CAN LITERACY LEAD TO TRANSFORMATION ?

by

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

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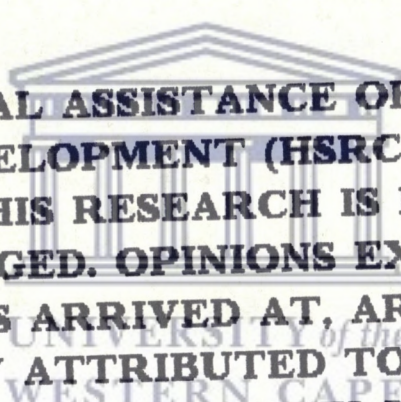
ABSTRACT

This thesis constitutes an investigation into the effects of literacy in a community which is severly disadvantaged. The thesis explored various ways in which the concept of literacy could be examined and the political assuments implied in each literacy orientation. In order to explore the effects of literacy following conventional research procedures a pilot study was conducted. During the pilot the data revealed that statistical analysis could not capture the political and 'liberational' nuances generated by literacy. In the light of this, it became necessary to adopt a mode of analysis which could capture the effects of the literacy.

This study therefore constitutes a description of the advantages and disadvantages of radically switching to a different paradigm in the life of a single project.

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my dear son, Michael-Peter Grant Fred, who died at the age of eight months in 1994.

I also dedicate it to my husband, Jan, who became so much a part of the literacy project as I was. He assisted me in all my endeavours and ventures and even the facilitators and learners got to know him well and knew that they could count on his assistance at any time.

To my other children, Michelle, Janice and Jason, who understood that I always needed to be involved in the community and needed to do this thesis around my involvement.

To the memory of my mother and mother-in-law, who were both denied the opportunity to be schooled, but who ensured that their children received education against all odds.

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To the facilitators, past (Mandy, Quinton, Mona and Cheryl) and present (Sheila, Stephanie, Ray, Lizette and Errol) who through their sheer hard work and loyalty made a difference in the lives of people in the community.

To Levi Engelbrecht, my supervisor, high school teacher, mentor and confidante. He had faith in my ability to finish, but also knew that some days everything seemed so far and distant. I am extremely grateful for his valuable contribution and the many hours he spent to assist in any way he possibly and humanly could. His humbleness brings him closer to the people at grassroots level and this was evident when he attended one of the social evenings of the literacy learners.

This thesis is dedicated to all our learners from the Peoples Centre, past and present, without you this thesis

would not have been possible. Your motivation to become literate at all costs was an inspiration not only to your families, but also to all your compatriots out there who ventured to do the same or are still somewhat very sensitive about their plight.

To Mandy, who helped me realise this dream. Thank you for assisting with proofreading this thesis.

To Eugene, who assisted with the references and bibliography.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AALAE	African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ANC	African National Congress
CACE	Centre for Adult and Continuing Education
CCD	Centre for Cognitive Development
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DET	Department of Education and Training
ELP	English Literacy Project
FSLN	Frente Sandanista de Liberacion National
GNP	Gross National Product
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LEI	Learners Empowerment Iniative
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
MLP	Maryland Literacy Programme
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO's	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLC	National Literacy Co-operation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAALAE	South African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
SACABE	South African Committee for Adult Basic Education
SANLA	South African National Learners Association

UCT	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNISA	University of South Africa
USWE	Use Speak and Write English
UWC	University of the Western Cape

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CHAPTER 1 :   RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1   FOCAL PROBLEM

In South Africa apartheid has caused so many communities to become impoverished at all levels that people cannot begin to see a link between their situation and the cause of it. Being illiterate, poor and discriminated against often makes people unable to either unravel the cause of their situation, or to change it for that matter. Paul (1991) refers to this link as follows:

> Poverty and illiteracy are often linked.
> They sometimes form 'Catch 22 cycles-reading and
> writing skills being required to find and keep
> a job and financial stability being the vehicle
> for gaining these skills.' Many of those strugg-
> ling to make ends meet do not see literacy as a
> solution to their poverty...to be addressed in
> the future after other needs are met (16).

In South Africa this link was the direct result of the policy of apartheid. The majority of black people in South Africa found themselves in the lowest paid jobs, with inadequate or no housing, ill-equipped educational or health facilities, which functioned under a system of little or no access, consequently denying them of basic human rights.

1.2   MITCHELLS PLAIN
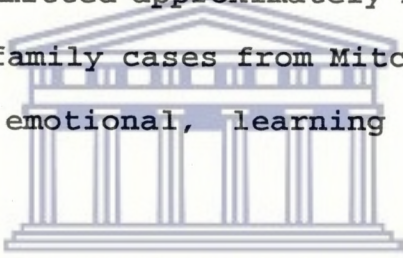
During the 1970's it was decided to establish   Mitchells Plain as a sort of middle class suburb, after many people were forcefully removed from their original places due to the Group Areas Act (1948), applied by the previous nationalist government. However after luring people with wonderful promises of decent housing and adequate facilities, the government did not provide what it had promised. Consisting of about nine subareas, there were no general hospital, civic amenities or recreational facilities. These areas are Westridge, Tafelsig, Portlands, Lentegeur, Rocklands, Eastridge, Beacon Valley, Strandfontein and Woodlands. In 1983 the population was already 189 233 (*Cape Herald* 1983). Eleven years later the population stands at 400 000 (*Argus 1992*).

In a publication, *Voices of Mitchells Plain* (1983), it was stated that health facilities were grossly inadequate, schools were overcrowded and inadequate, workplaces were far, travelling fares were high and the rate of unemployment and crime was increasing. Some areas turned into slum areas leading to stress and other illnesses. Today nothing much has really changed. These problems are described in reports by various organisations and institutions.

The increase in population and deteriorating socio-economic conditions led to gangsterism.

One of the reasons being that as early as 1982 children of schoolgoing age were idling around because in the newly established areas of Tafelsig and Eastridge there were no schools. Children started smoking and formed gangs with unsavoury types in the areas. The school dropout rate was high. Although schools were built later on the problem of gangsterism still remains.

According to the Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospital report (1989-1990), socio-economic problems lead to other problems so much so that they admitted approximately 2 000 cases, of which 95% were child and family cases from Mitchells Plain, ranging from behavioural, emotional, learning and drug abuse to marital problems.

Civic associations in the various areas started to work together resulting in the establishment of the Mitchells Plain Coordinating Commitee to try and seek solutions to these problems. Many campaigns were undertaken by this body. These included amongst others, campaigns for schools, hospitals, and recreational facilities. Others involved campaigns against gangsterism, high rents and busfares. These were all part of the struggle waged against the apartheid government. Many gains were made, but it remains an ongoing struggle although we have a new democratic government of national unity. It remains up to the commitment of the people in Mitchells Plain

to seriously campaign for the kind of community that they would like to see develop and make it a place where playing, learning and work can take it's rightful place in society.

1.2.1 Woodlands, a suburb of Mitchells Plain

Although this problem of impoverished communities has manifested itself all over the country this thesis will specifically deal with a much more confined geographical location, namely Woodlands, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town. Woodlands is a subeconomic area of Mitchells Plain. There are two secondary schools and three primary schools in the area. The dropout rate is fairly high and about four gangs are operating in the area, causing instability, fear and tension in the community (Woodlands Residents Association Annual General Report 1992-1993: 1-3).
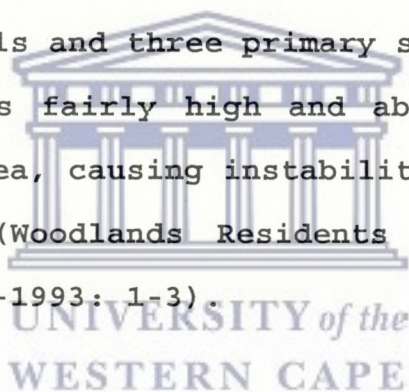
According to the City Council's population statistics the Woodlands' population is 19 743, but the residents association feels that this figure is underplayed as many a home houses two to three families. In addition there are many homeless housed in backyard shanties as the destitution of more and more families increased during 1993 (AGM Report 1992-1993: 2-3).

Taking into account the above socio-economic situation it becomes apparent that community workers are daily experiencing

the results of past failures and inadequacies of the apartheid system, leading to the alienation of the people from their own affairs and that of the community.

This inhumane system has caused people to become so disempowered in that they are not able to take iniatives, be creative or see that by institutionalising this disempowerment is not in their own interest. Thus they are exploited, cheated and oppressed to the point that it almost became virtually impossible to transform their communities.

1.2.2   Interest

As an educationist and a community worker one daily faces the dehumanization effect of the apartheid system, to the extent that it witheld basic :
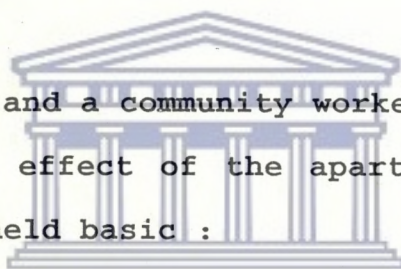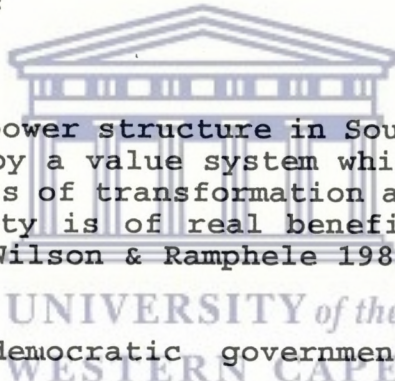
> literacy and numeracy beyond the reach of large sections of the oppressed and exploited (Perry 1991: 14).

Being a teacher at the local school I come into contact with many parents who are very concerned about the issues facing their community . One of the important issues highlighted by some parents was the frustration they experienced by being illiterate or semiliterate. They feel they cannot assist their children, they cannot even read or sign their children's reports. They feel they lack the confidence to speak in school meetings, let alone become involved in school affairs.

This state of affairs and the fact that I was already involved
with the Woodlands Peoples Centre prompted me to
take up the issue of literacy, but to change things literacy
needed to be taken further than mere reading, writing and
numeracy.

I am well aware of the fact that approximately 15 million
people in South Africa cannot read and write effectively
(Education Review 1993: 8). Therefore mass based literacy can
only be undertaken by a truly representative, democratic
government, whereby:

> the political power structure in South Africa needs
> to be infused by a value system which would ensure
> that the process of transformation and the creation
> of a new society is of real benefit to all those
> living in it (Wilson & Ramphele 1989: 267).

Since April 1994 a democratic government of national
unity has been elected which is strongly committed to the
Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Interim
Constitution (reference to the Adult Basic Education is made
on p9 & 10 of this chapter). However this does not change the
position of the illiterate people by itself. It is a process
which needs the commitment of literacy fieldworkers and
learners and the assistance from government to give basic
education it's rightful place in South Africa.

1.2.3   Reasons for demanding to be literate

It has become increasingly clear in the work done by the advice office at the Woodlands Peoples Centre that many of the persons are not in a position to read, write or interpret important documents governing their lives are illiterate or semiliterate. Many could not understand or read eviction notices, consequently being evicted or appearing in court over non-payment or late payments of accounts. Together with the Woodlands Residents Association, these persons have expressed the need to become literate in order to take charge of their own lives. This is but one aspect of development that has been tackled by this community.

1.2.4 a History of the advice office

As part of the Woodlands Peoples Centre the advice office was established to advise people on where to go with queries, mainly referring people through the 'correct channels' when they experienced problems. Eventually the advice office had to deal with child abuse , women battering, non-support , grants, housing, evictions, street children , court cases, electricity , water , rent and labour problems. During March 1992 to October 1993 the advice office dealt with 1200 cases with regards to the above categories (AGM Report 1992-1993: 3). Soon it became apparent that the advice office had to take on a new role. This role would be an attempt to try and undo the damage caused by apartheid by organising other projects around these issues. People had to be educated on their rights and

how to deal with problems. This process involved counselling and at the same time making people aware that they can make a difference, by advocating and working for change in the community. Soon other projects were launched in accordance with this new role as shown in the structure (See Appendix 1). Although apartheid laws such as the Group Areas and Separate Amenities Act have been repealed between 1992 and 1994 , it does not change the situation of the illiterate. It is thus essential to use literacy as a tool to develop the people's consciousness in order for them to change their own lives and make an impact on their communities.

However it is my conviction that mass based literacy must be undertaken in order to reach the millions of people who were denied the right to basic education, but that does not mean that we should sit back and wait for the new government to do it all on it's own. It could take years before this issue could be addressed adequately, but it will only mean that transformation will take longer.

Therefore, although this project would be undertaken on a small scale, I believe that it will make a difference in the community in which we live, because it will be practical and no research on literacy as far as I could determine, has been undertaken in Woodlands before.

1.3 CONCEPTUALIZATION

The key concepts, central to this thesis are usually treated as autonomous and separate issues, thus the focus of the conceptualization would be to explore the possible linkage between the concepts with the aim of demonstrating the extent to which a particular type of literacy could facilitate transformation.

1.3.1   Adult Basic Education

On page 17 of this chapter I refer to the works of Simmons (1983) and Seers (1979) in their discussions on the role of education in socio-economic development, especially in developing countries moving towards industrialization.
It was concluded that in order to obtain higher economic growth more emphasis should be placed on adult education on a mass scale and also on primary education. This tendency seemed to lead to the modern concept of lifelong education,

> whereby teaching children and adults reading, writing and arithmetic, by whatever means, is an integral part of, or necessary step in lifelong education (Tanguiane 1990: 11).

In South Africa Adult Basic Education (ABE) :

> would aim to provide adults with education and training programmes equivalent to exit levels in the formal school system, with emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills (RDP 1994: 63).

It goes on to state that this must be achieved with the cooperation of :

> employer, labour, local ,provincial, community and funding agencies (RDP 1994: 63).

This means that it is recognised as one of the countries' major problems facing the new government and strengthens my point of view that it cannot be undertaken only by the government and that it is a process which cannot be addressed overnight.

1.3.2 Mass based education

It was in the light of the above that many governments started instituting Mass based literacy programmes, but in many third world countries political leaders overestimated the role of mass based literacy as an only strategy to combat poverty, backwardness and ignorance.

> They have seen it as a promise of an end to
> backwardness, marginalization, a pathway to
> modernity and socio-economic development
> (Marshall 1990: 12).

She further stated that:

> It is a means by which the set of organisational
> forms, practices, agencies, institutions and
> documents that make up the state act in concert to
> gain purchase on women and men's lives... (Marshall
> 1990: 24).

What the governments have not realised was that it became a

integral part of the ongoing process of state formation.

At first mass literacy was kept away from the masses as the

ruling classes feared for their positions in society, so

the extention of public schooling went hand in hand with

integration and social control:
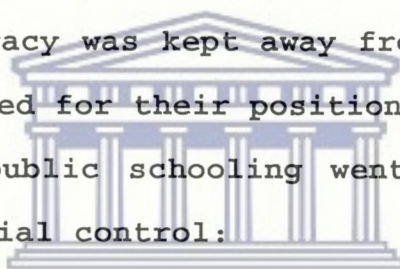
> The extension of mass literacy in Western societies
> then, must be seen in the broad sweep of historical
> transformation that created the capitalist society
> (Marshall 1990: 21).

Mass based literacy becomes part of reconstructing and

transforming society, in which people can feel free to speak

their own language and express how they understand their

situation.

In this instance literacy becomes:

a process of creating rather than transmitting
knowledge, in which working people develop a
capacity to locate themselves in their own times
and spaces, and legitimate their own activities and
interrelatedness, with the establishment of genuine
'people power' (Marshall 1990: 25).

1.3.3   Illiteracy, poverty and literacy

According to Tanguiane (1990) it is often found that
a high rate of illiteracy goes in conjunction with economic
backwardness and a high rate of illiteracy is both a result
and cause of poverty and in the end it becomes an obstacle to
development. He stresses the fact that illiteracy affects
particularly the most underprivileged and the most defenceless
(1).

On page 1 I have also referred to the link Paul (1991) has
made to poverty and illiteracy. In South Africa it is also
found that illiteracy is almost always found in the
communities that have been deprived, discriminated against on
the basis of skin colour and in the unskilled labour market.
It has been a deliberate policy of the racial capitalistic
government to use education and the denial of education as a
tool to further the aims of the apartheid regime. In a
chapter, entitled *Apartheids's assault on the poor*,' Wilson
and Ramphele (1989) singled out the policy of Bantu education
of the previous National Party government, as perhaps the most
powerful   tool   of   that   government   to
 impoverish and disempower blacks in South Africa. Those who
could not fit in with the dominant culture of the ruling class

dropped out of school and became a statistic of illiteracy and swelled the already overwhelming figures of the unemployed and unskilled labour market ,plunging people deeper into the cycle of poverty. It is not only poverty on the economic sphere, but also the the kind of poverty associated with human degradation and lack of confidence to assert oneself.

1.3.4 Literacy, functional literacy, empowerment, and development

Any literacy project needs to be clear on the question of literacy for what? Is it literacy for empowerment transformation or development or literacy for functioning in the society or for subordination and oppression.

For many countries and projects the issue at stake in literacy is for people to function effectively on a daily basis. This phenomenon is called functional literacy and the following definition was used in a survey in Canada.

> the ability to use printed and written information to function in society (Calamai 1987: 7).

Others disagree with this view and describes it as:

> having reading, writing and numbers skills necessary to perform tasks demanded by the community and especially by the job (Calamai 1987: 15).

In Tanzania functional literacy refers and operates on the level of activity based on learners' daily functions and

needs. It includes amongst others nutrition, hygiene and sosio-political aspects (Kalinjuma 1991: 2).

This differs from country to country depending on technological advancements and needs of a particular society. Likewise many governments have used literacy to suit their own needs, because literacy can never be neutral, of which South Africa is no exception. In South Africa the majority of black people have been denied that basic right, to the extent that approximately 15 million people in this country are illiterate. It is unfortunately this group of people who find themselves in the lowest paid jobs, exploited, cheated and living in poverty stricken areas where there are hardly any facilities to lift themselves out of this situation.

If a government is serious about the development of its people and the country it would take heed of the link that literacy has with power relations and the quality of life of it's citizens. Policy-makers must be aware of the fact that literacy can be used as a tool to enable people to:

> ...enhance and develop the confidence and skills to take control of their own lives and to participate fully in society (ELP 1989-1990: 2).

In the introductory chapter of Freire and Macedo (1987) Giroux refers continuously to the works of Gramsci who linked literacy to power and knowledge. In his opinion, literacy for Gramsci could be used to empower individuals and

communities, but it could also be used by the dominant class to discrimate and dominate illiterates in further subordination. Gramsci had furthermore stressed that:

> ... as a radical construct it had to be rooted in the spirit of critique ... literacy had to become a precondition for social and cultural emanicipation (in Freire & Macedo 1987: 1).

In this way people could be able to comprehend and transform their own society. This view is heavily criticised by Giroux because he is of the opinion that it fails to recognise the implications of the relationship between power and knowledge. Quoting Freire and Macedo (1987) Giroux says it ignores the:

> forms of political and ideological ignorance that function as a refusal to know the limits and political consequences of one's view of the world (5).

Because for Freire and Macedo (1987) :

> literacy is part of a process of becoming self-critical about the historical constructed nature of one's experience. To be able to name one's experience is part of what is meant to 'read' the world and to begin to understand the political nature of the limits and possibilties that make up the larger society (8).

Freire (1987) further states that:

> literacy leads to and participates in a series of triggering mechanisms that need to be activated for the indispensable transformation of a society whose unjust reality destroys the majority of people. Literacy in this global sense takes place in societies where oppressed classes assume their own history, for example in Nicaragua literacy took place as soon as people took their history into their own hands (107).

Freire's idea of transformation is about reading the world, in other words if learners want to attain literacy skills they first need to know their environment and understand how their immediate surroundings fit into each other in order to bring about change. Literacy should then be used as one of the tools by the oppressed to transform their society. If we follow the Freirean discourse, it becomes important that educators understand that students bring their own language to the class and that empowerment can only take place if they can look critically at the world and question the dominant culture in order transform their societies, they can go a long way in establishing their own social order and making their own history (Freire & Macedo 1987: 7).

It is in this sense that a learners own voice becomes imperative in the process of empowerment. If one understands that all of us are intertwined within power relations, it becomes vital that learners' own:

> experience provides them with the opportunity to give meaning and expression to their own needs and voices as part of a project of self and social empowerment (Freire & Macedo 1987: 7).

They are further of the opinion that in order for learners to understand and learn how to reconstruct their society, they need to become aware of the power of language to construct their own communities .

It is not only learners that must empower themselves but that the role of teachers needs to be reexamined in terms of their positions as transformative intellectuals.

This understanding of the world becomes vital for the process of development of learners with reference to quality of human life.

When one looks at development, capitalist governments tend to look at gross national product(GNP). This issue has extensively been discussed by Seers (1979) and Simmons (1983). Looking at economic growth only would hide the true facts of the quality of life of people, therefore (Seers 1979) stresses aspects such as employment, the equal treatment of people and essential nutrition as indicators of growth. It would all depend on what kind of development a government seeks and for what purpose. Simmons (1980) is of the opinion that governments might be prompted to spend more on primary and vocational education if they think it would increase economic growth (2-3).

If their aim is to foster quality of life they would think of implementing mass based adult education in order to promote an increase in the quality and income of the poor people (Simmons 1983: 3-4).

According to Tanguiane (1990) governments saw development in early years as synonomous with economic development. With this kind of development in mind education policies were formulated in that direction . In so doing the importance of

primary and adult education was totally ignored in favour of secondary education, which was geared towards economic outputs. It became increasingly clear that illiteracy was a hampering factor particularly in the industrialization of developing countries.

Poor children were left out in the cold as they had very little chance of getting access to the upper levels (high income, status, higher education) for all kinds of reasons.

By the late 70's these governments began to realise that:

> development was not limited to economic growth, but constituted a much more complex and diversified process, while economic development itself was not only a technical and economic process, but mainly a social process, implying substantial advances in the latter field (Tanguiane 1990: 15).

Tanguiane (1990) lists among others increase in income, reduction of child mortality, increase in productivity , and improvement in healthy eating habits. He cites Nigeria as an example where a survey showed that the infant mortality rate was 32% higher for mothers who never attended school than for those who attended at least primary education (10-17).

It was this trend that forced policymakers to re-examine the role of primary education and literacy towards social and economic development.

1.3.5 Importance of this study

Wilson and Ramphele (1989) are of the opinion that today it is very difficult to earn a living without being literate, especially now in an industrial age typified by the scarcity of jobs basic literacy is a prerequisite for employment(14). It becomes increasingly necessary to use literacy as a tool for illiterate and semiliterate persons to empower themselves to transform their communities.

Bray, Stephens and Clarke (1979) describes illiteracy as follows:

> lacking economic and political power and that the imbalance will continue to exist until illiteracy is eradicated (64).

They are also of the opinion that the illiterate are being exploited and subjected to disadvantages in a world where literacy is increasingly taken for granted. Wagner (1987) sees illiterate people as being:

> members of oral subcultures with their own set of values and beliefs , rather than as failing members of their dominant literature culture. He also says that they share their knowledge and skills in return for access to reading and writing of friends, neighbours and friends (210).

1..3.6   Factors inhibiting the impact of literacy

It becomes increasingly clear that this kind of fear, darkness and anxiety resulting from illiteracy, can only have a
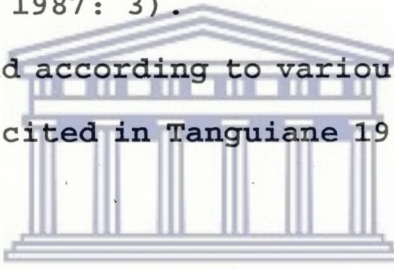
negative impact on the development and transformation of communities.

Although this is true in many instances in today's world literacy is increasingly taken for granted and an illiterate person hardly wants to expose their illiteracy for fear of retribution or exploitation by society.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) has adopted the *'eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000.'* Although the literacy rates of most countries are stable, population growth has increased and so has the number of illiterates (Wagner 1987: 3).

Illiteracy is defined according to various criteria in various countries. Viehoff (cited in Tanguiane 1990) includes amongst others:

> adults who have never attended school (instrumental
> illiterates), those who leave school after a short
> time or without passing primary level certification
> (semi-literates) those whose literacy has lapsed
> (secondary or revisionary illiteracy (23).

He says that it is :

> the lack of basic skills in reading, writing and
> arithmetic added with technical, social, cultural
> and political illiteracy (23).

He also refers to it:

> as a hindrance to full and effective participation
> in society (23).

Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania as cited by Tanguiane (1990) believes that people are illiterate if they do not possess the necessary skills to perform simple everyday tasks (31). Examples of such tasks includes reading instructions on medication, reading destinations of transport or filling in rudimentary forms.

Taking into account the many views on literacy described in this chapter it becomes quite clear that no literacy project can be politically neutral. It serves the purpose of some people and the state. Literacy does not only mean reading, writing and numeracy skills , but it needs to go beyond this spectrum. Learners need to acquaint themselves with the mechanics of their immediate and surrounding community in order to use their skills of literacy. One aspect which is not clearly spelt out in the ABE programme of the RDP is the aspect of taking literacy beyond mere basic literacy skills. It will be the tasks of NGO's, literacy fieldworkers, learners, labour and educationists to campaign vigourously for empowerment of illiterates through literacy.

1.3.7 Different ways of conceptualising literacy

Countries all over the world define literacy using their own standards, for instance in Canada it is seen as the:

> ...ability to use printed and written documents so
> as to be able to live in society, achieve personal
> objectives and develop personal knowledge and
> potensial (Tanguiane 1990: 123).

The European parliament saw it as a spectrum related to many situations. UNESCO's definition of literacy refers to:

> a'persons ability 'with understanding to both read
> and write short simple statements on his/her
> everyday life (Tanguiane 1990: 124).

Tanguiane (1990) refers to the Declaration of Universal Human Rights in 1948. He also mentions *The International* Covenant adopted by the United Nations in which both expressed and underwrites the human right to basic Education. It is the Persepolis Declaration of the Simposium held in Iran that:

> declared literacy as something more than reading,
> writing and arithmetic, it was rather a
> contribution to the liberation of man and his full
> development. It is a fundamental human right
> (Tanguine 1990: 18-19).

Although many countries support these declarations and enshrine it in their constitutions, inequality in education is found in both developed and underdeveloped countries.
In countries where the ruling classes want to maintain their dominant positions, it ranges from little or no access to education, lack of adequate resources and unequal distribution thereof. It reaches alarming proportions in different groups, it differs from region to region and in many cases is also

based on race, class and gender (Wilson & Ramphele 1989: 139-143).

1.3.8 The Non-governmental response to literacy in the apartheid era

Despite repressive measures and lack of resources experienced by NGO's under the nationalist apartheid regime they took the iniatives to organise and run programmes and services for the oppressed to uplift themselves. It ranged from nutrition, co-operatives, health and literacy. Examples of such organisations were Build Yourselves where literacy was used to obtain general skills for discussions around conditions and strategies to deal with problems.

According to Wilson and Ramphele, NGO's have been trying to address literacy but has only reached a small number of the 15-20 million illiterates. The National Literacy Co-op was established in 1980 and a recent national body, South African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (SAALAE) was established as part of a process to create a common strategy to literacy.

Many other organisations such as Maryland Literacy Programme (MLP) was established as early as 1976 to tackle illiteracy. Non-governmental organisations (NGO's) are still busy addressing the task of literacy , but it remains a drop in the ocean. The previous nationalist government was not taking the right to basic education seriously otherwise they would have sponsored NGO efforts ,or take on their

responsibilty, but they were not.

However we do need a concerted effort from all organisations to establish a common national umbrella body for Adult Basic Education in order to promote the NGO's efforts already put in and to demand that ABE as set out in the RDP takes it's rightful place in the education structures.

1.3.9 Perspectives on the function of literacy

On pages 13-15 of this chapter I referred to some of these perspectives focussing on Kalinjuma (1991); Freire and Macedo (1987); Calamai (1987) and ELP (1989-1990). Countries implement literacy projects according to their needs. They define the function of literacy from a historical perspective. In doing so they define the role literacy must play in their respective countries. Concepts such as empowerment, development, transformation, economic growth or even domination are used. These perspectives differ from country to country and from project to project. Literacy in Cuba was considered much more than a basic human right. The FSLN (Frente Sandanista de Liberacion National) called literacy :

> an apprenticeship in life because in the process
> the literate person learn his/her intrinsic value
> as a person, as a maker of history as an actor of
> an important social role, as an individual with

> rights to demand and duties to fulfill
> (Cardenal & Miller 1980 : 5).

In Zaire literacy is defined as to:

promote and strengthen socio-economic groupings involved in grassroots community development (Gege 1991: 6).

Tanzania sees the function of literacy as follows:

to address social, economic, political, cultural and educational needs of learners (Kalinjuma 1991: 2).

The ELP in South Africa believes that literacy can:

enrich people's lives and equip them with the skills to become actors in their workplace and community (ELP 1989-1990: 2).

It is thus evident that besides teaching people basic literacy skills, many believe that literacy can have an impact on all the aspects of peoples' lives and that it can transform not only the communities people live in but in certain instances impact on the way countries are governed.

1.3.10   Personal perspectives on illiteracy and literacy

The following are extracts from learners' perspectives on how they see illiteracy and literacy:

With literacy people don't earn more, but
everything they know is in their heads.
They can go anywhere, do anything, ask
for what they want, enter in, when people don't
know reading and writing, they are afraid.

(a learner from Mozambique in Marshall 1990: 11).

As an illiterate I could not sign my name in order to receive my salary. That was an embarrassment for me. Since I became literate I

have benefited a lot. I have been promoted to a
junior foreman position in the Ghana Railway
Corporation.

(Paul Yalley from Ghana in *The Spider* 1994:4).

It is better if we talk for ourselves about the
problems of illiteracy, as we are the people
affected.   We   know   how   it   is.

(an ELP learner in ELP 1989-1990: 5).

My life as an illiterate was very dull. As an
illiterate one has to rely on other people even for
very small matters...My social life has now
improved because I can communicate freely, bravely
and confidently with other people.

(Lindiwe Sidu, chairperson of SANLA in *The Spider*
1994 :5).

As jy nie kan lees of skryf nie, dink
mense jy het n siekte of jy is dom,
veral as jy hulle iets vra wat vir
geleerde mense sommer iets alledaags is
en dan moet jy voorgee.

(When you are illiterate people think you are
diseased and that you are stupid, especially when
you ask them something, which to a literate person
seems quite obvious and then you have to pretend)

As ek kliniek toe gegaan het het ek net die kaart
ingegooi. Ek het geen idee gehad wat daarop gestaan
het nie.

(Going to the clinic, I just put my card in. I had
 no idea what was written on there).

 Describing a train journey she said:

As ek per trein gereis het was dit n nagmerrie,
want ek moes al die bakens van elke stasie onthou

om nie te verdwaal nie. As ek by die huis gekom
het, het dit gevoel asof my kop wil bars van al die
spanning.

(Travelling by train was a nightmare, because I had
to remember all the beacons of all the stations
sothat I could not get lost. Coming home it felt as
if my head wanted to explode from all the tension)

(Susan Sias, a learner from Woodlands Literacy
Project).

The above descriptions give an idea of how illiterate people
feel, other people pry into their private lives, having to ask
them to read your confidential documents. They feel they are
plunged into a state of darkness whenever you have to take a
train or bus or putting you child's clinic card into the
correct box. It also describes how learners feel when they are
illiterate and what kind of lives they have to lead. It gives
an insight into a kind of anxiety that an illiterate person
has to endure, which a literate person can only imagine to
experience. It tells of the joy and the pride of becoming
literate and what it means to them.

When listening to what people say about the human degradation
they have to endure it becomes imperative that provision for
adult literacy is a right that must be exercised. Teaching
mere reading and writing should not be the ultimate goal, but
empowering people for the transformation of their personal and
political lives must become the overall motivating factor.

1.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section will deal specifically with the goals and objectives, always taking into consideration their participation in different activities. These would include meetings, workshops, social evenings, discussions, outings and contacts with other literacy organisations. The activities will also serve as a medium to establish if the goal and objective of transformation is taking place.The Methodology used will always look at the person in relation to his/her environment. Open-ended questionaires and unstructured interviews will be used to obtain relevant information and will reflect the framework of reference used. The qualitative method will be employed where the "researcher" will become a participant-observer and where those who participate in the study, voices will be heard.

The following chapter will focus on the literature study and will be introduced with the South African problem of illiteracy. Countries where literacy was introduced will be examined to evaluate the impact literacy has made on the rate of illiteracy and empowerment of people to transform their communities.

CHAPTER 2 :   THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Theories on literacy examine the phenomenon of illiteracy in the world and try to put forward reasons why countries embark on literacy projects. In trying to understand literacy, and more specifically illiteracy, it is important to focus on the role of capitalism; empowerment and transformation and to understand how adults learn.

2.2   THEORY ON LITERACY

Many theories associated with the effects and changes that education can bring about have been linked to the theories of development. It crystalized in the ideas of Durkheim (1893) and Weber (1920), which later developed into the modernisation theory. This theory spans through value systems, individual motivation and capital accumulation and was held as a blueprint for development throughout the world, with present day Third World countries seen as underdeveloped moving towards modernity. Frank (1970) sees this underdevelopment as a creation of capitalism. According to the Marxist theory this underdevelopment refers to controlled cheap labour, class struggle and maintenance of the status quo (9).

Youngman (1986) focuses on these ideas of Marxism which emphasised the means of production, characterised by a minority owning the means of production and the majority
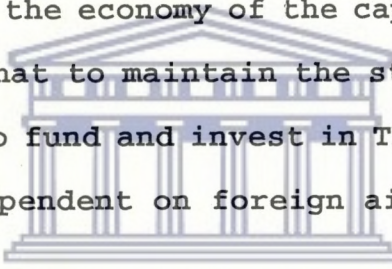
giving their labour in return for a meagre wage. On the role of education he is of the opinion that :

> Primarily their role was to legitimate and stabilize the social relations of production of capitalism. Their concern with teaching literacy and technical skills was secondary (20-21).

When Frank (1970) said that underdevelopment is a creation of capitalism, it stands to reason that countries which are less developed would use education for development. This is true particularly about states in transition, as they believe that education would be able to cure all or most of the ills created by capitalism, creating self-reliance, economic growth and a change in the lives of the poor people in their countries. Marx, Engels and Lenin view the above issue from a different angle situating adult education within class struggles in a capitalist economic system. They look at the way different classes influence society including the coercive nature of the state, therefore education never was and never will be neutral.

Many writers have analysed education systems throughout the world and have tried to look at the reasons why the illiteracy rates are higher in underdeveloped than developing countries. One such writer was Youngman (in AALAE 1991). He makes capitalism his departure point. He is of the opinion that it was capitalism which created a new world order and that capitalist countries developed at the expense of

underdeveloped countries by means of imperialism. They would take control over the means of production, resources, labour and forceful takeover of land. These countries then became the subjects ruled by the colonial empires. The education systems imposed by these colonial countries were used for domination and control and fostered dependence rather than independence. Stark contrasts and inequalities developed which led to poverty, disease and hunger. After gaining independence either through peaceful or revolutionary means it was difficult to gain true fundamental changes, because these countries depended heavily on the economy of the capitalist world order. He further states that to maintain the status quo, capitalist countries started to fund and invest in Third World countries, making them more dependent on foreign aid. He says that:

> The impact of aid therefore takes a myriad of forms but the overall effect is to limit the scope for self-determined directions of adult education development (Youngman in AALAE 1991: 3-4).

However nobody can refute the fact that serious efforts were made in these countries to undo the negative effects created by capitalism. It is therefore that education including literacy never were and never will be neutral. It was used for domination and control by most Western capitalist countries and for self-reliance, new-person image by the underdeveloped and developing countries. This was often tackled on a mass

scale. In Cuba the mass literacy campaign was developed to include the:

> developing of all Cubans into a skilled labour force and create a generalized Socialist Consciousness (Carnoy in Nasson & Samuel 1990: 118).

Nasson and Samuel (1990) are of the opinion that because of the poor inheritance of the Cubans from the capitalist system, from which the majority was excluded, it stands to reason why the Cuban government would rectify the situation both from a historical and a socialist principle.

In Tanzania the aim of mass education was self-reliance in order to:

> upgrade the competencies of the entire populace, to promote a broader sense of community, to nurture attitudes of cooperation and patterns of collective effort and to foster a sense of self-confidence (Samoff in Nasson & Samuel 1990: 133).

As in the case of Cuba, the issues that Tanzania was facing was that of self-reliance and economic survival. Their educational reforms were heavily dependent on foreign aid from Western countries, making it difficult to become self-reliant. Although their aims were socialistic, economic reality was a fact to be reckoned with. With foreign funding it became an issue of what is taught and who controls the schools for what purpose. We have seen that in resistance theories and in practice, schools can become a base for conflict and

resistance to the extent that reforms are resisted. Thus education must be accompanied by other strategies as part of a broader struggle towards economic and educational transformation.

In this instance literacy is important in any country which suffered as a result of policies that kept people in ignorance and poverty. It is for this reason that many countries believed in the human capital theory where investment in education can be used as a tool for upliftment and development, bringing about equal distribution of income. According to Nasson (1990) this view reached an all time low during the seventies. He backs his claim up with writers such as Carnoy (1978: 1979); Hurst (1981); Levin (1981) and Robinson (1981). These writers have all deduced that mass education expansion and economic growth levels can increase, but that equalization of income hardly occur or that the poor never attain wealth or power no matter how high the Gross National Product (GNP) of that given country. One possible explanation for the above-mentioned situation is that education was mostly used for functional literacy and to prepare people for the labour market and not to empower the poor so that they can take control of their own lives.

Samuelson (1987) supports this claim on the basis of four years of economic growth in America that didn't do much for the poor. He is of the opinion that economic growth can be

powerful, but it would not cure the evils of poverty. He says that economic growth:

> won't turn low-skilled workers into engineers or technicians or mend broken families or eradicate crime (41).

One writer who differs with the above view is Brickhill. In his study on literacy in Nicaragua, he wants to show how literacy could be used as one of the methods to combat underdevelopment. In his words it could be used as a:

> weapon to uplift the people from backwardness, ignorance and poverty (1982: 10).

In writing about Nicaragua he drew heavily on the Russian experience which expanded over 22 years and looks at the decrease in the rate of illiteracy and their prizewinning as a measure of success. Although there is much to learn from these experiences it becomes difficult to establish whether literacy has transformed society. In his article he reiterates his idea that literacy, schools and skills will become a vehicle for transformation to development but is criticized by Samoff (1981) who says that :

> schools cannot be primarily a vehicle for constructing a new order...so the educational system cannot by itself be the revolution (140).

In other words literacy must become part of a whole process in order to bring about transformation. In countries such as Cuba

, Nicaragua and many African countries the educational change was part of a strategy to overthrow repressive governments, changing peoples perceptions of politics and getting them to take charge of their own lives.

This view is supported by case studies done by Carnoy and Samoff (1990). They have concluded in these studies they have done on African , Latin American and Asian continents that:

> education in transition states is viewed, much more than in capitalist countries as the key to economic and social development...education is expected to play a key role in transformation of social relations (362).

They have also found that literacy is expected to play a pivotal role in economic and social development and is seen to change social relations, although political participation has not necessarily followed. As examples they used Tanzania, China, Cuba and Nicaragua. Here they have concluded that the illiteracy rates have decreased, awareness created and skills have been developed. Access to even the most remotest areas have been created and investment into education had as it's goal the transformation of the lives of the ordinary people. However, the use of education for development and creation of a socialist order has not been fully realised, because countries in transition are struggling with socialist ideals and economic growth.

Williamson (1979) in his study on Tanzania found that very little has been achieved on the road to self-reliance and that

a new class system has developed which he calls an *'international bourgeosie'*, because much of Tanzania's policies are linked to international capitalism. Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, has admitted that they have achieved very little in their efforts towards the creation of a socialist society:

> Ten years after the Arusha Declaration Tanzania is certainly neither socialist, nor self-reliant...There are still great inequalities between citizens. A life of poverty is still the experience of the majority of our citizens...our goal; it is not even in sight (Julius Nyerere quoted by Williamson 1979: 177).

In South Africa literacy became a tool with which the lives of the oppressed majority could be transformed to the extent that people could see that the apartheid system in the country was contributing towards poverty, ignorance and disease. They had to have the vote in order to participate in the decisionmaking process. However, contrary to the above belief, we have organisations merely teaching reading, writing and numeracy.

One such programme is the Brand Knew Literacy programme launched in March 1992. According to an article *'Branded for life'* in Fair Lady (1993) magazine the products people buy everyday are the basis of this literacy programme. Pug Roux, one of its creators, says that the success of Brand Knew is it's marketing strategy. He says:

> Literacy is a concept that can be sold to the consumer like any other product (Fair Lady 1993: 109).

According to him, 120 national and multinational companies whose brand names were used contributed R5 000 to launch the programme. Although this programme teaches functional literacy, one can argue that it promotes the sale of certain products and that these multinational companies stand to make more profit once people become literate. It does not teach people social responsibility towards their communities. Neither does it question the companies' responsibility towards it's workers in terms of wages and the turnover they stand to make from subsidising this programme. The programme is not free and companies are asked to sponsor their workers or facilitators who wished to be trained. NGO's must raise their own funds in order to obtain the programme. In 1993 literacy kits cost R350 per learner.

The question thus arises of how many people can attain literacy at such a relatively high cost or whether it is a matter of only those who can afford are able to become literate.

2.3   EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

In chapter 1 from pages 14 to 16 I have discussed the above concepts by referring to the works of Gramsci, Freire and Macedo. Literacy, according to Giroux in the introductory

chapter of Freire and Macedo (1987), becomes a vehicle to develop organisations to bring about democracy in it's real form. The Freirean model of empowerment is an excellent example. The basis of his theory is the relationship of people with others and the world, making sense of the world by means of their own language.

For Freire, being able to read and write and understand what they write means in real terms 'reconstituting' their 'relationship' in the world. This gives them the opportunity to express their needs in their own language thus empowering them on personal and social level. Giroux, however warns that becoming literate does not mean automatic freedom. There are no guarantees. He is of the opinion that the term illiteracy often provides a cover for the dominant classes to keep the poor, women, blacks and minority groups in ignorance.

It thus boils down to the conflict between the dominant classes, who wants to maintain the status quo and the subordinate classes who wants power. Critical literacy becomes necessary in this instance, because it becomes:

> an attempt to rescue history, experience and vision
> from conventional discourse
> (Giroux in Freire & Macedo 1987 : 10).

Only then can real empowerment take it's real course, transforming the lives of individuals, communities and whole countries.

Wilson and Ramphele (1989) sees illiteracy as a major dimension of poverty and examines in chapter 14 of their book different organisations that is and can empower people to bring about real change in South Africa. They state that power is at the root of it all. Without power the poor, the illiterate and oppressed will remain poor forever, with no chance of escaping.

Power, says Hollander and Offerman (1990) are distinguished by theoreticians as:

> power over (explicit or implicit dominance) from power to (the opportunity to act more freely within some realm...through power sharing) and power from (the ability to resist the power of others by effectively fending off their unwanted demands) (179).

All these writers emphasise the importance of real power in the process of empowerment. Riger (1993) however warns that instruments used to empower people can create an illusion of power which have very little or nothing to do with influencing decision making. He is of the opinion that:

> attempts to enhance a sense of empowerment create the illusion of power without affecting the actual distribution of power (283).

He further maintains that:

> A sense of empowerment may be an illusion when so much of life is controlled by the politics and practices at macro level...confusing one's actual *ability* to control resources with a *sense of* empowerment, depoliticizes the latter (283).

He warns against the struggle that can erupt between those who want to gain power and those who want to maintain it.

It thus seems that embedded in the theory of empowerment is the basis of conflict. Marxist theory has also referred to this 'false consciousness' which has nothing to do with an increase in actual power. When one deals with the ideology of empowerment the issue of conflict and power needs to be addressed. Therefore the mechanisms to attain the goal of empowerment becomes very important. In this instance Rappaport (1987) sees empowerment as a:

> mechanism by which people, organisations, and communities gain mastery over their affairs (122).

Lazarus (1988) agrees with this view. She refers to Kindervatter (1979) who used different methods in non-formal education to obtain the goal of empowerment. This was realised through small group activities, sharing responsibilities, equality, reflection and action. The above, applied correctly could lead to participatory democracy. Lazarus is further of the opinion that using the above process could lead to:

> simultaneous transformation at both the individual and social levels, enabling individuals to develop a sense of personal power, and exercising that to ensure the development of social institutions which meet the needs of the people (1988: 194).

According to her this process would enable individuals to gain control over their own lives. Like Riger (1993); Freire and

Macedo (1987), Lazarus places empowerment opposite oppression, inextricably linking it to conflict between those who have power over resources and those who are denied access to it. She uses the description of Wilson (1987) who says that oppression refers to a condition where one group is denied access to resources, opportunities and benefits in a particular society. Having stated that power is inextricably linked to oppression it stands to reason that only real power could lead to personal and political empowerment. This goes hand in hand with responsibility and accountability if used correctly, otherwise it could lead to abuse and exploitation as we have witnessed so many times in our history and especially if people are illiterate, they become the prime targets for abuse.

Many organisations in South Africa have faced and are still facing this challenge. One such organisation is the Centre for Cognitive Development (CCD) established in 1987 who believed that teachers can become the agents for transformative and empowerment. Before this could happen teachers need to be empowered themselves. The CCD address power in terms of relationships, specifically looking at the move from 'power under' the authorities or 'power over' learners to 'power with' learners and 'power for' development (CCD 1992: 6). In this way the centre sees power as an enhancement of democratizing the South African society. The centre focuses on cognitive, personal and teaching

empowerment. Cognitive empowerment refers to the actions taken by learners and educators towards developing independent and critical thinking. Personal empowerment refers to reflecting on the ways in which people were disempowered. Thus teaching should reflect openness, respect and build up self-esteem. In this way learners can begin to express their own values of change and thus realise that one can either accept the dominant culture or shape your own future (CCD 1992: 6). Sandbrook and Halfani in *The Spider* (1993) refers to empowerment as people's power, community organisation, self-reliance and other concepts. Although empowerment is recognised by them as spanning over a wide network of facets, they emphasise three basic aspects of empowerment, namely group identity, autonomous and popular organisations and learning and defending legal rights of popular sectors. They also refer to Julius Nyerere's idea s that NGO's should be serious about empowering people and not seek status and funds for themselves. It has been proven that organisations cannot empower people to transform the tyrannical political systems in Africa, precisely because of the undemocratic nature of some of these organisations (19).

However, contrary to the above view many NGO's in South Africa have played an instrumental role in empowering people to participate in the political process. Although we now have a democratically elected government, the powerful classes in society still hope to cling to their dominant values, trying

to keep the poor in ignorance. Formal and informal education have become the area where people are trying to rid themselves of this ignorance.

2.4 THEORIES ON HOW ADULTS LEARN

Theories on adult education refer to the nature of adult learners, how they differ from children, but also focus on how adults learn, stressing the characteristics of adult learners. Children spend their time at play or at school, while adults have other responsibilities, different roles and opportunities and for them, spending time on education is of the utmost importance. Besides viewing adult education as being an important investment for themselves and it's relevance to their everyday situation there are also other factors which needs to be taken into consideration when facilitators are involved in teaching literacy.

Knowles (cited in Hope & Timmel 1984), a pioneer on Adult Learning Psychology, spells it out. He is of the opinion that adults have a tremendous amount of experience and learn most from their peers. Knowles further emphasise that adults have dignity and must be treated with respect and facilitators should take heed of the observation and reasoning powers that adults possess. Adults also learn relevant things much quicker, therefore it becomes imperative that they become involved in planing and decision making. Julius Nyerere (cited in Hope & Timmel 1984) put it so aptly:

> A very pleasant thing about adult education is that
> we can learn what we want to learn - what we feel
> would be useful to us in our lives...For literacy
> is just a tool; it is a means by which we can learn
> more, more easily. That is it's importance...(105).

Wedepohl (1988) is of the opinion that teaching adults depends on the relationship between learners and facilitators, the content of learning, the process of teaching and the results of this kind of learning.

In the first instance the relationship is built on trust, equality, respect and democracy. Learners should have a say in what and how to learn. With regard to the content, learners should feel that what they have to say is important for everybody and that the content is related to their own life-experiences. Lastly they learn by applying what they have learnt in their daily lives, that they can also work with other people in their communities in trying to overcome problems they face on a daily basis.

Hope and Timmel (1984) reiterates this view stressing that:

> the most important characteristic of good Adult
> Education is that it is based on
> 'Problem-Posing'(99).

This would entail creating an atmosphere where the learners can discuss causes and solutions, where they can find out things for themselves and where they can plan action and take on tasks without fear of being ridiculed.

Learners in various countries have now made it clear that they would want to be a part of adult education movements. They would expect to be involved in planning, policy, goals and objectives, methods, material and everything else that has to do with literacy. This has already taken off in certain countries, where learner associations have been established in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Learners felt strongly on their exclusion and expressed it in the following words:

> Literacy is above all the business of the learners
> (*The Spider* 1995: 6).

This issue was taken seriously by African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE), with the establishment of the Learners' Empowerment and Initiatives (LEI) Programme to give learners the opportunity to become involved, because with the transformation of communities, new strategies have to be developed based on :

> Literacy centered on learners and based on community (*The Spider* 1995: 6).

During the training of the literacy facilitators at the Woodlands Peoples Centre the above issues were stressed by the trainer consultant. This was as a result of his practical experience with adults he concluded that they remembered more from what they discover for themselves than what they have heard.

The following chapter will focus on the literature study and will be introduced with the South African problem of illiteracy. Countries where literacy was introduced will be examined to evaluate the impact literacy has made on the rate of illiteracy and empowerment of people to transform their communities.

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<u>CHAPTER 3</u> : REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The literature review will be introduced with a focus on South African literacy. I will examine literacy projects carried out in different countries to examine how the studies were carried out.

3.2 <u>THE SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY</u>

The previous apartheid regime to a certain extent disregarded black (Coloured, Asian and African) people's right to basic education since education for blacks especially Africans was never compulsory. Adult education became the initiative of Non-governmental organisations (NGO's), who depended on foreign aid for the provision of this service. Education for blacks was discriminatory in provision of services, funding and resources. Even where it was compulsory it was never enforced. This led to a high dropout rate and a significant percentage of black children never attending school.

All this contributed to a high rate of illiteracy in South Africa. Although the idea was to provide such a service to disadvantaged communities, the aims and objectives were not always uniform. There were and still is no national integrated structures, hence the dispersed and divided programmes.

According to the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report (1993), efforts at providing literacy included the South African Defence force, Prison services, Department of National Education, Department of manpower, National Health and Population development. There were no clear objectives, no proper evaluation or strategies to reach the vast number of illiterates in the country. Furthermore the task was taken up by corporate business, industry, NGO's, religious and political bodies, with no coherent policy or strategies. Although the previous apartheid government has always offered night school on a very selective basis, it has not taken illiteracy or semi-literacy into account. Although schooling was said to be compulsory, it only effectively applied to whites. According to the (NEPI) report of 1993 it was only the Department of Education and Training (DET) that had adult education explicitly on it's agenda, but the budgetary expenditure for this purpose was less than 0,49% (23). Pillay (1990) concludes that Black education is underdeveloped precisely because of it's discriminatory nature as decsribed in the previous paragraph. This was evident in the inadequate per capita spending, lack of resources, unqualified teachers and the small number of matriculants and graduates who passed through the system (see tables on p 49 and 50).

TABLE I
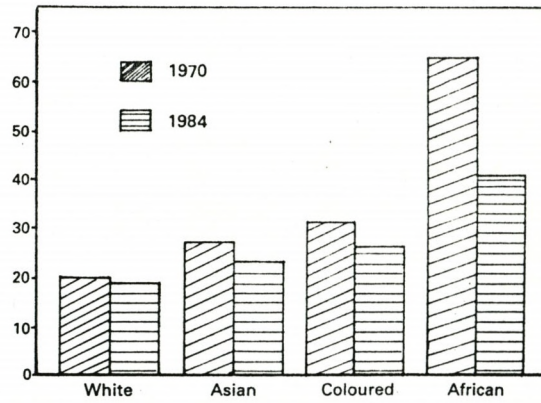
Source: Pillay, 1989

State expenditure per pupil, 1983/4
(Wilson and Ramphele 1989: 142)

TABLE 2

Comparative statistics for 1989

	Whites	Indians	Coloureds	African
Teacher-student ratio	17:1	20:1	23:1	38:1
unqualified teachers	0%	2%	45%	52%
Per capita spending	3,082	R2,227	R1,359	R764
Matric pass rate	90%	93,6%	72,7%	40,7%

(Hofmeyer & Buckland 1992:22).
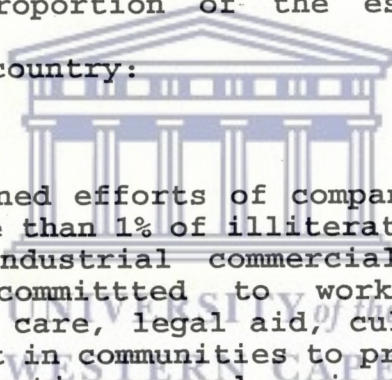
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It was further evident in the 17 different education departments up till late 1994, which was an indication of the different kinds of education for each racial group.

The previous apartheid state has never taken it's responsibility to educate it's black people seriously, but has tried everything in its power to cut financial aid to these organisations (Pillay 1990: 47).

Companies and NGO's have also organised their own adult education classes. All the efforts by different bodies only reached a small proportion of the estimated 15 million lliterates in this country:

> With the combined efforts of companies, state and NGO's, not more than 1% of illiterates are known to be reached. Industrial commercial, trade union federations (committted to workers' education), primary health care, legal aid, culture and other iniatives exist in communities to provide adult and non-formal education around various areas of need (AALAE 1989: 30).

Various organisations and institutions have taken the iniative to provide adult education with the help of foreign aid. These organisations could face closure as foreign funders are rechanneling their funds into the RDP, since South Africa became a democratic country (Business section of *The Sunday Times* February 1995: 5).

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) has established a Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) and has as

recently as 1994 established a regional body for adult educators.

The AALAE report (1989) focusses on a number of organisations that have taken up the issue of adult education. COSATU (Congress of South African Unions) has taken workers education seriously and is looking at issues such as oppressive monopolies and working conditions of workers:

> Despite the repressive measures and other problems COSATU has done well in educating it's workers and seeking democratic change from the regime. COSATU has for example, been able to have female workers' conditions of work improved: maternity rights for example, have been improved to the advantage of women (31).

Cosatu managed to formulate programmes in the health, technological and labour laws field, but the limitations of being illiterate became a problem in this area. Nevertheless adult education is also provided by means of cooperatives. Besides this fact provision is also made for children and unemployed women to learn lifeskills through art, music and culture. Women are mainly trained in the areas of dress-making, sewing and on forming cooperatives, which draws on the Zimbabwian experience. Another organisation trying to address illiteracy is 'Learn and Teach'. Their main aim is provide disadvantaged communities with skills to deal with their everyday situations and involve learners in planning and implementation of literacy learners, thus empowering them to take control of some form of their lives.

Another organisation that has taken up the task of providing literacy with the help of outside funding is the Maryland Literacy Programme (MLP) in Hanover Park in Cape Town. According to their annual report they have extended well into the rural areas but they also feel that all who are involved with adult education has only touched the surface of this vast area. The MLP is of the opinion that the inacessibility of the rural areas, the poverty stricken nature, lack of communication media are all indicators of the slow movement towards decreasing the rate of illiteracy in the country (Annual Report 1993: 4).

However, I would add that the establishment of a national body and a ministry for adult education would go a long way in addressing the problem.

Although we have the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC) and the South African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (SAALAE), established in 1980 and 1992 respectively, the merging of these two groups would most certainly help to create a united front to put literacy on the education agenda. According to the newsletter, *Ikwezi* (1993) this idea was strongly stressed at an ABE conference held in Johannesburg in 1993, representing 55 organisations. The South African Committee of Adult Basic Education (SACABE) was formed precisely to look into the above issues(8).

This process needs to be speeded up in order to deal with the effects it could have on the nation as a whole.

Alexander (1990), advocated that a credible political movement should take up the literacy crusade on a mass scale, following the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Mozambican examples, but looking at the post election education cutbacks for formal education this idea is fast becoming very remote. It now seems that only a co-ordinated national body will be able to present adult education's case and present reasons on the basis of it's historical efforts to lay claim on money allocated to the RDP by funders for adult education. In this way many of those denied basic education can be reached. Only then can adult education take it's rightful place alongside formal education. At the 1994 International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in Cairo, Egypt where South Africa was represented by the ANC, UWC, University of South Africa (UNISA) and SAALAE most of the above issues were raised by delegates. Concerns were raised about the high expectations of the people in South Africa flamed by election promises made by the different parties, given the corrupt state of affairs inherited by the previous apartheid regime. This is evident in the fact that according to Khoapa in *Ikwezi* (1994) the above government has spent less than 1% on adult education, considering the vast number of illiterates in South Africa. It is appreciated that the present government of national unity has made a firm commitment in the recent White Paper on education to Adult Basic education and Training (ABET), so as to redress past

imbalances. It recognises basic education as a fundamental right and :

> a means of equipping people with skills and competencies neccessary for national development (White Paper on education 1994: Chapter 36).

The present government has only proposed guidelines on the aims of ABET. Khoapa, chairperson of SAALAE echoes the Freierian doctrine and takes it one step further by stating that ABET in particular, literacy is seen :

> as a weapon for social change which make education practise the means by which subject beings can perceive, interpret, criticise and finally transform the world about them (Khoapa in *Ikwezi* 1994 :4).

They are further of the opinion that literacy can lead to an equal distribution of scarce resources and power in all spheres of life especially amongst the very poorest sector of the country. This kind of development can only have a positive effect on the RDP. However the mechanics of the development and implementation of literacy remains the task of all roleplayers involved in adult education, since the overseas funding of NGO adult projects are rechanneled and the government of national unity is experiencing a shortage of funds.

3.3 PROJECTS WHERE PRE-AND POSTTESTS WERE USED TO EVALAUTE WHETHER THE RATE OF ILLITERACY HAS BEEN DECREASED

The following discussion is an adapted summary from Powell (1979).

The Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (LDTC), established in 1974 took up the task of distance teaching methods in Lesotho. In 1976 they experimented with these materials in order to teach young people to read, write and do arithmetic. A baseline survey was carried out to ascertain the uses of literacy in everyday life in Lesotho, an experiment for games for teaching literacy and numeracy and a study to ascertain attitudes towards literacy by young people and to see whether the litercay rate could be decreased.

3.3.1 Testing

Learners in ten randomly selected groups were pretested at the beginning and posttested five months later. The pre- and posttest contained the same questions. Nine other groups not included in the test were also visited by staff members to observe their progress.

3.3.2 Pretest

This was done in order to find out the level of literacy of learners. Reading skills involved recognition of shapes of

letters, ability to pick out named syllables or named words, reading syllables, short sentences, longer sentences and answering comprehension questions.

For the purpose of reading and writing, 63 learners were pre-tested and 84 posttested.

3.3.3 Writing

Writing skills consisted of copying syllables and short words, writing down spoken words, short sentences, short letters with guidance and filling out simple forms.

3.3.4 Numeracy

Numeracy tests included recognition of numbers, adding and subtracting with money. The same groups used for literacy testing, were used for numeracy testing.

3.3.5 Groups

The groups, consisting altogether out of 472 ranged from 10 to 20 and held a minimum of three sessions per week. From the above figure 76% never attended school, with 24% from standard one to standard four being the highest standard. The ages ranged from 6 to 24 years . Their attendance dropped from 83,4% in May to 72% in October due to the ploughing season.

3.3.6 Summary

Although this study was not done specifically to decrease the illiteracy rate, the study is useful for this paper, specifically the testing methods and results. Reasons that they felt that the study was unsuccessful were the infrequent use and inappropriateness of materials.

Games were seen as a waste of time by leaders and learners, possibilly because they were not used correctly.

Some of the recommendations included using more designing materials for beginners and incorporating games into the workbooks.

Given the serious limitations and providing that the recommendations made be taken seriously, they were able to deduce that literacy and numeracy could be taught to village groups. In this study it was found that a third of the sample group taken learned something within the five months of the literacy project (Powell 1979).

The results indicated that this group had previous reading and writing skills, which means that the above group benefitted more than those who were totally illiterate. Although they were all pre- and posttested, the same questions were utilised in the pretest as well as the posttest, which could have had an effect on the results as learners had some idea of the kind of questions in the tests. Using a statistical framework, Powell deduced that there was a significant improvement in results of the posttest over the pretest. Based on his

statistical results he could determine whether it was feasible to launch a much larger project of this nature.

3.4 EXAMINING HOW LITERACY STUDIES WERE CARRIED OUT DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

These studies include China, Pakistan, Cuba, Tanzania, Nigeria, Lesotho, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Canada, Zaire, Russia, China, Pakistan, Kroo Bay Project (Sierre Leonie), Umm Keddada (Sudan)

3.4.1 Who were the learners?

The target groups in these countries were mainly adults who were unable to read and write in their own language. They included women, people from the neglected rural areas, those who had little or no access to education, peasants and workers and ranged in age from 15 - 60 years.

In Zaire the learners were illiterate women from rural and urban centres ranging from 14-60 years. Later the project included 8- 12 year old girls (Gege 1991).

In most projects learners were voluntary in the sense that they were not paid to attend or 'forced'. In mass campaigns people really had no choice, but that it seemed the right thing to do at the height of the revolution (Cuba, Nicaragua, China) and was taught free of charge and an opportunity missed or never experienced by the majority of the people.

According to Kalinjuma (1991) in the Shiri village of Tanzania by-laws were passed to enforce enrolment and attendance of illiterates. They were fined and punished for not attending, beer halls were closed at class times and also certificates issued to learners. This ensured regular attendance and a high rate of literacy, but this what was decided by the communities themselves in order to ensure a high rate of success(4). In Lesotho the literacy project was focussed on Std 1 to Std 4 dropouts, herdboys and youths who received no schooling at all (Powell 1979: 3).

3.4.2 Socio-economic background of the learners

At the time of implementing the literacy projects the countries' majority have had little or no access to basic education. Most of the above countries were colonised or exploited by foreign countries or experienced civil war which left high rates of illiteracy, poverty, a weak economy, malnutrition, famine, hunger, drought, no access to proper health care, disease, an education system plagued with racial, gender and urban bias, unequal distribution of resources, a hatred for menial labour. Most illiterates involved in these projects were subjected to these conditions and excluding them from organised structures and real decisionmaking power to change their lives.

3.4.3   Aims and objectives

Learning to read, write and do arithmetic remained the basic objective in all of these projects. Most projects stressed functional literacy in order for people to acquire skills they can use for their daily survival. The other fundamental objective to be found in the majority of the projects is consciousness-raising. In some (Cuba, Nicaragua) it was used to orchestrate the overthrow of the government of the day in order to replace it with a popular government.

The Lesotho , Kroo Bay and Punjab projects were pilot projects in order to access the viability of a literacy project on a much larger scale. According to *The Community* (1994) the Kroo bay project was to enhance participation in political process and improve knowledge of how government works. In the Punjab and Umm Keddada project it included strengthening religious beliefs (5-7). Their aim was to develop and improve the work done in the pilot study for implementation on a larger scale. Special attention was given to materials and methods(*The Community* 1994: 5-6).

In China, Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua socialist principles were stressed ranging from collective instead of individual to self-reliance. Except for the Punjab, Kroo Bay and Lesotho projects, the others were all mass campaigns implemented by the government in conjunction with NGO's. Most of these projects were sponsored by outside funders.

3.4.4   Methods used

For obtaining consciousness-raising the Freirean approach was used, assessing own attitudes and responding effeciently to everyday problems.

People were given excercise in holding pencils, writing excercises, using photographs of everyday situations in order to obtain a topic for discussion.

Some base their acquisition of the three R's on alphabetization, copying and recognision of letters, moving on to words, sentences and paragraphs. Aids would include charts, workbooks, games, primers, films.

3.4.5   Time-span from the pretest to the posttest and some results

The success rate depended on what each country defined as literacy and what their goals and objectives were.

China started their literacy in 1950 to 1966 and also in 1976 decreasing the rate from 85%- 25%. According to Carnoy (1990) Cuba took 9 months and their rate decreased to 21%.

Nicaragua took one year in order to attain a rate from 50,37%-12,96% (Flora , Mcfadden, Warner 1983: 56).

Lesotho implemeted their pilot project over a period of five months from May to October and concluded that one third of partcipants learned something, 60% learned something on numeracy and low level skills (Powell 1979).

According to *Ikezi* (1994) the Umm Keddada project reached a 100% success rate from 1992- 1994 with the creation of 950 classes for 37 000 participants.

Shengena (1981) concluded that Tanzania decreased their literacy rate from 65%-39% with their learners reaching different levels of literacy (8).

3.4.6   Problems encountered

The most difficult ones encountered were efforts to marry economic growth with socialist principles. This was especially true in the case of Cuba, Nicaragua, Tanzania.

Others included attendance and motivation of particpants and facilitators. Language became a crucial factor in Nigeria with it's more than 250 dialects and languages. Methodology, appropriate materials and the withdrawal of external funding and efforts of organising post literacy programmes also caused severe problems.

3.4.7   Summary of countries on literacy

In the above Third World countries education was seen as the key role in nation building, but also seen as a key to economic development. In many of these countries the emphasis is to bring the illiterate within the politics and modernity, accepting the Persepolis Declaration of Human rights of 1975. At first basic education was seen as a trade craft in the

community but in order for development to take place ,
productivity and technology is required which falls within the
modernity theory.

In Tanzania and Cuba there was a sharp focus on content, form
and method. Self-education is also emphasised. Youngman (in
Bhola 1988) is of the opinion that adult education in
capitalist countries are for domination, while conducting by
Socialists could be liberating.

In countries experiencing political transformation the number
of illiterates did not exceed 1, 5 million. The campaign was
tackled at the height of the revolution, while there was still
a lot of enthusiasim and the following success rates were
obtained. In Cuba the illiteracy rate was decreased from 24-
4 % ; Nicaragua's illiteracy rate was decreased from 1979-1980
from 50- 13% ; and South Vietnam from 25 in 1976 to 14% in
1978.

Most of the countries had a major language which made primas
simpler. The objective was to include all sectors of society
and run during major changes in the respective countries.

The campaigns were characterised by military fashion which
actually carried the revolution. There were national and local
structures involved in the campaigns. Schools and all other
available spaces were utilised. Pupils and teachers were
mobilised and played a major role with learners. The follow-up
campaigns did not receive as much attention as literates were
falling back into illiteracy. In countries where geographical

boundaries were targeted because of language the success rate was as follows:

In the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics the illliteracy rate decreased from 70% in 1913 to 13% in 1917. China's illiteracy rate came down from 85%-12% .

Unlike the African countries, China with its huge population could close its doors on the outside world and embark on reforms which were not possible for any African country. Despite all its efforts China obtained very little success and the question arises if the African countries can contemplate these changes, but they can still try to combat defects of the education system but not eliminate them . On a small scale the changes could be seen and the efforts were not entirely in vain.
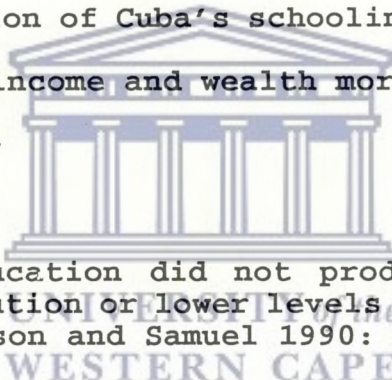
According to Bray et al (1979) awareness of social problems and causes in Tanzania gave some scope for local participation, reduced inequalities for relating education to life rather than certificates and the curriculum improved tremendously. Education for adults was just as important as education for children. The commitment and activities of teachers led communities to better things in Tanzania.

In Cuba changes had to be made in order to fulfill it's economic needs. According to Carnoy in Nasson and Samuel (1990) these changes were undogmatic and not according to Marxist-Leninists principles, but he praises their efforts to

maintain socialist principles. Some of these changes he concluded held the danger of a new class system.

I would agree that if those people who were selected to do technical or University training do not realise that they should use their skills to benefit the majority, then a new class would definitely be created. Furthermore with pressure from capitalist countries like USA Cuba and other third world countries could be forced to abandon it's socialists visions in order to survive.

Carnoy takes up this issue further when he stated that although the extension of Cuba's schooling system was part of a strategy to make income and wealth more equal and creation of a new order the :

> changes in education did not produce more equal income distribution or lower levels of unemployment (Carnoy in Nasson and Samuel 1990: 128).

All the countries which embarked on reforms encountered a number of problems in their endeavours to bring about fundamental changes in their societies. However, nobody can refute the achievements of the different literacy projects, although the question remains whether education is the key to development. In the studies above, statistical results, showing the decrease in illiteracy rates, were given. This is an indication of the gains that the literacy campaigns have made. It also depended on the definition of literacy in particular country and the number of illiterates that have

been reached throughout the campaigns. However, most of the campaigns (Cuba, Nicaragua, Tanzania) looked beyond mere reading and writing towards empowerment of their people, referring to it as 'apprenticeship in life' , 'strengthening socio-economic groupings', 'addressing needs of learners' as quoted on p 24 of chapter 1 of this thesis. Although one could not say whether the designs used were scientifically designed what was important was the consciousness raising of the people in view of their historical background and the strides they made in empowering people, whether it was on the personal or political front. Although many gains were made, it was always measured in the end against the economic viability of the country in question.

The next chapter will focus on the pilot study.

CHAPTER 4 :   THE PILOT STUDY

4.1   AIMS OF THE PILOT PROJECT

Since this was the very first time a project of this nature
would be implemented in the Woodlands area we needed a
forerunner to establish how it would be piloted and what type
of instruments would be used. The aim of the pilot project was
to test and evaluate measuring instruments and procedures that
would be used to teach people basic literacy skills, as well
as to empower people to take charge of their own lives, by
observing and testing them in various literacy activities. The
pilot project would also serve as a guideline to reach more
illiterate and semiliterate people and hopefully to decrease
the rate of illiteracy in the area.

4.2   SELECTING THE PILOT STUDY GROUP

Having made a list of all the names I had received from the
advice office at the Woodlands Peoples Centre, eight people
were randomly selected, visited and interviewed at their
homes. They were also asked whether they would be interested
in participating in the pilot project, which would be used as
a forerunner to implement a larger project.

4.3   SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF LEARNERS

All of those visited were adults with Substandard B being the highest standard they aquired. They were all from working class and their ages ranged from 20 to 58 years. They held menial jobs, which did not provide them with enough income to make ends meet.

Of the four who agreed to participate in the project by attending the classes, two were illiterate, having received no formal schooling at all. The other two attended Substandard B and could only write their names and surnames, but struggled to spell words correctly and could not make sentences or read full sentences. With their permission the above mentioned four were used as the experimental group and the other four were used as part of the control group.

4.4   PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

4.4.1   The coordinator

The Woodlands Residents Association asked the chairperson of the Education Committee to coordinate the project as they have already had a number of names of illiterate people that have been fowarded by the advice office and wanted to start such a project. The coordinator agreed and had to draw up a plan, which would include getting people involved, doing

administrative duties and drawing up a funding proposal for the project.

4.4.2   The facilitators

An advertisement was placed in the local newspaper for persons who were interested in becoming involved in a literacy project. A few of those already involved in the Centre indicated their willingness to participate. I held a meeting with those interested and it was decided that we would form a Literacy Committee and handle the necessary administrative work. Amongst the recruits was a person, who was trained in Adult Education by the Peninsula Technicon. He agreed to run the classes, but we had to raise funds in order to provide him with a honararium since he was unemployed. We decided that training of the others would take place later in the year. Prospective facilitators would observe some of the literacy classes and visit other projects in order to gain confidence and practical experience and familiarize them with the issues and methods applied.

4.4.3   The researcher

Being the coordinator of the project and doing the research at the same time gave me the advantage of creating an atmosphere of trust between the learners, facilitators and myself. As I was involved with the interviews, housevisits and the planning

of the finer details of the programme and being present at most of the events organised during the year, it made working with the group more flexible and relaxed. After explaining the programme and obtaining permission from learners and the project coordinator I set out doing the research. In this way I could sometimes assist when the facilitator and learners experienced difficulties.

However it was difficult to be at the classes all the time, but in this instance I asked the facilitators to proceed with the programme and take down the relevant notes and make any other observations which were deemed necessary.

4.5.   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT

Working on two levels, methods were implemented to:

4.5.1 *To ascertain whether people have attained basic literacy skills*

The eight people, as previously stated, were divided into an experimental and control group. A pretest was used to determine where people were before the literacy programme (baseline data). A posttest was used to evaluate the development of both groups after the intervention.

4.5.2 *To observe community involvement and transformation.*

Case Studies of all eight participants in the following respects were done:

A *structured interview* was done, since the majority of the participants were illiterate, this was appropriate as it would become a face to face interview with the participant, with the structured questions being asked and filled in by a field worker. Bhola (1990) states that a structured questionnaire in this case becomes a structured interview, because of it's personal nature. It can also in a sense become a test of what a participant can or cannot do, in other words, a form of testing a persons' knowledge (221-226). It would also entail giving them *opportunities to take charge of smaller groups*. This is important in building confidence, self-esteem and also development of leadership qualities. It would give people the opportunity to enter into discussions with their compatriots in seeking solutions to common community problems.

They would also be *observed* during their participation in activities pertaining to community affairs, literacy social evenings, workshops and outings.

4.5.3 The pretest

During the visits to people at their homes structured interviews were used as a pretest in order to establish the backgrounds ,literacy levels and the standards people have pass. After enquiring whether they were able to read and fill the questions in on their own, we established that none of the eight could do so. The Literacy Committee members then filled

in the questions. Both groups were thus subjected to pretest questions. This, apart from evaluating literacy skills, consisted of questions on the standards passed, reasons for leaving or not attending school, age, times and language preferences.

4.6   THE PROGRAMME

4.6.1   The material

As this was a pilot project, new in the field, we relied on the expertise and material of the trained people. We also bought material and asked for donations of stationery from the local business enterpreneurs. We thought it wise to gather and develop our own resources as most of the material was in English, while the majority of learners were Afrikaansspeaking.

4.6.2   The classes

After the visits and processing the information it was decided to have classes on Monday and Wednesday evenings for two hour sessions. The times were negotiated as three of the learners were in fulltime employment. It was also decided to start classes with marking the register and checking homework.

4.6.3   The methods

As the facilitator was trained in the Paolo Freire method of conscientization, I decided that this was appropriate for the pilot project to achieve both basic skills and empowerment. The methodology would proceed to outline strategies to realise the goals and objectives. Different types of information and social experiences needed to be extracted, hence the application of different methods.

4.7   THE ACTIVITIES (BOTH BASIC LITERACY AND EMPOWERMENT)

In order to give an idea of the kind of activities that were implemented during the pilot project ,the following section entails:

4.7.1. A roster of the projected activities of the pilot
         project.

4.7.2. A summary of the content of reading, writing and
        numeracy activities

4.7.3 Examples of empowerment activities undertaken during
       the pilot project. These included:

       A workshop on voter education

       A social evening

       Participation in International Literacy Day

       An example of a numeracy activity .

4.7.1.   Roster of projected activities

MONTH	AIMS	ACTIVITY

1994

March	getting to know others	registration
	start with patterns	relaxed writing
March	start election code	introducing election

April-

May	empowerment	to vote or not to vote
		skid on voting conditions
		getting identification of different parties
	empowerment	ballot form; making a cross, mock elections
	empowerment	film on voting; discussion
		reinforcement, changes:

                                    * double ballot, IFP
                                    s t i c k e r ;
                                    expectations
                                    d i s c u s s i o n   of
                                    aftermath;
                                    peoples feelings
                                    further involvement

June   organizational skills   writing and reading
                                         discussion on cake
                                         sale

              involve family   preparation for
                                        social evening

June   share experiences   social Evening
                                        discussion on
                                        Social evening

August   functional numeracy

              reinforcement   pay correct amounts

                                        correct change
                                        read date, time,

prices, budget

	participation	preparation for
	organise	International literacy day (ILD)

September	meet others	at ILD
	reinforcing basics	writing, reading, numeracy
September	extension of	campaign with learners
	literacy programme	in informal settlement

October	basics	reading, writing, numeracy
		meet outsiders
		visitors

November	determine level	evaluation of
	development	learners
	end of term	preparation for outing

November   social evening   socialize

                                             presentation of

                                             diplomas

                                             (See Appendix 2)

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*   Double ballot meant voting twice, one for your chosen
    party in the province and one for your chosen party in
    the country.

*   Inkatha Freedom Party decided at the last minute to
    contest the elections. Since the ballot forms were
    already printed, the election commission had to print IFP
    stickers, which had to be pasted at the bottom of the
    ballot form (See Appendix 3).
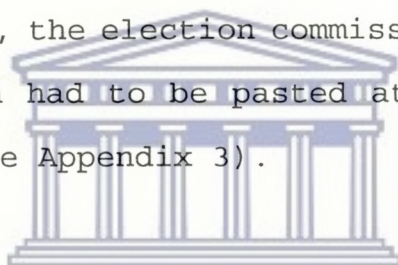
4.7.2   Summary of reading, writing and numeracy

In chapter 2 mention was made of Freire and Macedo's reading
the world which in fact means that reading comes before
writing. Therefore it is understandable that when we teach
people to write, reading goes hand in hand, because in the end
people should be able to understand and read what they are
writing.

4.7.2.1   Writing

In order to give participants exercises in holding pencils, they were given patterns to practise writing (See Appendix 4). As soon as learners learnt to relax and feel comfortable, they would go onto the next step. A discussion would follow, normally on community issues, such as crime, high rents, unemployment or general situations and the facilitator would choose a sentence that would sum up the discussion. This sentence would be written on the board/flip chart. It would be read aloud, sounded and then broken up into words and letters. Then learners would write it down, try to copy and then be given homework, which could be in the form of recognition of letters, cutting letters from newspapers, magazines or any printed word, or they would be asked to practise what they have learnt at home with the help of family members.

4.7.2.2   Numeracy

Although basic numeracy entails adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplication ,it would focus on everyday issues, such as working with money, paying bills, buying goods and checking wether learners could work out the exact amounts they had to present and the change they had to receive. It also includes measuring, weighing, telling the time and writing numbers in words (See Appendix 5).

4.7.2.3   Example of a writing lesson

Topic of lesson: Writing in the form of patterns

Aim of lesson: - exercise in writing

                  - get flow writing letters

                  - try to relax

                  - coincide with alphabet recognition

Teaching aids:

                  - example of pattern on newsprint

                  - pattern worksheets

Structure of lesson

The facilitator wrote down the word KLAS (CLASS) given by a
learner. He breaks up the word to show that it has letters.
Each letter is used to show the lines and curves associated
with writing. The learners then proceeded to write down the
word and followed the curves with their fingers.
The facilitator paste up pattern no 1 and ask learners to
follow the pattern with their fingers on their worksheet.
They are reminded to stay within the lines and to move
from left to right. With the pencils in their hands they copy
the pattern onto the following line. From pattern 1 and 2 the
letters r, n, m and h are learnt. During this lesson patterns
1- 4 were completed.

Activity

Learners were asked to practise these letters at home. They had to cut out any of these letters from printed material and paste it on the worksheet next to the appropriate letter. They were asked to practise at home and try and complete patterns 5-10.

Observations

Two of the learners pressed so hard that they made holes on the pages. They also wrote over the lines. The two other learners looked very frustrated because they were finished quicker than the other two while the facilitator were busy assisting the two learners who struggled. I noticed that it was the two learners who were illiterate who struggled.

4.8   THE POSTTEST: THE MANN-WHITNEY U-TEST

After being subjected to the programme the experimental group and control group were subjected to a posttest.

The Mann - Whitney U test for two experimental samples was used for statistical analysis.   It is especially a valuable test for obtaining data in the behavioral sciences and education. Since the test statistics is based on the ranks of observations and not on their numerical values, it is appropriate for this study (Kirk 1984: 402). This means that the assumption is made that the population is continuous and that random   samples have been drawn from each other. Therefore this test is used to test the hypothesis that two population distributions are identical. In this case the data obtained for the experimental and control group are treated as being similar and the statistic U is then based on the smaller of the two sums of ranks, being based on rank data and not on numerical value.

In this study a sample of 4 was randomly assigned to the experimental group and 4 to the control group.

They would be subjected to:

4.8.1   Observations

To see how they reacted within the activities and get an idea of their development.

4.8.2   Testing

To ascertain whether they could:

- fill in and understand a rudimentary form

- perform and calculate basic numeracy

- write a few simple sentences

4.8.1   Observations

4.8.2   Testing

All scores were given out of 100.

4.8.2.1   Filling in and reading a form

Learners were given a simple form on which they had to fill their personal details (See Appendix 6).

4.8.2.2   Writing a few sentences on any topic

They were asked to write a few sentences on any topic.

Here spelling, punctuation was important in marking these

sentences (See Appendix 7).

4.8.2.3   Numeracy

The Numeracy test consisted of ten sums ranging from easy to

more complicated.

a. Filling in the correct missing numbers:

1.   1,2,3..5,6,7,8,9,....

        11,..13,14,...16,17, 18,...20

b.   Add up the following:

2.   R1.00 + R2.00 + R3.00 =

3.   R1.89+ R2.99 + R5.99 =

4.   R80.00 + R25.00 + R20.00 =

5.   40c +30c + 75c =

c.   Subtract the following:

6.   200.00 - 179.00

7.   50.00 - 30.00

d.   Multiply the following:

8.   6 x 2 =

9.   17 x 2 =

10.   120 x 3 =

4.9   RESULTS OF THE BASIC LITERACY SKILLS

4.9.1 Computational formula for calculating the Mann-Whitney U-Test

According to Pretorius (1995) the observed U should be converted to a Z-statistic in order to use the Z tables. Having done this the:

Ho must be rejected if observed value Z > Z critical value

Ho must not be rejected if observed value Z < Z critical value.

The formula for converting U to Z is:

$$Z = \frac{U_1 - U_E}{o_u}$$

The formula for U_1 is :

$$U_1 = N_1 N_2 + \frac{N_1(N_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1$$

The formula for U_E is :

$$U_E = \frac{N_1 N_2}{2}$$

The formula for o_u is :

$$O_u = \frac{N_1 N_2 (N_1 + N_2 + 1)}{12}$$

Notes:

1. U_1 = the observed value for group 1

2. The formula for U_1 uses the number of scores in each
   group (N_1, N_2) and the ranks of group 1.

3. U_E is referred to as the expected value of U

4. The symbol o_u is referred to as the standard deviation of
   U.

5. To find R_1 the ranks of group 1 should be added.

4.9.2 The Hypothesis

H_0: The distribution of scores in the two populations
from which the groups were drawn are identical

H_1: The distribution of scores in the two populations
from which the groups were drawn are not
identical   (Pretorius 1995: 111-115).

4.9.3 The results of the testing

	Experimental Group				Control Group		
Learner	Numeracy	Read	Write	Learner	Numeracy	Read	Write
1	62	64	60	1	50	40	40
2	80	82	70	2	40	30	40
3	72	82	70	3	54	50	50
4	54	56	52	4	30	30	30

Score	Group	Rank
77	1	1
76	1	2
62	1	3
54	1	4
51	2	5
43	2	6
39	2	7
30	2	8

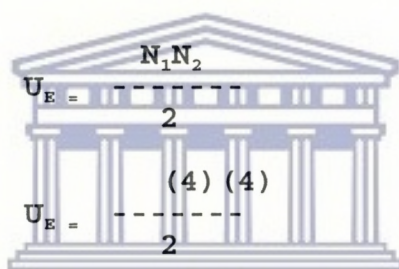## 4.9.4 The calculation of the literacy results

$$U_1 = N_1 N_2 + \frac{N_1(N_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1$$

$$U_1 = (4)(4) + \frac{(4)(4 + 1)}{2} - 10$$

$$U_1 = 16 + \frac{20}{2} - 10$$

$$U_1 = 16 + 10 - 10$$

$$U_1 = 16$$

$$U_E = \frac{N_1 N_2}{2}$$

$$U_E = \frac{(4)(4)}{2}$$

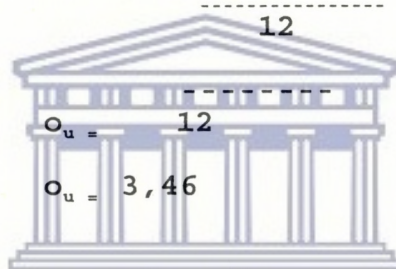$$U_E = \frac{16}{2}$$

$$U_E = 8$$

$$O_u = \frac{N_1 N_2 (N_1 + N_2 + 1)}{12}$$

$$O_u = \frac{(4)(4)(4 + 4 + 1)}{12}$$

$$O_u = \frac{16 \; (9)}{12}$$

$$O_u = \frac{144}{12}$$

$$O_u = 12$$

$$O_u = 3,46$$

$$Z = \frac{U_1 - U_E}{O_u}$$

$$Z = \frac{16 - 8}{3,46}$$

$$Z = \frac{8}{3,46}$$

$$Z = 2,31$$

4.9.5 The decision

On the basis of the results:

$Z_{(obs)} > Z_{(crit)}$ (2,31 > 1.96)

: The H_0 is rejected

This means that the distribution of scores in the two populations from which the groups were drawn are not identical and differ significantly.

In terms of the pilot study it means that the intervention programme did make a significant difference amongst the groups. The reasons for this outcome could be:

1. Literacy intervention was significant

2. The sample could have been sufficient

3. The control group have not performed significantly without intervention.

4. The assumption that we made during our interviews were wrong, because some of the control group could read, write and do numeracy, but their scores difered signicantly from the experimental group after the latter have been subjected to literacy.

4. However, the Mann-Whitney U-Test is not sensitive enough to the issue of empowerment, which was an equally important aim.

5. Having had a control illiterate group and subjecting them to testing was an insensitive move on my part. The participants were not very comfortable with having to perform a test, without 'preparation' as they called it.

6. A major problem working within the statistical framework that was underlined by the relevant literature and my supervisor, was that my population for the pilot study was

too small in number and made the significant findings doubtful.

7. During the pilot study and towards the end of the pilot study I realised that my research question would be better dealt with in the interpretative paradigm, particular with the qualitative method.

4.9.6   Observations

After a period of six months there was a marked improvement, especially amongst the two illiterate persons
Although they could not as yet read and write on their own, they could with some assistance at least fill in simple forms, read and write simple sentences. With the numeracy test one can only come to the conclusion that they know how to work with figures, but found it difficult in writing it down.

4.10.   CASE STUDIES; BEFORE THE BASIC LITERACY PROGRAMME

Learner A
He is 22 years old and works at the Cape Mental Health in the Town Centre, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town. Upon entering the programme he was shy, an introvert and did not mix with others. He could only write his name and surname and could identify certain words of the alphabet, but very often confused them. His attention span was very short and passed substandard B in a remedial class.

Learner B

This learner, age 24, is married with three children and has never had the opportunity to attend school. He has struggled to make ends meet due to the fact that he was illiterate and could never find a job. Eventually he found employment, but was expected to perform certain duties which involved writing. His employee was aware of his problem and recommended that he attend literacy classes. When the opportunity arose quite near to his home he grabbed it with both hands. He was able to write his name and surname, but mixed up the letters, eventually becoming very frustrated at not being able to even spell his own name correctly.

He had a lot of experience in many fields , but was very embarrassed and bitter towards his parents for not putting him through school. He also felt bad for his children's sake for fear that they would be ridiculed by their friends if word leaked out about his illiteracy.

Learner C

She is a forty year housewife with five children and has never attended school. Upon entering the programme she was unable to read or write. She was also emotionally and physically abused by her husband for many years.

She was shy, embarrassed, negative with a very low self-image. After the intervention she was able to write her name, surname

and address. She was able to read simple and build simple words and sentences.

Learner D

She is a 37 year old with four children. She was nine years old when she started school and subsequently felt that the others were way above her. She left the school in substandard B. She could read with assistance and write her name and surname.

4.10.1   Implementing the empowerment programme

In order to establish the level of empowerment, different activities were undertaken and the learners were closely observed.

4.10.1.1   Workshop on voter education

Topic: Election 1994

The aim of the lessons were to teach learners to understand the process of democracy. They were also to be made aware of their right to vote without fear and the voting procedure. The lessons would also touch on how learners can become involved in bringing democracy nearer to them by becoming involved in community issues.

The teaching aids consisted of roleplay, films, picture associations and examples of ballot forms, boxes, voting booths and all other neccessary mechanisms.

The teaching methods included discussions, groupwork and mock elections.

Learners had to choose a groupleader or a spokesperson.

They had to discuss the question of whether it is important to vote or not to vote and the reasons for their choice.

After 15 minutes the group had to report back. The facilitator wrote down the main words such as, *democracy* ; *housing*; *jobs*; *education*; *health*; *pensions*, as reasons for voting.

The reasons they put foward for not voting were:

- Fear of intimidation

- Fear of losing their houses

- They were sceptical that there would be no changes.

Each of these were discussed and written down and learners were asked to fill the words in simple sentences.

Learners were asked what could be done to address their fears. Some of the suggestions were as follows:

  - Visible police presence

  - Vote in secret

  - Assurance that their houses will not be occupied

A racist campaign led by the National Party in the Western Cape led socalled "coloured" people to believe that their houses will be occupied by "blacks" if the ANC should win the election in the Western Cape.

After the discussion they were given a task to perform.
They were to discuss with their neighbours what they have
heard in class and also find any pictures or articles about
the election and bring it to class.

LESSON 2

Lesson Topic:- Conditions for voting

The aim of this lesson was to assist learners with obtaining
an Identity Document (ID) and to make them aware of the
conditions under which they would vote.

The teaching aid was a skid prepared by a voter education
group. The skid of ten minutes were presented and learners
were asked to comment after a group discussion. The following
were some of their observations:

- A child voted, but not to sure on the voting age

- No ID were presented

- Someone paid one of the voters to vote for her

- One voter was asked which party she voted for

- One voter voted twice at the same place

This was compared with a poster on which conditions
were set out. The facilitator wrote down the following
sentences which was broken into words.

- Any person 18 years and older can vote

- Voting will take place in secret

- You must be a South African citizen to vote

- You must have an ID/ Passport/ Temporary ID

Learners then practised to place words into correct order and then wrote it down. At the following meeting learners had to fill in the missing words of sentences containing the words such as *democracy* and the others mentioned previously.

Learners had to find out anything they could on parties participating in the election. Those who were not in possession of ID's were assisted with filling in of application forms and photo's were taken at a mobile unit that was set up at the Peoples Centre as part of the election process of the duties performed by the election commission.

LESSON 3

The aim was to familiarize learners with different parties, leaders and party names. Being aware of the manifestos of each party would could lead them to make an informed choice.

The faciliatator would also teach them how to make their crosses next to the party of their choice.

The teaching aids included and example of a ballot form for each one, example of ballot on newsprint and the faces of leaders.

Learners were asked what they knew about the parties and also the acronyms of parties. A newsprint was pasted up with information. Flashcards were pasted over each name. Learners were asked to paste each card over matching name. They were asked to pick out faces to match each party. This activity was repeated several times. The facilitator moved on to making

a cross on newsprint. This was followed by finger movement. Learners were asked to practise making crosses with their hands, then with pencil and finally next to any party of their choice. They are also reminded to make their cross within block otherwise it would be counted as a spoilt paper. Learners had to complete this information with their flashcards on their ballot form example and practise making crosses in the blocks.

Lesson 4 was a practical session and the steps as explained in the MATLA Trust booklet was followed (See Appendix 8)

Lesson 5 consisted of a film on voting to reinforce the voting procedure. It was also a opportunity to discuss last minute changes to voting procedure.

Lesson 6 took the form of a meeting addressed by party candidates and where learners had the opportunity to raise questions which were prepared in class.

Lesson 7 was a discussion on the aftermath of the election and the expectations of people were high. This led to further discussion on what was going to happen in the future and how people should be getting involved.

4.10.1.2   A social evening

The objectives were to share experiences, build up confidence and to involve family members,

Preparation started the week prior to the event. Learners discussed what they would prefer that evening. As it was the first social evening where they would be exposed to their family members in the literacy environment, it was decided that the evening be organised by the literacy committee. They made input into what they were going to present.

Invitations were addressed to the earners and family members, the project coordinator and staff members of the Woodlands Peoples Centre.

The evening was opened with a speech by the project coordinator, followed by the literacy coordinator.

One of the learners then made a speech on behalf of the group saying:

> Ons dank God en die mense by die senter vir die geleentheid om te leer.
>
> (We thank God and the people at the centre for giving us an opportunity to learn)

Through tears she told how difficult it is to be illiterate and how people see you as being 'stupid'. She thanked all who contributed to the evening and then learners presented thank you cards that they have written with the assistance of the facilitators. Two learners then read a dialogue, which they have compiled with the facilitator. Photographs were taken to

serve as momentos as well as part of our resources (See Appendix 9). An encouraging speech was given by a family member, saying they were wondering what learners were doing during these classes and tonight :

> We are proud to see what they have learnt and will in future give them more encouragement.

A closing speech was given by the literacy coordinator, thanking the learners, literacy committee, project coordinator and staff of the Woodlands Peoples Centre for their assistance. Everybody was asked to enjoy the refreshments and mingle with others.

As it was the first social evening, the learners were very nervous, tense and scarred that they would make mistakes.

It was obvious that in the short time since we have interviewed them that they have grown personally to the extent that they were prepared to openly say that they were illiterate when they started out. Three of them was preparing for an interview with the local newspaper later that week. Although they expressed satisfaction with the evening we raised the issue of them taking some of the responsibilties at a next opportunity. They agreed but not to take on every aspect of organisation. They also felt that they we should invite an outside speaker from another literacy organisation. They also raised the issue of performing a drama or skid at

a next function. After discussing the evening in their class they wrote down a few sentences on the evening.

4.10.1.3   Preparation for International Literacy Day

The aim of the evening was to foster participation, meeting other learners, practising organizational skills and also using the opportunity to foster public pressure on the government for assistance and recognition of work done by NGO's. After discussing the event and establishing that all four learners will attend it was suggested that a banner and posters will be created, that will be used by the learners during the march. Transport would be left to the coordinator, but the refreshments will be prepared by the learners. After learners decided what they wanted on the banner they followed a set procedure.

Learners took magazines and cut out letters and a suitable picture for the banner. These were pasted onto a A4 page, and a transparency was made. An overhead projector was used to project the image this onto a calico sheet (material used for painting). Each of the learners took a chance to write over a letter with pencil, which was later painted. Two learners were chosen to carry the banner at the march that would take place in Atlantis. Learners each decided to do posters that would reflect why literacy is important to them. They wrote it onto a page and then onto a cardboard, with the assistance of the facilitator. The learners also chose a representative to make

a speech, summing up what they have learnt and how important literacy has become in their lives. They decided to take charge of the braai arrangements at the venue in Atlantis, Cape Town. Each of the learners and members of the Literacy Committee contributed towards the refreshments. From the contributions they would purchase the meat, salads and cooldrinks. The Literacy Committee took charge of the transport, liaison with the South African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (SAALAE) organisers and photographs. All these activities took two and a half weeks which also included a discussion and written work on how they found the International Literacy Day, what they enjoyed , what the shortcomings were and suggestions they had for following International Literacy Day.

The learners enjoyed the day and they were happy to meet so many other learners. There were no media coverage, as was promised by organisers of the event. The sporting activities that the organisers (SAALAE) of the event promised never materialised. However there were a number of issues raised by the learners themselves.

Our learner's representative was not too well prepared, thus not representing the view of all the learners. The transport turned up late to take learners home.

The learners did not really mix with the other learners. During the march most hid behind their posters for fear of being recognised as this was their first public outing.

What the learners said about organisers was true. All the learners did not contribute to the speech made by the representative. Although they stuck to the group most of the day, one could see that they enjoyed the day, some coming out for the first time.

They made certain suggestions as to what could be done at a next International Literacy Day. These suggestions would included putting all the learners ideas together on paper prior to the event and to have it read to them to make sure it was representative of their ideas and feelings.

It also meant making sure that learners make a point of meeting at least two other learners. This could be achieved through games and other activities prepared during that day. Learners felt that because of their experience with the march, they would not be so embarrassed the next time. It was quite understandable, as it was the first time learners really exposed themselves in public, openly declaring to the world that they were illiterate.

4.11   CASE STUDIES: AFTER THE INTERVENTION

Learner A

Having gone through the programme he could then associate letters of the alphabet with words such as a for apple and could clearly remember it much easier in this manner.

He can read certain words such as cat, mat, fat and can construct very short sentences. He has not attended classes on a regular basis, which could have affected his results in the tests. However, the group has come to accept him the way he is. He has become more relaxed. He has clearly made himself at home, accepting the group as being part of a family. Having attended remedial classes it was difficult for him to accept that here he would be treated with respect and dignity and not be ridiculed for the pace at which he progressed. Although he was a very shy person who initially never spoke a word, not even in class he later on became so confident that he would speak in front of the group. It did not matter to him if he could not find the right words to express himself. He said it anyhow and it meant a great deal to him and his family. They were as surprised as he was at the fact that he would dare to speak in front of other people. They were also surprised at the knowledge he gained in the literacy classes. During the election campaign his parents remarked with pride that:

> He could explain to us in detail certain things about the election that we were uncertain about. He has really learnt a lot in the literacy classes and was extremely sad if he had to miss a lesson.

He would especially enjoy the outings and would always share his refreshments with everybody. He was also quick to point out if something was not right. During the banner making for the International literacy day in Atlantis he was the person

who advised us on the right kind of paint for the banner. He has clearly put his skills as a spray painter to good use.At work he performed his duties with much more care because he says:

> I have found new friends. People trust me and don't see me as being retarded as they used to.

Learner B

Now he is able to identify the whole alphabet, identify simple words, read labels. He also fills in rudimentary forms. At his work place he has improve and was given more responsibilties, which he performs with great care.

He has developed his self-confidence, self-image and has found himself to be quite an artist when coming to drawing and painting. Through the empowerment activities he has come to develop a great potential for organisational talent.

Having been terrified for his children if people had to find out that he was illiterate, he has slowly come to accept the fact by explaining to his children that he never had the opportunity to attend school. He feels that :

> I think I can go much further now that I have learnt so much. I want to move on and become a traffic cop.

He must however be encouraged to read more and his spelling needs attention.

Learner C

After the evaluation she was able to write her name,surname and address. She was able to read simple and build simple words and sentences. She is able to identify place streetnames and products. She is able to follow hymns from the book and verses from the bible. She has grown tremendously on both the personal and literacy levels. She gained so much confidence that she could speak her mind in meetings and whenever the opportunity arose. She represented the learners at the ILD in Atlantis. She became a representative of the learners on the literacy committee. She remarks that:

> Al die jare het ek maar net by my huis gebly. Ek wou nooit waag om uit te gaan en met ander te meng nie. Vandat nou ek 'literacy' bywoon sien ek plekke en ek staan op vir my regte.
>
> (All these years I stayed at home. I never wanted to go out and hardly mixed with people. Since attending literacy I am seeing places and standing up for my rights)

Learner D

She learnt better sentence construction and improved her spelling. She is able to read with more confidence.

She has build up her self-image and confidence.

During the preparation for the ILD in Atlantis she was the one who bought the refreshments. Before she could not bring herself to do this. Together with another learner the two of them went to buy the items for the refreshments.

Being physically abused by her husband she learnt to stand up for her rights and took her husband to court to start divorce proceedings. She even got a interdict against him.

She remarked that:

> Ek het nooit kon dink dat ek tot so iets in staat
> sal wees nie, maar die 'literacy' klasse het my
> slim gemaak.
> (I never thought I would do something like this but
> the literacy classes made me wise)

She could also obtain information on her sons whereabouts. He used to run away from home because of his fathers' abusive behavior. With the help of the advice office at the centre she was reunited with her son. At one of our social evenings she brought him with to see what they did at these classes and both of them was so proud at what she has achieved. When she related her experience during one of the speeches she was overwhelmed with emotion that she could:

> Ek kan vanaand hier staan en se hoe ek voel. Dit is
> moeilik om te beskryf. Alhoewel ek beter kan lees
> en skryf het ek meer geleer gedurende die klasse.
> Ek is weer n mens wat mense in die oe kan kyk
> sonder om skuldig te voel dat my man ons al die
> jare geslaan het.
>
> (Tonight I can stand here and say how I feel. It is
> difficult to describe. Besides learning to improve
> my reading and writing, I have gained much more
> during the classes, I am a person again and I can
> look people in the eye without feeling that I was
> always the guilty person when my husband beat us up
> for all these years)

However her spelling could improve and she has to read more

Her self-image and confidence has growm tremendously.

4.12   PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED

4.12.1   The material

Most of the material we got hold of were in English and most of it had to be translated. One learner was Englishspeaking and this made the task of the facilitator difficult.

4.12.2   Levels

Learners were not on the same level, meaning two were totally illiterate and the others two were semiliterate, which made working one on one basis difficult. He also had to work on both English and Afrikaans, having one English speaking learner.

4.12.3   Absenteeism

Absenteeism made progress difficult, as they were only a few. It made quite a difference if one or two were absent and the facilitator had to go back to the previous lesson.

On two occasions the facilitator was absent without giving notice and this created a situation of panic, although I took over the class. Dropout of learners was a real problem. Because they were so few I could do housevisits in order to find out why some would want to drop out. Winter saw learners

coming to class very erratic. I had to sometimes fetch learners who stayed far from the centre.

With the voter education workshop I found that there was a massive heap of information that one could dispense to the learners. Time was of the essence and with all the holidays in between, it was difficult for learners to catch up were they had left off.

4.12.4   Homework activities

This was a new phenomenon. Learners sometimes did not complete the activities that they had to do after a lesson either because there were not time or they did not understand.

4.12.5   Classes

The times of the classes became a problem. Some learners felt that classes could also be held in the morning for those who did not work, because the evenings could become dangerous. This was a problem splitting up the resources and having the facilitator coming four times a week.

Learners were given too little responsibility or control over the activities. They felt that they were ready for more exposure to the media and other learners. They also felt that although the literacy classes were good they needed some

employment skills which they could use to generate money to help them survive.

4.12.6 Training

I had to look for a trainee consultant who were familiar with many more methods of teaching literacy. Being observers at some lessons this was also a point picked up by the other potential facilitators who would receive training later during the year. Although the facilitator was trained in the conscientization method, he fell back on the alphabetization method on numerous occasions. This resulted in very little of peoples own life experience becoming the centre of discussion. One possible explanation was the fact that it was the facilitators' first practical encounter with teaching literacy after his training.

4.12.7 Empowerment

Very little change was brought about in the community in which the experimental group lived. All grew on the personal side ,but they were not involved in any way in community activities.

4.12.8 The researcher

As the coordinator I observed half of the activities and could not be at all the classes and events. I had to rely on the information of the facilitator.

During the times that I was present, I sensed that the learners had much more potential for development than that which were forthcoming. I also sensed a feeling of trust, rapport and closeness to the learners which could only enhance the project and which I felt could be explored further during the bigger project, hence the change to participant observation, described in detail at the end of this chapter.

4.12.9 Involvement of people

Given the sensitive nature of illiteracy, it was difficult to get people involved. The methods of getting people involved in the project was limited. We relied on the advice office for names of interested persons. Having asked people to participate in the pilot project as a control group was also a problem, because they wanted to be part of the programme but not be 'tested' like that. They wanted to participate for the sake of becoming literate.

4.12.10 General

During the empowerment activities they were given very little responsibilities as we were as new to the field as they were. The activities were not planned with the learners input beforehand and they had to accept it. They have not been given the opportunity to take charge of activities.

Lessons were also not planned with learners to establish their interest and what matters to them. This could have been done in conjunction with their goals and objectives at the beginning of classes and little later on to see whether they had changed their directions as they became further involved in literacy.

4.13   QUALITATIVE FRAMEWORK

The testing of learners and the design (Mann -Whitney) was inapprpriate to the sensitive nature of this issue. Subjecting people to formal testing and especially with the control group was seen by some as underlining their 'ignorance' or 'stupidity'. Peoples' life experience did not count. It was only when I became part of the programme that I realised the sensitive nature of being illiterate. During the testing, one could sense the pressure as they were trying there utmost to complete and not to make any mistakes. Having being subjected to the same test as someone who had some kind of schooling (semiliterate) gave illiterate people a sense of failure if

they could not perform as well. At that time I had very little idea of the world that illiterate people live in.

Having gone through the experience of the quantitative framework, I decided that this method notwithstanding it's possible advantages in other research areas becomes very insensitive in dealing especially with illiterate people as I have described above under the section '*problems experienced*'. After a lenghthy discussion with my supervisor and after I have read on the interpretive paradymn, I decided that for the purpose of implementing the bigger project that I would follow a qualitative framework. According to Peacock (in Crabtree and Miller 1992) this style of research seeks the truth:

> truth from the natives in their habitat by *looking and listening*(49).

According to this method the information is collected by means of "*observation, interviews, and mechanical recording* of conversation and behavior. Following the unstructured interview technique in this method it is described by Bernard (in Crabtree and Miller 1992) as :

> guided everyday conversations and is often part of participant observation (16).

According to Ferreira (1988) the qualitative paradigm is:

based on induction, holism and subjectivism (109).

This could be done if the researcher does not have any preconceived ideas. It starts with certain observations and move on towards generalised patterns. This means that the observation aims to include the hole and takes the actions and experiences of the participants serious. The researcher, who will become the particpant observer, thus needs to know his/her participants sometimes on personal level, building an environment of trust in which participants can respond without fear. In essence it would mean to collect data in the language of the participants and how they understand the situation. Shurinck & Schurinck (1988) is of the opinion that participant observation means the researcher should become part of the group and define a role for him/herself during the research. The researcher assumes the role of 'observer' but with the knowledge that he/she knows the participants.

Van der Burgh (1988) describes participant observation as:

> A strategy which involves social interaction between the researcher and those being studied in the milieu/environment of the latter (64).

According to Taylor and Bogdan (in van der Burgh 1988) the information is collected by 'looking listening, enquiring and recording'. This would mean that the researcher then becomes 'part' of the group, actually taking part in the activities. By becoming a participant observer I would hoped to add more

value to what learners say of their own progress and what literacy can do for them.

The following chapter entails the implementation of the larger literacy programme.

CHAPTER 5 :   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LITERACY PROJECT

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the implementation of the programme, based on the literature review and the results of the pilot study. The implementation will be carried out in such a way that it will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the project.

5.2   GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

5.2.1   Goals

a.To reduce the illiteracy rate and in doing so equip the target group with reading, writing and basic numeracy skills. One of the goals is to teach people basic literacy, as has been described in chapter 1, that people who came to the advice office could not understand and fill in rudimentary forms or documents, leading to other problems and because they could not read or write other people could easily exploit that fact.

Some people expressed their needs as follows:

> Ek wil graag die bybel lees om beter deel te neem
> aan die kerk dienste.
>
> (I want to be able to read the bible to participate
> more fully in church services)
>
> Ek wil my naam teken wanneer dit by finansiele sake
> kom en ook verstaan wat ek teken.

(I would want to sign my name when it comes to financial matters and also understand what I am signing)

Ek wil my persoonlike dokumente self lees en nie van ander mense afhanklik wees nie.

(I want to be able to read my own personal documents and not rely on other people)

b.Taking literacy beyond reading, writing and numeracy leading to involvement in community affairs. This is important because during the apartheid years, the oppressed majority had no decisionmaking power and decisions were imposed top down. In this way many were exploited in the sense that they were denied basic human rights such as proper housing, clean water, basic education and many others. The general election was one way of exercising their right to decide who must run the country. The mechanics of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the coming local elections will give people a far greater say in the running of their own communities.

Through the empowerment process we hope to find ways to ward off any forms of discrimination and oppression.

5.2.2   Objectives

a.Equipping the target group with basic literacy skills.

b.Overall development of skills and confidence.

The acquiring of basic skills could lead to the using of the anylitical tools to become involved in activities that are of paramount importance to transformation.

5.3   <u>METHODOLOGY</u>

The methodology will proceed to outline strategies to realise the previously stated goals and objectives. Different types of information and social experiences needs to be extracted, hence the application of different methods:

a. <u>To ascertain whether people have attained basic literacy skills</u>

Having decided to change from the Mann-Whitney U-test (Statistical analysis) to qualitative method allows me as a participant observer to use different tools in the observational process. These include amongst others looking, listening, interviews and recording.

Working on the following two levels a combination of the above methods will be put to use.

a. Determining wether people have aquired basic literacy skills and

b. To determine the level of empowerment in terms of community involvement and transformation.

Case Studies of at least 10 of the random selected 30 learners will be discussed in respect of:

Unstructured interviews, before and after the implementation since the majority of the participants were illiterate. They would also be given opportunities to take charge to organise certain activities. This is important in building confidence, selfesteem and also development of leadership qualities. It

would give people the opportunity to enter into discussions with their compatriots in seeking solutions to common community problems.

Their participation in activities will be closely observed and recorded. These activities would include involvement in community affairs, literacy social evenings, workshops and outings.

5.4   PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT

5.4.1   Facilitators

The people who were recruited during the pilot project all agreed to be trained. Regular meetings were held in order to plan and discuss any problems and seek solutions. A meeting was set up with various institutions to provide training for the Literacy Committee.

5.4.1.1   Training of facilitators

The Literacy Committee was trained over a period of six weeks by an independent consultant from the Peninsula Technicon in Bellville, Cape Town. We were trained in the *Breakthrough* method in conjunction with the structured and unstructured *Language-experience* and *Alphabetization* methods.

During the pilot study the facilitator had to fall back on the alphabetization method, hence the combination of methods. In the Breakthrough method the use of sound were stressed and

learners own life experience becomes central to any lesson. The use of codes or pictures serves as a starting point to any discussion in which learners become involved. This method is significant, because the learners realise that what they have to say is important and in this sense it creates good listening and oral skills. In this way learners can also discover that writing is a form of speech written down and it can be reversed into speech through reading aloud. Although the Breakthrough method was discussed in detail other methods such as the unstructured and structured Language-experience and Aphabetization methods were also included. In the unstructured method the class starts with discussion on a picture of relevance to learners and a sentence given by a learner is written up for everybody to see. Learners are then taught, kind of rote fashion, to read and write the sentence. In the structured version the class would start with a discussion generated through a code. Sentences are chosen from a controlled core vocabulary, which in a sense inhibits and limits learners to what has been prepared. The Alphabetization method has the advantage that the alphabet is covered before any writing or reading takes place and learners will then be able to find writing and reading easier, but it can become very time consuming. During the pilot study it was my observation that the facilitator would fall back on this method. The learners would confuse the letters with each other . One of the problems then would be that they have not covered

the alphabet from the beginning and it became very frustrated for the facilitator and learners. In this instance it would seem that what learners have to say would be put aside to concentrate on the mastering of the alphabet, which was very time consuming. The Language-experience method is used by many organisations in Britain because of it's success with children and has been adopted and adapted by some South African groups such as Montagu and Ashton Gemeenskapsdiens (MAG), National Language Project (NLP), Use, Speak and Write English (USWE).

Although the training concentrated on functional writing, reading and numeracy, it was linked to community issues, finding ways to ward off any discrimination and exploitation, by looking at things from a different viewpoint and trying to look behind the obvious facts.

Codes were used in order to sound words around vowels. It was done so that learners be given enough practise to hold pencils/pens so that that they may concentrate on what they write. Here it was noted that one should take heed of the progress of the learners as each person progress at a different rate.

The training also concentrated on cognitive, conceptual skills and co-ordinating skills, primarily involving a person's mental ability for example numerical skills, skills involving a person's ability to understand various aspects of a certain

matter and it's implication and to come to a specific conclusion.

The development of these skills was an integral part of training so that facilitators could become aware of the shortcomings and disadvantages of learners and develop these skills in their lessons as part of reading and writing.

At the end of the training session each facilitator was awarded a certificate at a graduation ceremony, attended by various guest speakers.

5.4.2   The researcher

As with the pilot study I remained the coordinator of the project and doing the research at the same time. This was also one of the reasons for the switch to participant observation. Having established a rapport with learners, facilitators and staff of the Woodlands Peoples Centre, gave me the opportunity to gain first hand information on potential learners and the problems experienced in the area. One of the problems experienced was that I could not be at all of the classes all of the times and had to rely on reports from facilitators. Having being involved in the pilot project gave me the advantage of creating an atmosphere of trust. I invited the learners from the pilot project to the first social get together to motivate other learners who were about to begin.

5.4.3   The target group

As it was mainly adults who visited the advice office and expressed a need to become literate, it was decided to focus on adults, who could not read or write or who were semi-literate. This was also based on my experience in our pilot study and the focus of our training.

5.4.3.1 Getting illiterate and semi-literate involved in the programme

Having spread the word through our previous learners and working through the advice office, we received numerous enquiries about our literacy programme.

During our meetings it was decided to go on a campaign to get more people involved. This led us to divide Woodlands into smaller areas in order to facilitate speedier visits to the names we have received. Letters were sent to churches, schools, clinics, post offices, surgeries and other organisations in order to locate more people in the area (See Appendix 10).

Talks, announcements, posters, pamphlets and adverts were directed at literate people in order to convey the message that a programme to teach literacy was about to be launched by the Peoples Centre. The response was overwhelming. The names and addresses were processed accordingly and the facilitators decided to work in groups in streets allocated at a previous meeting. People were then visited and interviewed as to what standard they had passed, how they dealt with documents and which days and times they would prefer the classes to be held.

They were also asked to spread the word to other illiterate persons whom they knew would be interested. After processing the relevant information, all were informed of a gathering, which would also serve as an opportunity to meet each other and to pass on information as to when classes would commence.

5.4.3.2   The socio-economic status of the learners

The randomly selected group's ages ranged from 22 to 65 years. 36% were men and 63,3% were women. Of the 30 learners 56% had no schooling and 3,3 % only got as far as standard three. Most of the rest left school in sub standard B. All were from a working class background and were either unemployed or performing menial jobs.

5.4.3.3   Attendance

February - 89%

March   - 89%

April   - 64%

May   - 80%

June   - 76%

July   - 79%

Five learners dropped out of the programme due to the following reasons:

* Death of a husband

* Promotion to a higher position

* Church commitments

* Illness

* Scared

Observation

During the month of April learner attendance dropped. One of
the reasons was the resignation of one of the morning session
facilitators. Learners now had to build trust with a new
facilitator, since the learners were split up between the two.
The other reason was the onset of winter and the dangerous
conditions for learners as they left the centre. We then
decided with the learners to move 9 of them nearer to their
homes to another venue. Attendance then noticeably increased
during May 1995. However the facilitators of this group
sometimes forgot to fill in the register and attendance was
then estimated.
The venue (a wendy house) however created some problems as we
had to buy electricity and during rainy evenings it was quite
cold. This was sorted out, as the church from which it was
rented, bought hardboard and some of the learners volunteered
to fix it in order to prevent leakage.

5.5 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LITERACY PROGRAMME

5.5.1 The Material

As the Literacy Committee was a relatively new group, other literacy organisations were contacted for materials, while at the same time building our own resources.

5.5.2 Operation of classes

Classes started on the 2nd of February 1995. Eighty one learners were interviewed at their homes by the members of the Literacy Committee. The interviews were used as a method to determine the level literacy and empowerment of learners as only two persons could fill in the questions without assistance. Fifty one learners registered in January at the very first social evening held to get acquainted with each other. Thirty of the registered learners were randomly selected and closely observed and interviewed over 45 sessions running up till end of July.

Classes were held on Monday and Wednesday mornings at the Woodlands Peoples Centre for two hours each with two facilitators. Two separate classes were also held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings respectively with two facilitators per class. As I have mentioned previously, one of these classes were held at a separate venue after learners started to dropout at the start of the winter. The class were moved

nearer to the learners in order to boost attendance. Initially classes were held on Monday and Wednesday mornings, afternoons and evenings at the Woodlands Peoples Centre. The majority of the learners preferred Afrikaans as a medium of communication, although there were learners, who wanted to improve their English. We also had four Englishspeaking learners in the group.

Due the resignation of one facilitator and at the request of learners, classes were moved to Tuesdays and Thursday mornings and evenings. The afternoon classes had to be scrapped, because learners found it difficult to attend as their children would then be home from school.

Due to the change over of facilitators, learners were reluctant to respond as a climate of trust had to be rebuilt. Facilitators also found it difficult and struggled with the different levels and the different rate of progress of the learners. However, whenever learners experienced difficulty, other learners who progressed at a faster pace, were called upon to help and the other facilitator would also work on a one to one basis.

As a starting point learners and facilitators and coordinator introduced themselves, negotiated on times, teabreaks and also discussed any problems they would be experiencing and how they could solve this.

Although learners were reluctant to speak up at first, they

gradually began to sense that things would not be done with which they did not agree. Each lesson started with the register, a discussion on anything interesting that happened in the community and reasons why learners might not have attended previous lessons. In order to facilitate matters at first, learners were given time at the beginning of the lesson alone to talk about problems that they were experiencing. This was then conveyed by a representative or the learners themselves. It would then be discussed in class or otherwise taken to Literacy committee meetings that were held once a month.

After the first gathering of learners and facilitators it was decided that each session would start with a few minutes for filling in the register, discussing reasons why learners stay absent (if not too personal) and also listening and discussing anything interesting that has happened in the community. The facilitator would then also check homework and try and assist learners who experienced difficulties with the task they had to perform. Learners also decided that during winter or cold evenings they would not take a break, but leave earlier.

5.5.3   The Activities

The activities of the programme consisted of reading, writing and numeracy activities in order to teach people basic literacy skills. During these activities their participation

was observed. It also included empowerment activities that lead to the empowerment of learners.

5.6   PROPOSED ROSTER OF ACTIVITIES

Month	Aims	Activity
1995		
January	getting to know each other	social gathering
February		registration;
	empowerment	voter education workshop;
	basic literacy	reading, writing;
March	community involvement	anti-crime march;
	basic literacy	reading, writing;
	empowerment	local elections;
	fundraising	dance
	socialising	
April	basic literacy	reading, writing numeracy
May	basic literacy	reading, writing numeracy
June	employment skills empowerment	needlework course

July	basic literacy	reading, writing numeracy;
	empowerment	social evening
August	basic literacy	reading, writing numeracy;
	awareness	abhor day planting
September	empowerment	International literacy Day; outing post office; outing to library; letter to minister of education; interview by local newspaper
October	fundraising	cake / rummage sale;
	basic skills	reading, writing numeracy
November	evaluation	ascertain development
December	rewarding learners	diploma ceremony;
	socialising	outing

5.7   IMPLEMENTATION OF READING, WRITING AND NUMERACY

During these activities more or less the same sequence were followed as with the pilot study such as starting with exercising with the holding of pencils, pattern writing and then moving onto sentences, words and letters.

Facilitators however, tried to make use of more practical lessons. Teaching aids consisted of adverts, scales, watches and measuring instruments. Learners were also closely observed when they were given opportunities to take charge of preparation and buying of refreshments for gatherings. The methods used to master these activities included a combination of the *Breakthrough, Language experience and Alphabetization methods* and were used whenever one or other method failed to produce results and especially when time was of the essence. Following will be an example of a reading and writing lesson.

5.7.1 Example of reading and writing

<u>Lesson Topic</u>:   - Writing a story about oneself

                            - Filling information on a form

<u>Aim of Lesson</u>: - Read with understanding

                            - Filling in rudimentary forms

                            - Leading later to complicated forms

Teaching Aids:

- example of form on newsprint

- worksheet - form

- previous lesson worksheets(numeracy)

- story on one of learners

Structure of Lesson

At a previous lesson learners were asked to write five sentences about themselves with the assistance of family members. They were given an idea as to the content of the sentences. This they had to bring to class. With the permission of learners a volunteer was asked for his story. The facilitator wrote it down on newsprint. Then the learners were asked to read with facilitator.The main facts were cut out in flashcards and the facilitator would ask learners the following questions:

What is the person's surname and name?

When was he born?

What is his address?

What is his telephone number?

Where does he work?

Who does he work for?

Learners are then asked to paste the answers next to required information on the newsprint form.

The process is simplified to the information required on any rudimentary form.

Activity

Learners had to fill in the information on their forms.
Those who struggled were assisted by the facilitator
and other learners. Afterwards they were encouraged to write
ten sentences about themselves.

Observation

Learners were a bit frustrated because they knew all the
information of the form, but just could not write it
down. Family members, it seems, often wrote the sentences for
some learners and they would find it difficult to read the
handwriting. Some numbers (telephone numbers and date of
births) were written the wrong way round. There were a few
who could fill in the forms adequately.

5.7.2 Case studies: Before the intervention programme

Only example of five case studies will be given in this
thesis. The other five case studies will be part of the
appendixes (See Appendix 11).

Learner A

She is a married 40 year old woman . Her husband went blind
during working for the railway company. They have four
children and live in an informal settlement. She has to do
everything since her husband has gone blind.
She was completely illiterate when starting the classes.

Being one of 12 children, she was taken out of school to look after her younger sibling and could not attend school.

Upon entering the programme, she could only write her name, but could not write letters or fill in documents. This became an important goal since all documentation had to be handled by her.

Learner B

He is 38 years old and married with two children. He passed Sub standard B as his highest standard. He blames himself for leaving school so early. He says :

> Ek voel arm want ek is ongeletterd. Ek moet altyd ander mense var om dinge vir my te doen.
>
> (I feel poor because I am illiterate. I must always ask people to do things for me)

With the assistance of his wife , he pays the accounts. She handles all other correspondence and together they do the shopping. He could not even read the destinations on the trains or busses and had to rely on others. He could also not read or fill in any forms without assistance. This learner was very nervous and negative about his progress. He would never dare to speak in front of people for fear of saying the wrong things.

Learner C

She is 53 years of age. She was taken out of school to care for the other children. When her mother died all of them were put in foster care. She went to stay with an aunt, who took her out of school to care for her aunt's other children. For a number of years she worked in a factory and managed to conceal her illiteracy very effectively. They had to write up the stock and she said:

> Ek het altyd vir n vriend gevra om dit vir my in te vul. Sy het ook nooit geweet ek kan nie lees en skryf nie. Miskien het sy geweet, maar wou niks se nie.
>
> (I would always asked a friend to fill in my totals. She never knew I was illiterate. Maybe she knew, but never spoke about it)

She felt exceptionally bad about her illiteracy , since all her brothers and sisters who were also in foster care were given the opportunity to finish their schooling. She also felt very frustrated as she so much wanted to do more effective church work.

Learner D

This learner is 40 years of age. She works for the Council and has to record plant seedlings as to when and how many were planted. She had no school at all and felt very bitter and disappointed in herself. She can only write her name and surname, which her children has taught her to do. She can

identify landmarks and beacons, but cannot read destinations. She has to rely on her children, colleagues at work and other people for assistance.

Her children has to read the correspondence and she feels that:

> Dit is nie altyd wenslik dat kinders n mens se briewe lees nie.
>
> (Children should not always read a person's letters)

She wants to do things for herself, especially read and write well as it would be a benefit for her in her work. She is a talkative person, but also listens to what others have to say.
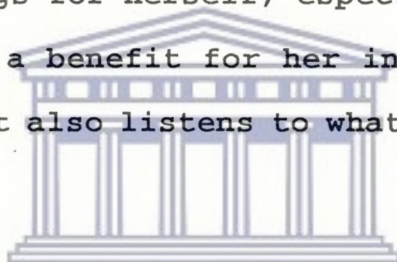
Learner E

Learner D is 40 years of age and works for a petrol company in the tests and repair section. He is illiterate, but has taught himself the very basic skills, such as his personal particulars and elementary mathematical calculations, with the assistance of family members and friends. His work required working with figures, therefore he decided to attend literacy classes as he could be eligible for promotion. His only aspiration was to develop his writing skills and more extensive knowledge of mathematical calculations. Although he taught himself he felt that he lacked confidence and a

positive self-esteem in order to assert himself, because he feels people exploit him because of his illiteracy.

5.7.3   Results of the interviews before the intervention
          programme.

Although only examples of five case studies were given
within the study, the results of the interviews and obser-
vations off all participants are discussed here.

Reasons why people moved to Mitchells Plain

Not one person interviewed mentioned that the government with
the group areas act was responsible for their move to
Mitchells Plain. Most of them said they moved because parents
moved to another place or they went to stay with relatives.

Reasons why they left school early /or had no schooling

The majority of responses were that they were the eldest and
had to look after the other children or that the school was
too far from their homes. Other reasons included learning
problems, hospitalization, laziness, too old for school, and
moving to another place.

How would they describe poverty

The overall response was lack of economic resources including
having no money, food, employment or a house. Some also felt
that you are poor if you are illiterate , because you must ask
other people for assistance with your personal life and in
this way you are always left out of everything. Some felt that

you are poor if you have no education and if you have no education, you have nothing. You are not able to buy the material things you want or need in life. Others felt it to be a more spiritual poverty, where you are robbed of your dignity and you have no privacy. One learner put it in this way:

> Almal weet van jou besigheid. As jy in die straat loop, kan jy eintlik voel hoe mense van jou praat. Jy dink jy vra mense om jou te help, maar hulle bespot jou.Jy is n niks. Jy is arm in hul oe.

> (Everybody knows your business. When you walk in the street you actually feel how people talk about you. You think you ask for their help, but they make fun of you. In their eyes you are poor)

How they went about treating letters/documents/accounts/shopping/busrides/trains/taxis

The majority asked their husbands, wives, children or others to help them with correspondence. They would do their own shopping and pay their own bills, but struggled to understand the content of bills and only relied on the colour and picture on bills to establish what kind of bill it would be (example an electric bulb would indicate the electricity account). When shopping, they would recognise the labels and amounts, but would stay away from 'no name brands' for fear of buying the wrong products. They would ask assistance on the destination of trains or busses and taxis, but would also make use of landmarks. Here one particular learner recalled how rude a busdriver was to her when she asked where the bus was going:

Kan jy nie lees waarheen die bus gaan nie?

(Can't you read where the bus is going?)

He would get out of the bus and rudely show her where she had to look for the destination, but would not read it and then get back into the bus. She said:

Ek het soos n swaap gevoel.

(I felt like a fool)

Do they belong to any organisation?

Most were churchgoers, but only four belonged to community organisations. The reasons were that they would not want to speak in meetings for fear of saying the wrong things or being laughed at.

Reasons for attending literacy classes:

The majority wanted to read and write. Those who could wanted to do it more effectively or learn English.
With this acquirement they would be able to handle their own affairs . They also felt that maybe it would boost their confidence to communicate with other people and also speak their minds. Some said:

Ek wil my eie persoonlike sake hanteer

(I want to handle my own personal affairs)

> Ek was aangewys vir bevordering by die werk, maar moes dit laat gaan want ek was ongeletterd.
>
> (I came in line for promotion at work, but had to decline because I was illiterate.)

5.8 EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES

In trying to empower people the activities consisted of the the following:

5.8.1   Social evening to get to know each other

5.8.2   A farewell for one of the facilitators

5.8.3   A workshop on local elections

5.8.4   A needlework course

5.8.5   A social evening to present what they have learnt

5.8.6   Other activities included an anti-crime march and dance.

5.8.7   International Literacy Day/Month

5.8.1   Social evening to get to know each other

This evening was mainly organised by the facilitators in order to get people to know each other. It was also used as an opportunity to announce the start of the classes in February. A few people responded on the set out times and days of the classes. However these issues were dealt with in detail when the classes started as learners were reluctant to talk in big groups. Although the evening was successful, it was clear that people were not entirely at ease for fear of their illiteracy being made known to the world.

During the class sessions, it was stated that they were still very much ashamed of this very sensitive issue.

However it was felt that they would want to be exposed to more of this kind of social evenings in order to rid themselves of this inferior complex. Facilitators had to build up a relationship of trust with the learners if they wanted to achieve results, as people were still very suspicious of the motives of these classes.

5.8.2 Farewell for a facilitator

Although this was not part of the planned activities for the year, it was unfortunate that we lost one so soon after beginning the classes. Because it was so sudden , the facilitators set a date, organised all the refreshments and the learners were invited to attend. This time however the learners who were taught by the facilitator made speeches, wrote messages of thanks with the help of the other facilitators. All learners were not acquainted with the facilitator that well as she only took a few of the learners. One of the problems experienced at that moment was that these learners had to adapt to the style of the other facilitator and had to rebuild a new trust relationship.
Some stayed away for a while, but returned after housevisits were made in order to bring them back.

5.8.3 Workshop on local elections

Here the aim initially was to explain everything about local elections. There were many problems country wide with especially the boundaries, representatives and bickering amongst certain political parties. Since time was running out for the registration, the main aim was to get people registered and later on as issues became clearer to explain such issues as the classes progressed. The workshop then just involved trying to answer peoples questions and assisting them with the filling in of the forms as it was still very early in the project, people could not understand the kind of information needed on the form and the reasons for it. One of the facilitators is attending a workshop on local elections and as soon as the main issues are settled will present a full workshop to the learners. The preparation for the local elections remains an ongoing process up till the realisation of voting. During our visit to the library learners checked in the voters roll to see if their names appeared. Two of them phoned the tollfree number to enquire.

5.8.4   Needlework course

During June a needlework course was held, organised in conjuction with Cape Technicon and the Resource/Literacy group from the Woodlands Peoples Centre. As some learners indicated that they would want to engage in employment opportunities, they were asked wether they would be interested to attend. Ten women attended the two week course, ending with a ceremony,

where they were given certificates and displayed the garments they made.

They were very anxious and scared and did not know what to expect, but felt pleased and satisfied with themselves and felt that they had gained more confidence in themselves.

From the interviews, the women were quite amazed at what they could make, without having any experience of sewing or working with a sewing machine. They would now want to share these skills with others and also try and purchase two machines in order to continue practising their skills.

Those who chose not to attend for various reasons felt disappointed that they had missed a wonderful opportunity.

5.8.5   A social evening - A presentation by learners

The idea to have a social evening was to enhance the empowerment of learners, but also a sharing experience for family, learners and facilitators. The social evening idea was put to them and they agreed. However it was agreed that the learners would take charge of every aspect of the organisation. They were excited, but fearful, but was assured that the facilitators would give advice and assistance if needed. Facilitators, learners and their family members were invited. A few visitors also arrived, but this did not deter the learners. One of the learners performed the task of master of ceremonies. He called upon another learner , who opened with a prayer. One other learner then welcomed everybody and

asked one of the visitors, followed by the literacy coordinator, to say a few words. Being one of the visitors my thesis supervisor was called upon to say a few words to the group. He was very impressed and expressed his appreciation towards the learners for giving him the opportunity to say a few words.   Then it was time for the learners performed two dramas much to our surprise. The one drama was about the coming elections and centred around registration of voters. One of the learners acted as a registration official and the others were questioning him on issues relating to the elections. These centered mainly around who to vote for, reasons for voting again after the general elections and how to register. They concluded with the question of whether everybody had registered for the elections.

The second drama was about interviews for a vacancy. One of the learners interviewed the others for a job. To his amazement they were all illiterate. This irritated him and caused him to become very impatient and rude towards them, saying things like:

> Julle kom mors almal my tyd as julle weet dat julle nie eers kan lees of skryf nie.
>
> (You come and waste my time when you know that you cannot even read or write)

They felt extremely humiliated and embarrassed about their illiteracy and decided to act on it:

> Ons moet iemand vind om ons te leer,dan sal ons
> werk kan kry.
>
> (We must find someone to teach us then we shall
> find work)

They then looked for someone teach them to become literate.
After finding such a person it was demonstrated how difficult
it was to teach adults literacy , but it called for patience
and commitment. The audience laughed when one of the learners
mistakenly said something else, but it was taken in good
spirit.

The master of ceremonies, one of the Englishspeaking learners,
then called upon learners to relate their experiences. He
himself had to break the ice ,because learners were somewhat
reluctant. He recalled that it was through his wife that he
eventually got a job as a caretaker at the Woodlands Peoples
Centre. As the literacy classes were held there he was asked
to join as he was illiterate and his job would sometimes
involve taking phone messages and bookings for the hall. He
explained that his parents promised to help him read and
write, but they never got around to doing it. He recalls the
painful memory of job hunting, where he was asked to fill in
forms, which looked foreign to him. He says that:

> I had all the qualifications in my head, but none
> on paper.

He continued:

> It felt liked I was being driven into a corner and
> my head felt like bursting. I started perspiring
> and getting the gitters. The world of an illiterate
> is a dark one, which only those who find themselves
> in it would really understand.

Then he tells about the things that he is able to perform now.
He says that he takes telephone messages, takes bookings, can
fill in and read simple forms. He has met new friends and is
able to go out and speak to people with confidence. He
motivates other learners to continue, because in the end it is
worthwhile.

Another learner comes and relates her story. She runs a creche
in a nearby informal settlement. Although she was illiterate,
she attended meetings, representing her area and struggled to
hide her illiteracy. She said that besides her illiteracy she
was totally lost in meetings when people started speaking in
'high English'. She decided to attend the literacy classes and
now makes a much better job of running the creche and learning
English as well. She also urges learners to continue, because:

> It makes a difference in your life.

Another learner was totally surprised at herself for making a
garment on the needlework course. She says:

> Ek het nog nooit op n masjien in my hele lewe
> gewerk nie en self my man was verbaas oor my
> handewerk.

> (I have never worked on a machine in my life and
> even my husband was amazed at my handywork)

The master of ceremonies then calls on the last learner to
give a vote of thanks. She thanks everybody on behalf of the
learners, and express her gratitude for the opportunity
provided to become literate. She continues :

> Geletterdheid is altyd n emotionele saak vir my en
> ek voel altyd om te huil as ek my storie vertel,
> maar vanaand sal ek probeer om sterk te wees en nie
> te huil nie.
>
> (Literacy is always an emotional issue for me and I
> always feel like crying when I relate my story, but
> tonight I will try not to cry and be brave)

She recalls how the children in her court used to make fun of
her on her way to literacy classes. They said something like:

> Een en een is twee, een en een is twee.

> (One and one is two, one and one is two)

At first she would become very shy and embarrassed, but later
on took it in her stride.
She tells how at a school meeting the coordinator asked if
they knew any person that would be interested to become
literate and how she shyly mentioned after the meeting that:

> Ek is een van hulle.
>
> (I am one of them)

After attending the classes she says she became much more aware of the literate world and things opened up. She became aware of community issues, women's rights and could pluck up the guts to stand up for what she believed in. In her own words :

> Ek weet nou dat ek vir myself kan praat. Ek het by plekke ingegaan wat ek nooit gedroom het ek sal binnegaan nie en dit alles vir my regte .
>
> (Now I know I can speak for myself. I have entered places I never dreamt I would enter and all for the sake of my rights)

She even allowed her photograph to be taken for the local newspaper and could not be bothered whether other people knew she was illiterate. When shopping with another learner for the social evening she says:

> Vir die eerste keer kon ek die ingang en uitgang tekens en die etiket op die items lees.
>
> (For the first time I could read the exit and entrance signs and the labels on the items)

Then she calls on the facilitators and coordinator and asks learners to present them with gifts as a token of learners appreciation for their patience and commitment. The facilitators were overwhelmed by their learners' appreciation and cannot even begin to express their thanks and gratitude. Everybody is then thanked for attending and making the evening

the learners have prepared.

Observations

The evening was extremely successful and the development of learners on the empowerment level became the highlight of the event. They performed with confidence in their actions even in front of strangers, whom they have never seen or met. They could laugh at their own mistakes and were committed to make the evening a resounding success.

We were amazed at what they had organised on their own.

Their stories were hart rendering and touching and could move any literate person to tears. There was a tremendous sense of pride and achievement in the learners and facilitators alike.

The message to continue , whenever obstacles occurred was strongly put forward by the learners and there was a renewed strength that was almost visible.

There were however finer details which learners did not give attention to. The learner who was elected to give out invitations forgot to invite the project coordinator of the building, which the learners found very disturbing and annoying. This learner was severely reprimanded for his inefficiency and was asked to apologise.

There was no written programme to follow and everybody was kept in suspense on what was coming next. They started three quarters of an hour later than the planned time, because learners were still to be fetched.

The content of the election drama was a bit inadequate as the officer could not answer clearly on important issues and also the fact that registration has already expired some months ago. All these issues were then discussed at the first class after the evening. Recommendations were made and promises were made not to repeat the mistakes made. They were already looking forward to having a next social evening at the end of the year, free of any hassles.

5.8.6 International Literacy Day/ Month

This celebration included an outing to other literacy learners, outing to the Post office and City Library; a letter to the minister of education and an interview with a local newspaper.

As my observations for the purpose of this thesis concluded with the social evening, the rest of the activities will not be written up, but for the sake of the project will continue to play a role in the evaluation and planning for the continuation of the literacy project for next year.

The next chapter will focus on a discussion of the results of the implementation.

CHAPTER 6:   RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME AND DISCUSSION

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the results and a discussion of the implementation of the literacy programme. The basic literacy programme will first be discussed, followed by the empowerment programme. Each section will begin with a short, summarized case study of the learners, followed by the general patterns that were identified during or towards the end of the programme. Each section will conclude with a discussion where I , as participant-observer would give my own impressions.

6.2   BASIC LITERACY

6.2.1   Case studies : After the intervention programme
Learner A
Learner A, upon entering the programme could only write her name. She has progressed to the extent, where she is now able to write all her personal details. She can write full sentences and is able to write a short letter. She has become extremely good with numbers, since all family business is done by her. She was a very shy person who never wanted to speak up for fear of saying the wrong things. She also felt that people were looking down on her, but because she can read and write she feels that people respect her.

Learner B

This learner always needed the assistance of his wife to do shopping, pay the accounts and handle correspondence. After attending the classes he is now able to read accounts, pay the correct amount and work out the change he needs to get. He can also now do the shopping on his own and work out the prices of goods and the amounts that has to be paid.Now he is able to fill in simple forms. Learner B has progressed to the point where he is able to read and understand simple forms, write full sentences and also read the destination of trains and busses without any assistance.

Learner C

She could can now read and write , but has not progressed to the extent where she can do things fast enough. She is still learning to write a complete sentence and is still catching up on her word building. She can identify words and spell them if she cannot pronounce the word. She can write her personal particulars and can read streetnames and places and destination of transport.

Learner D

This learner has come to appreciate what literacy has meant to her. She is now very optimistic about what she can achieve and can apply her basic literacy skills at her work.
She is able to fill in elementary forms , identify destinations and read simple documentation. Although she still

needs assistance with difficult correspondence, she feels that her progress, although slow has been excellent:

> Ek voel sommer soos n nuwe mens en wil nog ander dinge leer.
>
> (I feel like a new person and want to learn more things)

She has become so eager that she never missed a class.

Learner E

This learner has now developed the confidence to perform his duties well at work, especially working with figures. He has also improved his writing skills to the extent where he makes entries into books and keeps record of sales and purchases. The activities that has been offered to him in the literacy classes has helped him tremendously in his job, especially the mathematical calculations, as it was relevant to his duties.

6.2.2   Discussion: General patterns

The fact that people thought that it was entirely their parents fault for taking them out of school was evident in their response to the reasons for never attending school. During the discussions on the election many of these issues were highlighted and some learners began to see the reasons why they were kept illiterate. In many instances learners lived on farms. One learner only now realised that the farmer used child labour for his own gains. He would close the school during the fruit picking season:

> Julle moet help om die vrugte te pluk. Wanneer dit klaar is sal ek die skool heropen.
>
> (Jou must help with the fruit picking. When it is finished I will open the school again)

There was definitely an awareness on the part of learners on issues which they previously accepted as being the norm. Although all the learners who participated were now able to write their most basic personal details, some of them still needed some kind of assistance. It was more an issue of making sure that they wrote it correctly. For those who were totally illiterate, reading and writing was a tedious process. It seemed that for the working adults, where literacy meant a promotion, the rate of progress was much quicker as in the case of learner B. It also seemed that in the case where learners had definite goals, basic literacy was much easier to obtain as in the case of learner A, where all family matters rested on her shoulders.

As mentioned earlier, learners came to literacy with a lot of experience, knowing how to work with money, measurements, time, but found it difficult to put it in writing and reading. Although learners were given the same basic lessons, cognizance was taken of the levels of literacy upon entering the programme and each of them were observed according to what they could perform after going through the programme. Unlike during the pilot project where all the learners were given the same test, they were now observed as to what they could do in comparison with the level at which they entered the programme.

The progress rate was slow for those who were illiterate, but they were usually assisted by their more advanced their compatriots. The effectiveness of collaborative learning and peergroup tutoring was hereby illustrated. When it came to mastering even a particular letter of the alphabet or writing or spelling a word there was a pride that only those who live in the world of illiteracy would understand and describe. One learner described her achievement on mastering the letter d as follows:

> Ek het altyd n d vir n b aangesien, maar dank God vir die moed om die verskil te sien.
>
> I have always mistaken a d for a b, but thank God for giving me the courage to see the difference

A lot of mistakes were still made. There were still learners who did not write between the lines. Some were still struggling with reading, spelling as they went along. Some found it difficult to write full sentences, punctuation and incorrect dates and dates of births. Patience often grew thin on both sides but the determination of learners to read and write and the satisfaction that facilitators got out of success drove both parties on.

6.3 EMPOWERMENT

6.3.1 Case Studies: After the intervention programme
Learner A

During the activities she has shown an eagerness to participate and has grown rapidly in self-confidence and empowerment. She now regularly attends the upgrading meetings in her area and also speaks her mind in the meetings. She is also very proud to wear the waistcoat that she has made during the sewing course attended in June of this year. This learner has progressed at an extremely fast pace due to the fact that she was motivated and determined to become literate. She says:

> Alhowel ek nie my man alleen wil laat as ek klasse toe kom nie, weet ek dat dit my hele familie sal bevoordeel. Ek was altyd afhanklik van my man, maar nou is hy afhanklik van my.
>
> (Although I never want to leave my husband alone when I come to class I know that it would benefit my whole family by becoming literate. I have always depended on my husband, but now he depends on me)

Learner B

He says:

> Geletterdheid het vordering in my werk beteken. Ek voel meer positief en ontspanne.
>
> (Literacy has meant progress in my work. I feel more positive and relaxed)

He is able to come in line for promotion at work, but had to be able to read and write more fluently. He has developed his confidence to such an extent that he has become determined to reach his goal. In the past he had such a low self-esteem that

he just lived from day to day never trying to reach his goal.

He states it as follows:

> Ek wil n motorwerktuigkundige word soos die tyd
> aangaan. Ek is hoogs tevrede met my vordering binne
> so n kort tyd, maar ek wil aangaan.
>
> (I want to become a mechanic as time progress and I
> am highly satisfied with what I have achieved in a
> short time, but would want to continue)

During the social evening he was one of the speakers who had to introduce the guest speaker. He could not believe that he was able to perform such a task in front of other people and commented afterwards with:

> Ek het gedink ek gaan dood, maar ek het dit oor-
> leef.
>
> (I thought I would die, but I survived)

Learner C

After attending the literacy classes this learner developed a positive feeling. She met other people who were in a similar situation as hers. Although she could never catch up on what she had missed through the years, she could at least now give all she had to become literate,. She was proud that she had the guts to come out into the open and do something about her situation. She was one of the learners who were interviewed for the local newspaper and was not really concerned that other people would find out about her being illiterate for so may years.

Learner D

This learner has come to appreciate what literacy has meant to her. She is now very optimistic about what she can achieve and can apply her basic literacy skills at her work.

She has become so eager that she never missed a class. Her listening and conversational skills has rubbed off on the class and has inspired the other learners positively. Although her progress is slow, her optimism and enthusiasm serves as an excellent motivating factor. She has reported making new friends, a new outlook on life and a better relationship with her children. She is always eager to pull her weight in any planning and organisation of the events of the literacy project.
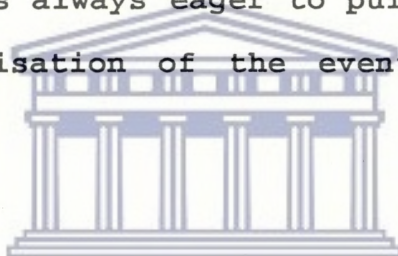
Learner E

After attending classes on a regular basis he declared:

> Ek voel minder afhanklike van ander mense by die werk en meer positief en vol selfvertroue vir die toekoms.
>
> (I feel less dependant on other people at work and more positive and confident about the future)

He also says that:

> Geletterdheidsklasse het my uitkyk op die lewe verander. Ek vermy nie meer mense by die werk soos eers nie en woon gereeld vergaderings by waar ons griewe bespreek word.

> (Literacy classes has changed the way I view things
> in life. I do not avoid people at work and
> regularly attend meetings at work, where our
> grievances are tabled)

Towards the end of the literacy programme, we heard that he has been promoted in his department and was now working in the Johannesburg branch of this company. One of the facilitators was of the opinion that he only needed the confidence to unlock his memory, which literacy provided for him.

6.3.2   The interviews: General patterns

After 45 sessions all the learners were interviewed again. The following are their responses:

<u>What progress did they make in terms of reading and writing</u>? They can identify the alphabet, but some wrote letters incorrectly. They can write their names, addresses, dates of birth and telephone numbers. They can fill in rudimentary forms and write simple sentences and identify certain words. This is what some had to say:

> Ek kan nou my naam en van skryf.
> (I can now write my name and surname)

> Ek kan etikette , bus- en trein destinasies lees
> (I can read labels, bus and train destinations)

> Ek kan my kind se leesboek lees.
> (I can read my child's reader)

<u>How literacy influenced their family/work/friends/community</u>

They were more aware of issues in the community, but not yet as ready to become deeply involved. Four people serves on an upgrading committee in the informal settlement and one learner serves on the literacy committee. The majority has not become fully involved in community projects. They would become involved in ceratin issues, but not an ongoing involvement. Those who work has reported that they can perform their duties with extra confidence and one learner has obtained promotion at work due to the fact that he has literacy skills. All relatives support the learners. This was clear during our social evenings when family members were also invited. Learners say that they have made knew friends through the literacy project.

How they felt when they were illiterate and how they feel now since becoming literate

Learners said that they did not feel good about it.

Words they used were 'embarrassed' 'ashamed' 'guilty'

Some of them described it as follows:

> Ek het nie goed gevoel toe ek nie kon lees of skryf nie, maar nou voel ek goed vandat ek geletterd geword het.
>
> (I did not feel good that I could not read or write, but since becoming literate I feel good)
>
> Dit was nalatigheid aan my kant en ek is spyt daaroor. Nou kan ek sien wat ek al die jare gemis het.
>
> (It was negligence on my part and I am sorry about it. I can now see what I have missed out)

Ek was teleurgesteld omdat ek nie kon lees of skryf
nie, maar nou voel ek dat iets groot in my lewe
gebeur het.

(I was disappointed that I was illiterate, but now
I feel as if something big happened in my life)

How they treat documents/letters/bus and train rides/ shopping since attending literacy classes

They can identify the destination of trains, busses or taxis.

With difficult documents they still make use of assistance

from family or friends. They still do their own shopping, but

can now identify products much more easier.

Some said:

Ek kan nou sommer baie beter dokumente
hanteer.

(Now I handle documents much better)

Vir die eerste keer kan ek die etikette lees.
Ek kan nou ook 'no name brands' koop wat my
geld bespaar.

(For the first time I can read the labels. I
also buy 'no name products' which costs much
cheaper, thus saving me money)

Have they joined any organisation since attending literacy and do they speak up in meetings:

Except for four learners none has joined organisations. Others

belong to their church organisations, but also makes a

difference there. Most learners have developed the confidence

to say something in meetings, without fear of being laughed

at.

<u>Incidence, where they could apply literacy skills:</u>

Many reported that they could sign their names for the first time ever or they could read the destination on the transport or follow a hymn/bible verse in church.

This is what some learners had to say:

> Ek neem beter boodskappe by die werk.
>
> (I take messages much better at work)

> Ek kan nou beter lees en my kind help.
>
> (I can read better and help my child)

> Ek kan my naam teken as ek my man se ongeskiktheidstoelaag gaan haal. Voorheen het ek n kruisie gemaak.
>
> (I can sign my name when I fetch my husband's disability grant. I used to make a cross)

One learner moved us to tears when she described how she could only now read her youngest son's school report and even give him advice and encouragement. With her eldest son, due to her illiteracy, could not read or understand his school report.

<u>What they would want to do after becoming literate</u>

Many were looking for opportunities to complete at least standard 6. Others were interested in job creation. One learner was very eager to teach farm children literacy as she grew up on a farm, where she was denied the opportunity to be schooled.

6.3.3 Discussion

It was on this particular issue that the most growth occurred. This was evident from the participation of learners in the activities that have been described and their own perceptions on their progress. Some of the learners also obtained employment after becoming literate. They became eager to participate in the events, wanting to show the "world" that they were not "stupid" as people often referred to illiterate persons.

Although they were not wholly involved in community affairs as we anticipated, they moved from being almost totally immobile to becoming more aware of what was happening around them. Some of them were now able to speak their minds on community issues without fear of being shut down. Some have become involved in community issues such as the ongoing anti-crime campaign and the most recent 'scrap the arrears campaign' where the community is mobilising themselves against crime and gangsterism and also to pressure the city council to scrap rent and rates arrears, which have built up as a result of unemployment in the area.

They became interested in meeting other people, seeing places and in many instances some of the learners have been to places that they have never been in their life for fear of venturing too far. The sense of pride, achievement and success is hard to describe in words, but is captured in the words of one of learners who said with tears in her eyes:

> Ons se dankie, dankie vir die geleentheid om the leer en weer iemand te word.
>
> (We say thank you, thank you for the opportunity to learn and to become someone again)

Although this project was done on a small scale I have found a commitment from both the facilitators and the learners. People have grown much more on the empowerment side than the rate they have progressed on the basic literacy skills. One reason for this could be that they could now assist their children with some of the elementary things (example was the learner, quoted above, who could now read her child's reader). One reported that she was now able to read or understand their children school report for the first time. For me that was much more important than reading and writing, although it is difficult to separate the two. Although the community have not been transformed per se and we have not reached the many thousands of illiterate people, we have touched the lives of each person who went through the project and their family members. By means of the literacy process, the people who have gone through the project, have been transformed. They have become aware of issues around them. They have opened their eyes and see certain matters from a different perspective. They have made an impact on their children lives and in issues that matters in their personal and political lives. They have taken control of their own affairs and their environment, in

their own understanding of 'the world' however small that may be.

The very last chapter will focus on a summary, conclusion, recommendation and the identification of possible further areas of research.

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CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CRITIQUE

7.1   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem of illiteracy was studied in this thesis against the backdrop of the effects of the apartheid regime and how it's policies kept people in social ignorance and poverty. To understand how people function in a world of illiteracy it became necessary to investigate how the problem of illiteracy manifests itself worldwide, in South Africa and particularly in the area to which this study was confined.

Looking at ways to try an overcome this problem I deemed it necessary to examine literacy projects in other countries (Chapter 2) There were many similarities, but also many differences. The outcomes of which were not too successful in terms of creating a new society, but where people were empowered in a way that was denied to them under the colonial rule. In many of the countries studied (Cuba, Nicaragua, Tanzania) the government of the day realised the benefit of implementing mass based literacy campaigns, which was definitely not the case in South Africa under the previous apartheid regime and certainly not materialising under our present democratic government. Therefore it became necessary for me to look at the feasibility of a pilot project, since it would also be the first time the area of Woodlands would embark on such a project (Chapter 3).

In order to understand what was meant by illiteracy and where I wanted to take people I focussed on concepts and different perspectives, because illiteracy and literacy means different things to different people, especially the illiterates themselves, depending on the kind of political set up people find themselves in.

It became important to focus on the issue of empowerment, being the main goal of the study, taking literacy beyond mere reading, writing and numeracy. It became imperative to examine theories of how adults learn, because it was somewhat different from teaching children. It was necessary to understand what issues were important for adults and what instruments could be used to attain the goal of empowerment.

Having worked within a positivistic paradigm during the pilot study and evaluating the results, forced me to change to a paradymn that was more appropriate and sensitive to my research question. Although the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test were significant, it was clear that I had to use another reference framework. It was clear from the results that the Mann-Whitney test was not the most appropriate for my research question and could not measure sufficiently the progress of empowerment (Chapter 3), hence the use of participant observation during the implementation of the bigger literacy project.

Implementing the pilot project I opted for the kind of formal testing as we have come to know it in our formal schooling system. Being a teacher at the local school and being trained in this method was the accepted way . I soon found out that it was inappropriate for what I was trying to measure. At that stage I had very little knowledge of the operation of the illiterate world. I could only try to put myself in their shoes, but would never really understand how they survive in a literate world. Based on this and the difficulty in calculating what people could do, prompted me to change my technique, hence the shift to a qualitative method. It brought me closer to the learners. A bond developed that sometimes were too close for a design of this nature. People's progress could not be measured sufficiently in statistical terms but in the tears they shed and the passionate words they spoke about the change that literacy has made in their lives.

For me this became an eye opener because as literate persons we tend to take everything for granted around us. It becomes a lesson to the children of the learners for the value they attached to learning. That one is never too old to learn, but if there are opportunities that one should make use of it not to regret it in your old age. And in that sense I assume that this project promoted a culture of learning in the homes of learners.

For me it has been a tremendous pleasure to have achieved something like this on my journey, touching the lives of others while my own

life and understanding of the illiterate world also changed. In a sense it was also a tribute to all other illiterate persons and community workers who find themselves in this position in South Africa.

I have make a number of mistakes as I went along, especially the choice of my research design, but this can be a learning experience to other who would want to follow suit.

Having then opted for participant observation gave me the opportunity to evaluate learners on the basis of observation, description and interpretation. Their own perspectives became important, hence the use of their own language. It gave me the opportunity to familiarise myself with their 'world' and to come to know their problems, fears and aspirations. Sometimes I felt I became to close to make sound interpretations, but what became significant was that what they had to say was more important than teaching them mere reading, writing and numeracy.

A literacy project such as the one implemented can make a tremendous impact on the lives of ordinary people. Up till now it was not the previous government, but the people themselves who wanted to make a change in their living conditions. It transforms the kind of poverty that people endure when they say :

> Ek voel arm omdat ek nie kan lees en skryf nie.
> n Mens moet alewig mense vra om jou te help.
> As jy kan lees en skryf kan jy dinge vir
> jouself doen.

(I feel poor, because I cannot read and write.
You are always dependent on other people's help
If you can read and write you will be able to do   things
for yourself).

It may not change entire communities, but it touches the lives of
learners and their families and this causes a spiralling effect.

I have also focussed on the work done by the community and how it
culminated in the building of the Woodlands Peoples Centre . The
staff and voluntary workers have sacrificed and have put their
skills to the benefit of the community. In all earnesty I can say
that the RDP, which now has become a local buzz word has been
started long ago by this community.

I have studied the literacy projects in other countries and could
learn from their experience, but this project also became a contact
project for other groups in Mitchells Plain and elsewhere. Our
learners have been quick in letting the people know where they came
from and what they were able to do. Whenever an opportunity for
employment comes up, which our learners are capable of doing I
gladly recommend them.

I have tried to put the theories in practical terms, which are not
always possible, because literacy is not a rigid set of steps. It
is a process whereby learners take the lead in many respects,
without them sometimes realising it.

And so through my study I have found that literacy can become a
powerful tool, not by itself, but in conjunction with development
as a whole. I have found that even the acquirement of the most

basic literacy skills can lead to empowerment. Those who were working reported an improvement at work particularly how they perform their duties and how they feel towards their responsibilities. As Giroux (in Freire and Macedo 1987) has pointed out that learning literacy does not automatically provide food or jobs or houses for the poor (Chapter 2, p 38). Individuals might be able to find employment, but those are the lucky ones.

One thing is certain, literacy can empower and transform peoples lives and their perception of the 'world' at the personal as well as the community level.

7.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

For the project that I was involved in I would strongly recommend the following:

The project should be extended by means of an all out campaign. This campaign should include laying claim on RDP funds for the continuation of the project, since an infrastructure already exist and people are committed to continue. It should make use of the media and other contacts to broaden its base, especially in Mitchells Plain.

Mitchells Plain can form a body which will be linked to a national literacy body that will truly argue and put the case of Adult Basic Education firmly on course.

I would also strongly recommend that those facilitators get recognition for the dedication and commitment in the form of

certification and remuneration by the government, because also they have families to feed and will be unemployed if no funding comes forth. Their skills should be put to use because they know how the community operates, what problems are encountered and what issues are at stake. To enhance this they need ongoing training and refresher courses, which will recognise the work they have done at grassroots level.

One aspect that really needed attention were the setting up of clear levels at the outset of the project. If this is not done, it becomes a problem when the goals and objectives are not clarified. This however is not something that can be done by facilitators or the coordinators on their own. They have to work hand in hand with the learners.

But because learners, when starting out are not really clear on what they really want to achieve or what is available to them in the project. Evaluation of learner's goals and objectives at two monthly intervals is recommended

The ideal setup for teaching literacy would be on a one to one basis ,giving individual attention to learners, but we know that it is impossible with the vast amount of Illiterate people that have not yet been reached in this country.

For the sake of progress facilitators can work in groups of two, sharing ideas with each other, and also standing in whenever one of them cannot be present, as absenteeism by the facilitators can cause situations of panic and anxiety in learners. To facilitate

the smooth running of classes learners need to be divided into groups that are more or less on the same level and language. In order to do this learners should be evaluated at the beginning to establish their level of literacy. By this I do not mean formal testing, but interviews and questionnaires on specific things that learners can or cannot do.

It is also recommended that if a literacy project such as this one be tackled that one carefully examines the kind of instruments that will enhance and lead to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the project.

Furthermore the case of literacy needs to be taken up by a national body, together with all roleplayers involved in adult education. NGO's need to pressureless government into recognising the efforts they have put into empowering and transforming peoples lives. Together they need to remind government constantly of their committment in the RDP and the White paper on education. Foreign and local funders need to be targeted, while South Africa is still on the agenda to contribute to development in South Africa. Only in this way can the negative effects of the legacy of apartheid be put behind us and lead to a more egalitarian society, where individuals and communities can make a better impact on the development of South Africa as a whole.

7.3   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

If someone wants to continue with researching this project the recommendations should be taken heed of and implemented. It is best to study other countries literacy project, but preferable to look inside our country and study at least two projects in detail. The goals and objectives must be stated clearly, but needs to be adapted or changed in consultation with learners and facilitators. The media needs to be pulled into the project. In this manner more people are reached . The more people become aware, the more they would come forward to become involved in literacy. They would want to become part if they realise what others have achieved and also if government give their blessing. In this way literacy organisations can decrease the illiteracy rate and can make a greater impact on the country as a whole.

7.4   CRITIQUE

After the implementation of this project I realised that certain issues were not adequately dealt with. One of the stated goals of this project was the decrease of the illiteracy rate in the area. However no full scale survey was undertaken to establish the illiteracy rate . This meant that I could not prove statistically by which percentage the illiteracy rate decreased. I could only determine that at least 41 from the 51 learners who registered became literate as 10 learners left during the course of the

programme (this includes the 5 from the randomly selected group). Having further stated that learners would take charge of smaller groups also did not materialise in the true sense of the word. The only time this occurred was during discussions and when they had to choose groupleaders to report back after a session. Although some of them developed leadership qualities, this was never tackled as a separate entity and in retrospect I should have instituted a workshop on this particular issue.

Listening and recording was sometimes a problem, because the exact words of learners might not have been noted down. This happened often during the interviews and at activities where learners' own voices needed to be heard. Asking learners to verify whether their correct words were used sometimes created uncertainty as some would forget exactly what they had said, but the sentiments that they expressed would be captured, they felt. I had to rely on reports from facilitators whenever I could not be present and thus took it on face value. They would sometimes forget to fill in the registers or could not be able to interview too many learners at once. All of this became problematic. I realised afterwards that I could have made use of a tape recorder in order to capture the exact and true reflection of learners' words. Although the needlework course provided the opportunity for the creation of job skills, I felt that more projects could be tackled, where learners can get involved in to create an income. One such project could have been a vegetable garden or a cooperative, but could be one of the projects if the literacy project continues in the future.

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WOODLANDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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Networking
Social Problems

Other Activities
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Basic Ballroom
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Woodlands Peoples Centre

_____   _____

Literacy Co-ordinator   Class Facilitator

Date:_____

BALLOT PAPER

SAMPLE ONLY

Make your mark next to the party you choose.

Etsa letshwao pela mokgatlo oo o o kgethang.

Yenta luphawu eceleni kwelicembu lolikhetsako.

Endla mfungho etlhelo ka vandla leri u ri hlawulaka.

Baya letshwao go lebagana le lekoko la gago.

Yenza uphawu lakho eduze nehlangano oyikhethako.

Plaas u merk langs die party van u keuse.
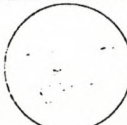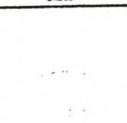
Dira leswao la gago go lebana le phathi yeo o e kgethago.

Kha vha ite luswayo phanda ha dzangano line vha khetha.

Yenza uphawu lwakho ecaleni kweqela elo ulikhethayo.

Dweba uphawu esikhaleni esiseduze kwenhlangano oyikhethayo.

Party			
PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA		PAC	
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS		SOCCER	
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY		KISS	
VRYHEIDSFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT		VF-FF	
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY		WRPP	
WORKERS' LIST PARTY		WLP	
XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY		XPP	

Party	Symbol	Abbreviation	Leader	
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY		AMP		
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY		ACDP		
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT		ADM		
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY		AMCP		
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS		ANC		
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESE PARTY		DP		
DIKWANKWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA		DPSA		
FEDERAL PARTY		FP		
LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY		LUSAP		
MINORITY FRONT		MF		
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY		NP		
INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY		IFP		

Presented by the Voter Education Programme of the Independent Electoral Commission.

Penrose
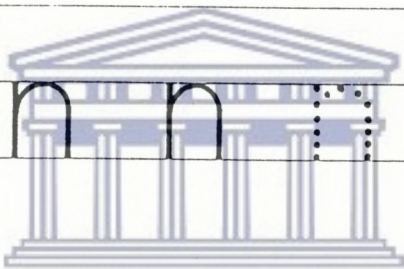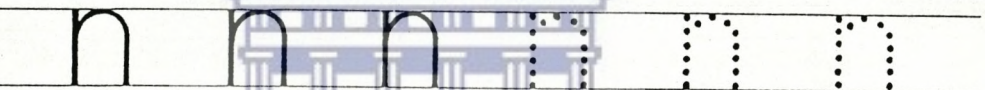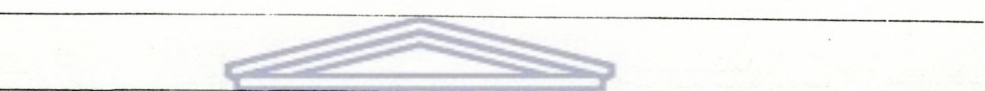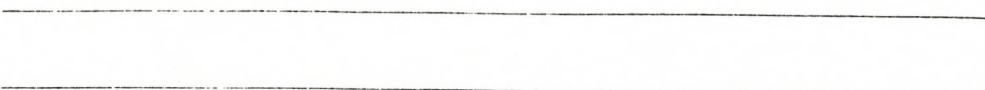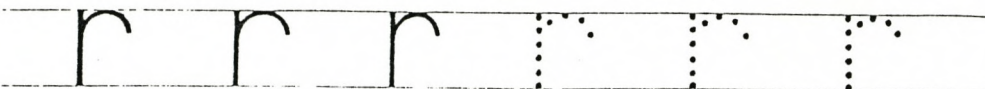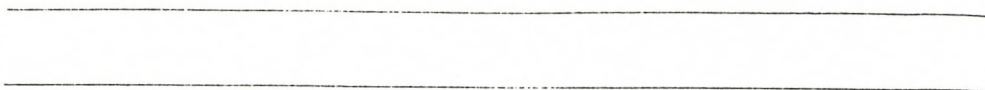
WRITING PATTERN 1

WRITING PATTERN 2

WEDEPOHL (1988) :35
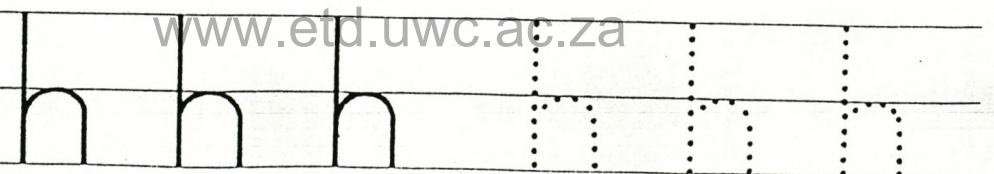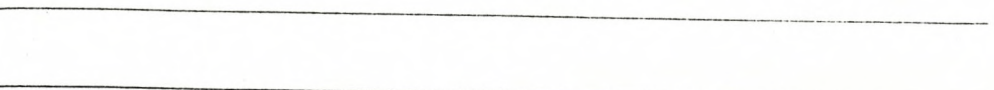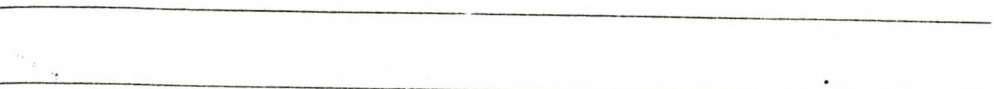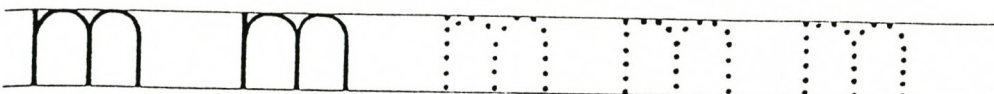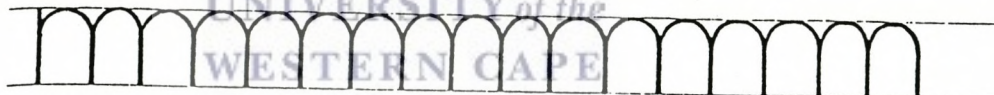
Number	Picture	Words

APPENDIX 5
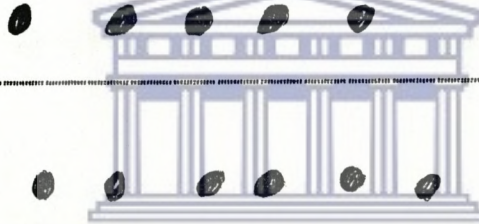
Number	Picture	Words
1	●	one
2	● ●	two
3	● ● ●	thre
4	● ● ● ●	four
5	● ● ● ● ●	five
6	● ● ● ● ● ●	six
7	● ● ● ● ● ● ●	sevn
8	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	eight
9	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	nine
10	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	ten

11   12   13   14   15   16   17   18   19

FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

SURNAME :_____

NAME   :_____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

HOME
ADDRESS:_____

_____

_____

WORK
ADDRESS :_____

_____

TELEPHONE : _____(HOME)

_____(WORK)

SIGNATURE:_____

Timothy

1. Gangsters fight one another
2. Robberies and murder happen a lot
3. If people stand together we can
4. fight crime.
5. This is bad examples for the children

5. Working with illiterate voters

Aims:

To show illiterate voters how to fill in a ballot. To give illiterate voters practice in filling in ballots.

Time: 1 hour.

What you need:

- poster "Ballot";
- photocopies of flashcards of names of parties for each participant;
- photocopies of 3 model ballots for each participant;
- envelopes – place the small cut-up flashcards in them;
- rough paper, pencils, prestik;
- voting booth;
- ballot box.

What to do:

- Explain that you are going to teach people how to vote. Stress that you will not tell people who to vote for.

- Set up the room in the same way as you would for people who can read and write. In other words, use the voting booth and the ballot box and explain exactly what these are. (See pages 12 and 13.)

Follow these steps exactly:

Step 1:

- Place the poster "Ballot" where everyone can see it clearly. Explain that this is a large copy of the form something like the one that everyone will get on election day. Each person marks her vote on this paper. It is called a **ballot.**
- First go through each name on the ballot with the group. Read it to them, pointing to the name on the poster.
- Then read each name together as a group.
- Show the large flashcards. Explain and show how each one matches a name on the ballot.

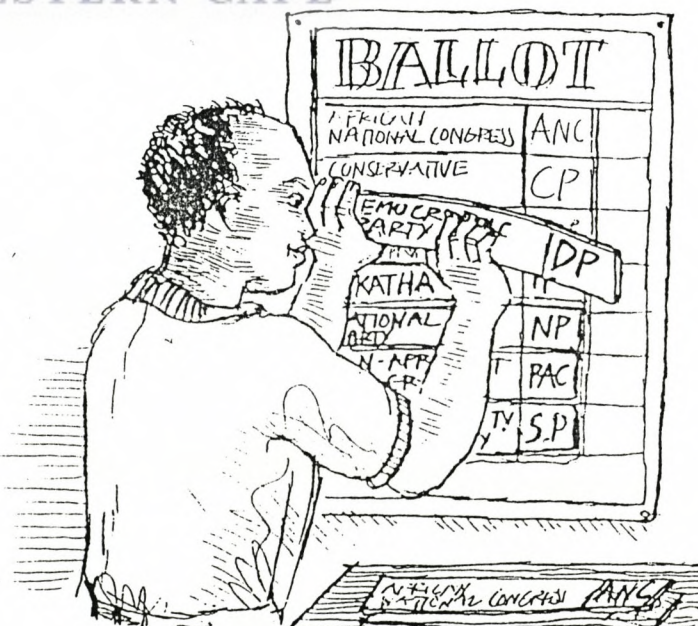Use the notes on page 14 to explain exactly what a ballot is.

- Place a flashcard under the name it matches. Say the name out loud and get the group to repeat the name after you.
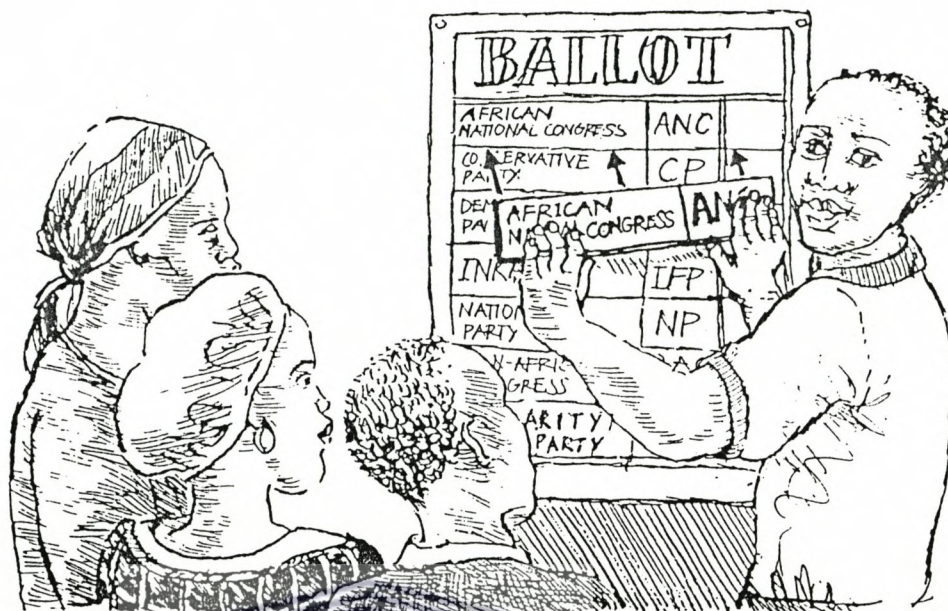
- Stick the flashcard on top of the correct name with prestik. Repeat the process with each one.
- Remove the flashcards one by one, again saying the names.

Step 2:

- Ask each participant to come up to the poster and match any flashcard to a name on the poster. When they have done this they must stick the flashcard on top of the name, and say the name. (You may need to help.)
- Continue in this way until all the names are found. Practise this step about four times.

Step 3:

- Then ask people to remove the flashcards, one at a time, saying the name on the flashcard. Again practise this step about four times.
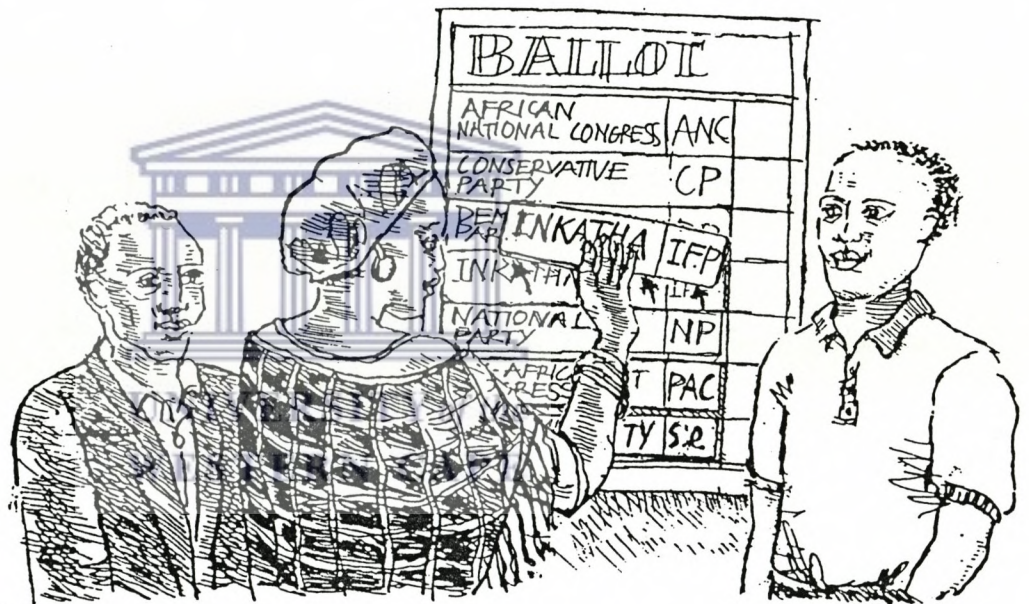
Step 4:

- Hand out the model ballots and small flashcards (in the envelopes). Explain that these are copies of ballots.
- Help people to practise matching the small flashcards to the names on the ballot. Go around and check.


- Then call out a name and ask people to match the flashcard to the ballot – continue until all the flashcards are used.

Step 5:

- Now explain how to mark the ballot, i.e. to write a cross, or a tick next to the party of their choice, or to draw a circle around the party.
- You may need to teach people how to hold a pencil (*demonstrate and let people practise*).
- You also need to teach people how to write a cross, a tick, or how to circle a name:
  - First demonstrate a cross on the newsprint and say, "This is a cross and this is how we write it." (In the air show the directions you go in to make the cross.)

- Then ask people to copy making a cross in the air, after you.
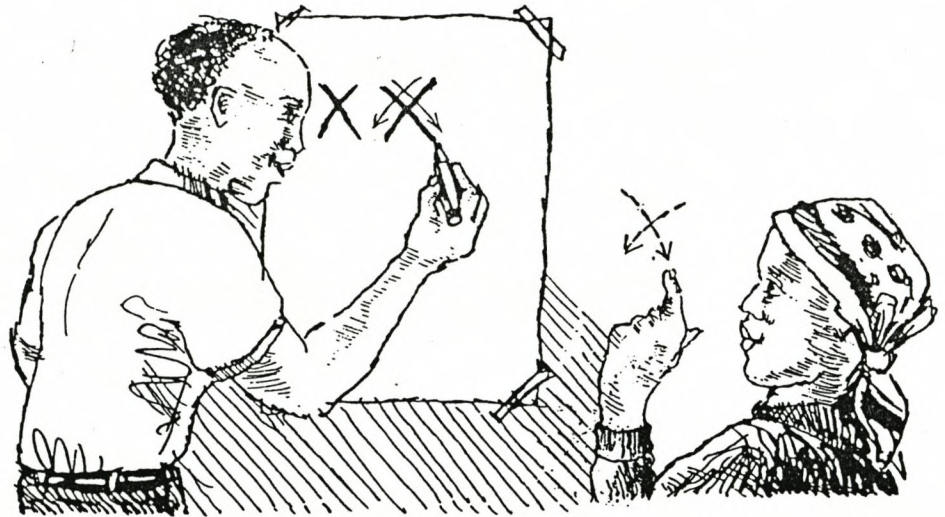
- Ask them to write a cross on rough paper. Participants should copy and practise many crosses on rough paper.
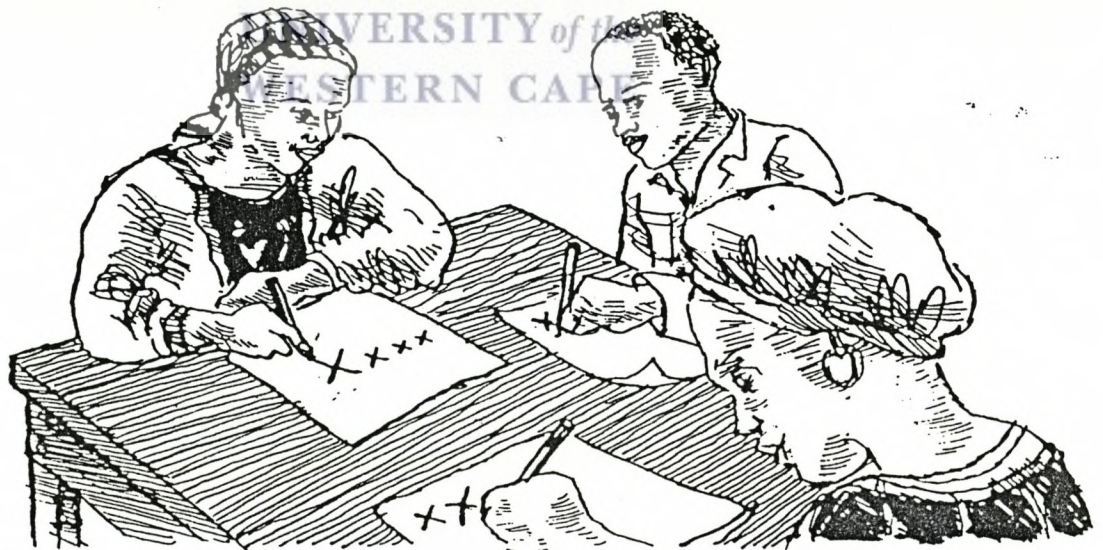
- Now, using the poster "Ballot", show where people will write their cross. (Be careful not to influence how people will vote.) Explain that they need to decide who they will vote for and then make their cross next to that name or symbol. *Demonstrate this for all to see — use many examples.*

· Finally, ask people to practise drawing the cross on the model ballots. Go around and help if necessary.

Remember, always tell people what you are doing and what the mark is called. Always demonstrate first, then practise in the air, on rough paper, and on the model ballot.

· Follow the same steps to teach the tick and the circle.

Step 6:

· Finally, ask people to go into the voting booth one at a time, and to mark their ballot.
· They must then fold their ballot and put it into the ballot box.
· Count the votes. Go on to explain about spoiled ballots (see page 15). Continue as you would with literate people.
· Let people take their model ballots and flashcards away with them, so that they can practise at home.

Most illiterate people do not know that there are organisations that teach adults to read and write. Find out what literacy organisations there are in your area so that you can refer illiterate people to them.

APPENDIX 9
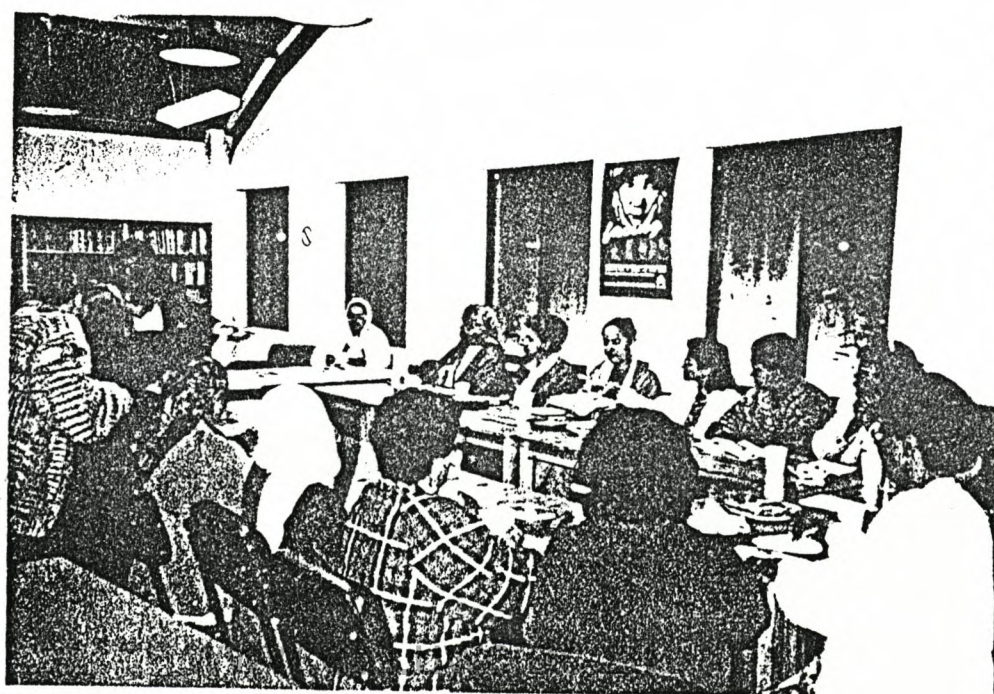
Woodlands Residents Association

LITERACY

Secretary
Basil Mashappie

Chairperson
Theresa Solomon

Sir/Madam

RE:ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING SEMI- & ILLITERATE PERSONS

The Advice Office of the Woodlands Residents Association have detected that a number of persons coming for advice are unable to complete or understand basic documentation
(Hire purchase agreements, council notices, application forms and other important documentation) due to the fact that they cannot read or write.
A large number of them have expressed the need to become literate in order to alleviate the above problem and also play a more significant role in their everyday community affairs.

The Education Committee, an affiliate of the Woodlands Residents Association, has now taken this task of conducting such a programme in response to this need and also in the light of the movement towards a more democratic South Africa (At present the Education Committee runs other programmes such as Speech and Drama, Art, Xhosa, a Children's group and a pre-school).

In order for us to effectively conduct this programme and reach as many illiterate/semiliterate people as possible, we need to locate more such people via as many sources as we can and are asking your much neeeded assistance on this very sensitive issue.

We kindly request your assistance in locating as many illiterate and semiliterate persons who would be interested to attend these classes.We therefore kindly ask you to bring the contents of this letter to the attention of your members.

HOUSES SECURITY & COMFORT

If you, know of any such person, then we would ask you to take down the necessary particulars of such illiterate/semiliterate person on the attached form. One of our Committee members will collect the form from you and we will then do the necessary follow-up work.

Your assistance in this regard will contribute greatly to the enrichment of Woodlands Community, as those who become literate, will be able to play a more meaningful role in their everyday lives, and ultimately in that of the whole community.

If you do need more information,please do not hesitate to contact the Woodlands Peoples Centre at 341157 (ask for Sheila or Ursula) or call Merle at 348127 after 4pm.

Thanking -you-in-Anticipation.

Yours-in-Education.
Merle Fred (Mrs)

_____

(Co-ordinator,for and on behalf of the Education Committte)

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX 11

CASE STUDIES: BEFORE INTERVENTION

Learner F

She is 53 years of age and totally illiterate. She could not attend school as the school was too far and they had moved often. She said that:

Ek is teleurgesteld omdat ek nie kan lees of skryf nie.

(I am disappointed that I cannot read and write)

Her husband handled all her affairs. She wanted to learn to read and write because she wanted to become independent and to be able to read the bible. She could identify prices and could also identify the different bills that had to be paid. She felt that her husband rules her life, because he did everything. She could not write any of her particulars, but could identify her name.

Learner G

He is 22 years of age and attended remedial classes up to standard two. He could write his name and address, but was very slow. He often mixed up letters and numbers. He felt very bad about not being able to do everything, seeing that he was in the upholstery business. His parents handled his documents. He wanted to improve his reading, writing and numeracy in order to perform better at work. He was also

interested in promotion.

Learner H

She is 47 years old and left school in Standard 1. She could

not attend school further as they moved from place to place.

She reads with great difficulty and practically has to spell out each word. She

pays her own accounts, with the help of her son as her husband is illiterate.

She relies on her neighbor for assistance with documents. She does her own

shopping and can recognise prices. She wants to be able to write and speak

more fluently and needs help with bookkeeping that she does for the church.

She is a very determined learner, who wants to attain certain goals for herself.

Learner I

He is 55 years of age and never attended school. They lived on a farm and

could not attend school as it was too far. He has four children and standard 2

is the highest they have passed. He describes poverty as:

Wanneer n mens nie geld het nie.

(When a person does not have money

He pays his accounts with the help of friends and family. With travelling he

says that he is accustomed to using certain routes only for fear of getting lost.

His wife, who is literate does the shopping and handles any personal

documents. He can only write his name and recognise certain other details. He says that he decided to attend classes as:

> Dit word al moeiliker om vandag om deur die lewe te gaan sonder skool oor die weg te kom.
>
> It becomes more difficult today to go through life without any schooling)

Learner J

She is 65 and one of the eldest learners. She has never set foot inside a school.

She has one daughter on whom she relied for everything for most of her life.

She was taken out of school to help her parents. She describes poverty as:

> As jy nie genoeg geld verdien om kos of klere of n huis te kan bekostig nie.Jy is ook arm as jy nie skool gegaan het nie.
>
> (If you do not have enough money to buy clothes or food or a house. A person is poor if you have never attended school)

She cannot read or write, but has a tremendous amount of experience. She works as a domestic and lives in an informal settlement. She depends on her daughter, but also asks for assistance whenever she needs it.

CASE STUDIES: AFTER THE INTERVENTION

Learner F

This learner was very dependent on her husband. During her attendance of the literacy classes her husband passed away. She remarked that if she had not attended the classes she would have been absolutely lost. Because she could read and write , she was able to handle her affairs after her husband's death. Although she needed assistance with the arrangement, she was able to sign important documents.

She started reading library books and Afrikaans newspapers. Although she is still very slow, her progress is well.

She has grown on the personal level as we have seen with the death of her husband. She now had to take over whereas he did everything in the past.
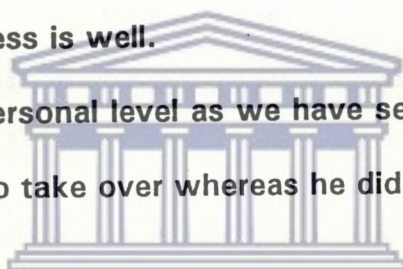
Learner G

He can read and understand and fill in a form. Although his work does not require reading and writing, he has improved on these skills. Doing upholstery work, he wanted to do mathematics, especially measuring. He has become quite good with calculations.

When he entered the programme he was a shy person because he attended a remedial class. He would never speak in front of any group. Since attending the literacy classes he has developed some confidence and has also made new

friends. He would now gladly say something to the group. He loves organising

for events and has also assisted in transporting learners as he is able to drive.

His parents is very proud that their son has developed so much in a short space

of time. He is also very proud of himself and says:

> Life has new meaning for me. I always thought that there were
> something wrong with me because I was in a remedial class, but
> I am just as normal as anyone else.

Learner H

Her aim was to read and write more effectively. She can read and write more

fluently since attending classes. She has written a letter to the head of the

Prison Services in Cape Town and is very proud of herself. She has also learnt

to work with figures well and can now make a much better job of her

bookkeeping for the church. She has also learnt to do the banking of money

and has become very familiar with the workings of the auto teller machines.

She can now also teach her husband who is illiterate.

Learner I

He can now read basic words and knows the alphabet. Although he cannot yet

read and comprehend difficult pieces he can help himself. He still asks for

assistance with difficult documents. He is able to put his literacy skills to

practise

at work. He says :

Ek kan beter die mense van God verduidelik vandat ek klasse bywoon.

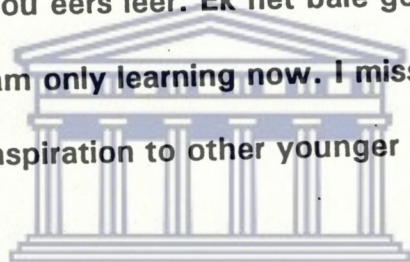(Since attending classes I can explain the work of God much better to people).

Learner J

For this learner to have been illiterate all her life and now writing her own personal particulars has meant a great deal. Although she is very slow, she is happy with her progress. Being able to read and write basic things has given new meaning to her life. She says:

Ek is spyt dat ek nou eers leer. Ek het baie gemis.

(I am sorry that I am only learning now. I missed out a lot)

She has really been an inspiration to other younger learners, especially when things gets tough.