? Yes ___ No ___

Agreement between teacher and students? Yes ___ No ___

Methods of Teaching

Lecture _____ Demonstration _____ Question and recitation _____

Supervised practice _____

Subjects Offered at Present

Subject	Enrollment	Time required to complete
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Subjects Formerly Offered But Now Discontinued

Subjects	When discontinued	Why discontinued
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

New Courses Planned

Subjects

When

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Number of Employees

Male _____ Female _____

Total teachers _____ Administrative _____ Others _____

Are teachers paid a regular salary? Yes _____ No _____ Inproportion to
class enrollment? Yes _____ No _____

Preparation of Staff

Name

Subject

Training or degrees

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please return to Thos. L. Holley, Prairie View A. & M. College, P. O.
Box 2423, Prairie View, Texas.

List of towns reporting adult education programs.

Towns Reporting	Number of Schools Reported
Austin	1
Beaumont	1
Brackettville	1
Breckenridge	1
Calvert	1
Corpus Christi	1
Cuero	1
Dallas	3
Edinburg	1
Fort Worth	2
Galveston	1
Hemphill	1
Houston	1
Huntsville	1
Jacksonville	1
Joaquin	1
Karnes City	1
Marlin	1
Marshall	1
Mexia	4
Orange	1
Paris	1
San Antonio	5
San Marcos	1
Waco	3
TOTAL	<hr/> 37