

**A DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF  
ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION (ABLE) PROVISION  
IN BARBADOS: INDIVIDUAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND NATIONAL GOALS  
1990 - 1993**

**By  
Elizabeth Veronica Best**

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**Department of Educational Psychology and  
Special Educational Needs (EPSN)  
Institute of Education  
University of London**



## ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to describe the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) in Barbados and examine the extent to which ABLE provision has been guided by the goals of participants, institutions which offered it and the government which required it. The empirical research study which constitutes the basis of the dissertation is located within the general field of adult education and the particular area of adult literacy. The data is related to both fields by a review of the literature on ABLE theory and practice from international, Caribbean and local perspectives. Focus is placed on the nature of literacy, as has been conveyed by definitions; and values attached to its acquisition, as have been indicated by declarations of its potential benefits.

The descriptive component of the dissertation includes profiles of participants and practice of three ABLE programmes operating in Barbados between 1990 and 1993. The descriptive data was obtained from the responses of students and tutors to structured questionnaires and informal discussions; and from classroom observations made by the researcher from the perspectives of both passive and participant observer. Participants' profiles include personal details; information about their motivation, beliefs, attitudes, expectations and previous learning experiences; and the outputs they claim for the provision. The Profiles of practice cover instructional and interactive aspects of the teaching-learning process including the selection of materials, methods and strategies; type of classroom management and the nature of the relationship among participants.

The evaluative component comprises an analysis of the data within a framework of national, institutional and personal goals, a focus informed by the importance which educators have attached to goal-setting in educational provision. The main findings of the research are that in most cases, local ABLE provision was not informed by the goals of the three interests and that ABLE practice often appeared to be directed towards outputs opposed to those goals. The main conclusion is that the impetus of the ABLE programmes was not goals but an internal dynamic informed by local attitudes to education in general and beliefs about literacy in particular.

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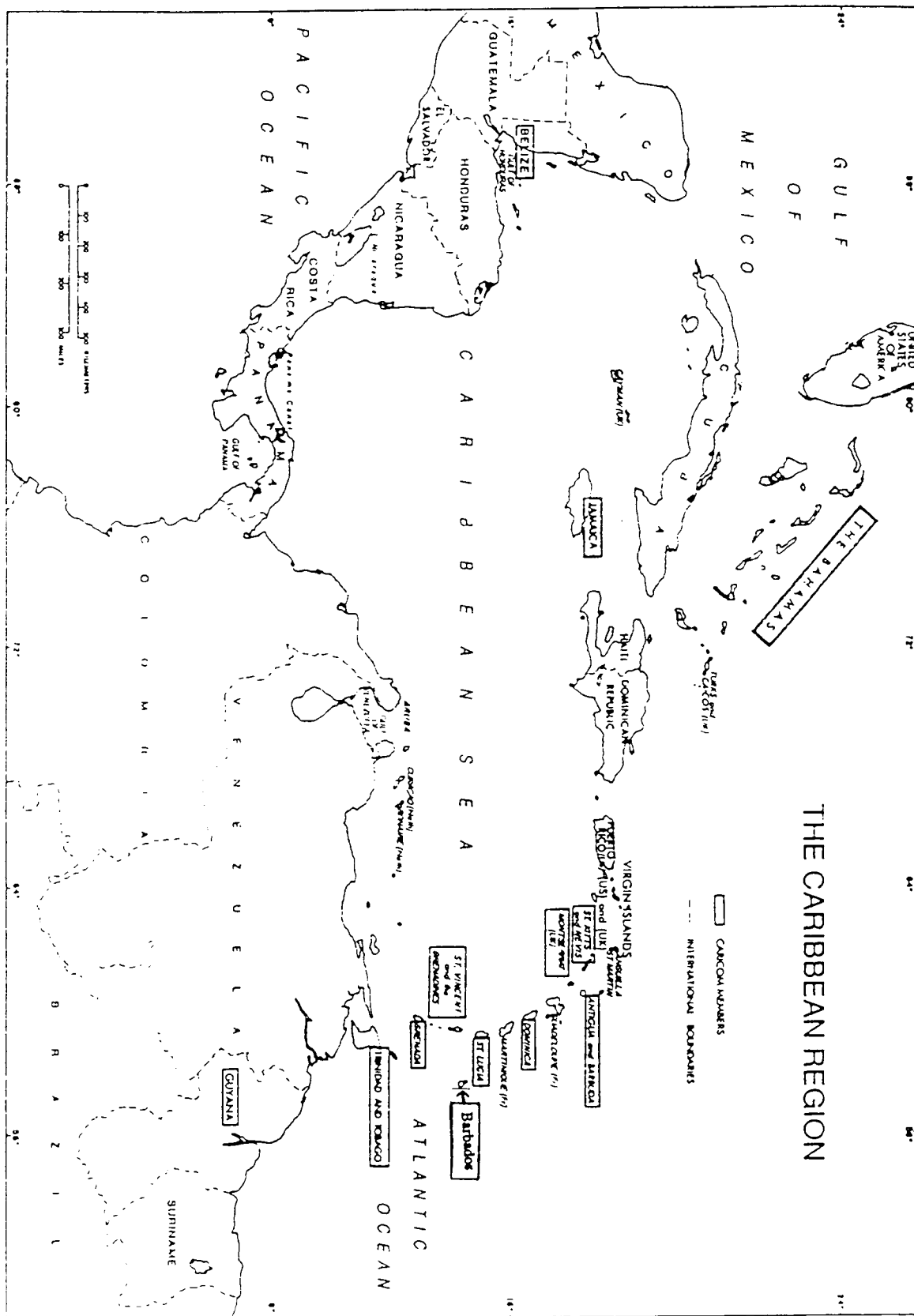
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABLE	Adult Basic Literacy Education
AEU	Adult Education Unit (St.Vincent)
ALBS	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills
BAEA	Barbados Adult Educators Association
BAPTO	Barbados Popular Theatre Organisation
BAR	Barbados Association of Reading
CARCAE	Caribbean Regional Council of Adult Education
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARNEID	Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation and Development
CEDEE	Centro Dominicana de Estudios de Educacion (Dominican Centre of Education)
CPE	Centre of Popular Education (Grenada)
DLP	Democratic Labour Party (Barbados)
DOMCAE	Dominica Council for Adult Education
EWLP	Experimental World Literacy Programme
FE	Further Education
GIS	Government Information Service (Barbados)
ICAE	International Council of Adult Education
ILY	International Literacy Year
IPK	Inisiativa Particular Korsou (Curacao)
ITFL	International Task Force on Literacy
JAMAL	Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Learning
NAME	National Association for Mass Education (St.Vincent)
NDRF	National Development and Research Foundation (St.Lucia)
ONAAC	The Office National d'Alphabetisation et d'Action Communautaire (National Office of Literacy and Community Action)
PRG	People's Revolutionary Government
PROMEDLAC	Major Project In The Field of Education In Latin America and the Caribbean
SVUT	St.Vincent Union of Teachers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation
UWI	University of West Indies
UWISOCS	University of The West Indies School Of Continuing Studies
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association

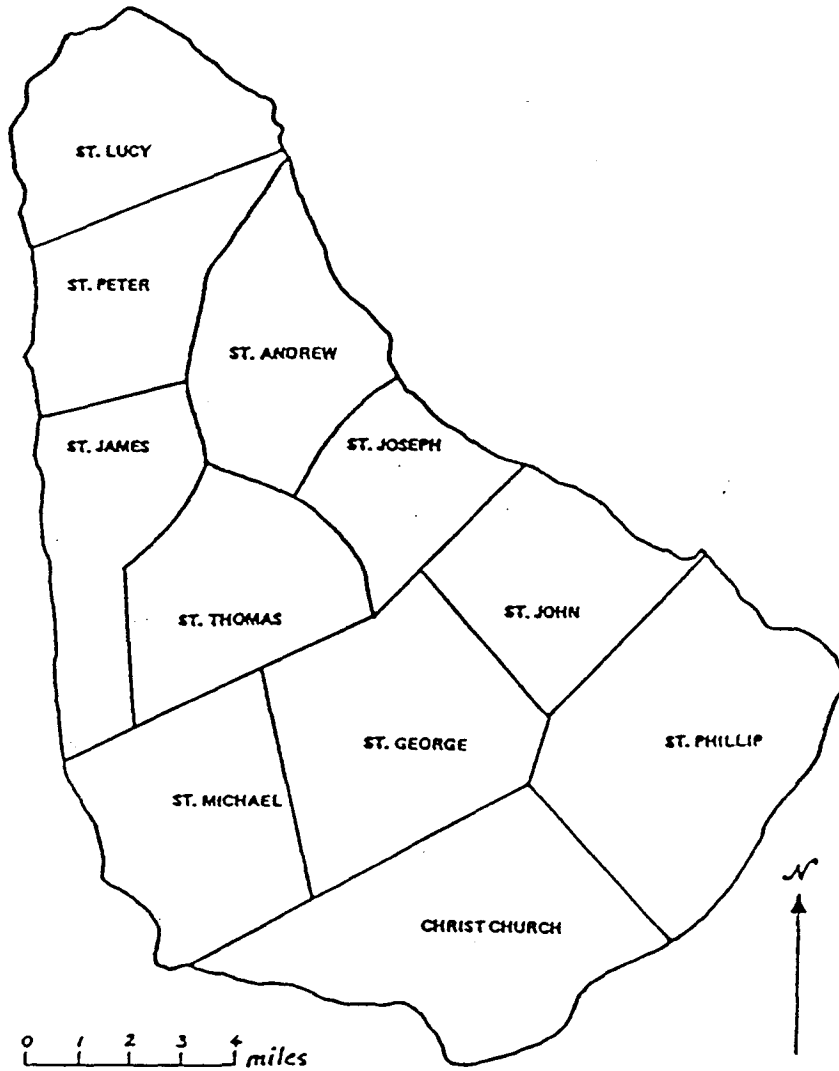
Map 1.

Map of The Caribbean Showing Barbados in Relation to Other Territories



Map 2.

Map of Barbados Showing The Parish Boundaries



## INTRODUCTION

In Barbados, when we speak of adults who cannot read or write we refer to "those who can't dance". In a nation where dance is integral to the culture, that description suggests that non-literate adults are not in step with the majority of their fellow citizens. It also assumes that they could create awkward situations for themselves and others and it implies that they are therefore likely to be left to "dance" alone much to everyone's amusement. That local attitude to adult illiteracy is reflected in the claim made by educators and commentators in the international community since the 1940's, but was given more force during International Literacy Year (ILY) 1990, by the claim that illiteracy dehumanises and marginalises "those who can't dance" and thus blocks the development of the person and the nation. It was against the background of those claims for illiteracy, counter claims for literacy and an interest in the type of ABLE provision that would be offered to adults to effect their personal development and that of the nation that the study of the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) in Barbados was undertaken.

The focus on basic literacy in relation to adults in Barbados was prompted by public expressions of concern about apparent manifestations of a literacy problem at all levels of the education system and among both employed and unemployed people in the community. For example, an impact evaluation survey carried out among secondary and post secondary students in 1986 had suggested that the rate of functional literacy might be 80.1 per cent which, though high in comparison to rates cited for other Caribbean countries and some industrial countries, was much lower than the traditionally quoted 98.2 percent. At the community level, there appeared to be a large number of adults who could not read or write well, or at all, as indicated by their response to the call-in radio programmes broadcast as part of the local contribution to literacy awareness during International Literacy Year (ILY). The business sector had expressed dissatisfaction with the level of functional literacy demonstrated by secondary and tertiary graduates already working or seeking employment in that sector and the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, located in Barbados, had voiced concern about the level of functional literacy among its undergraduates.

Paradoxically, the general speculation about a local literacy problem co-existed with people's knowledge of the range of educational provision being offered and conflicted with the general acceptance of a 98.2 per cent literacy rate for Barbados. It seemed that the availability of universal and free primary education as well as equal access to free secondary and post secondary education warranted such a level of literacy. More high school students than in previous times seemed to be graduating with higher grades in more than five O'level subjects; there were reports of success among school dropouts who had opted to take their exams at private O'level institutions; more pre-schoolers were being educated; and more adults were taking advantage of the number and range of evening courses made available by various institutions. Altogether, more schooling seemed to be taking place in the 1980's than at any other time in the island's history. Since many Barbadians generally equated schooling with education, and to many, being educated implied being literate, the awareness of the range of available educational provision seemed to have precluded any serious challenge of the reliability or validity of the high literacy rate.

The above contradictions seemed to have made it difficult for people to accept that the problem of illiteracy was very serious for Barbados. That difficulty was reflected in a statement made by one education officer that the situation regarding literacy in Barbados might not have been marked by a problem of widespread adult illiteracy but by instances of lapsed literacy, and therefore there might have been no need for major remedial efforts. Nevertheless, some individuals and non-governmental organisations seemed to have thought that the literacy problem in Barbados might have been more serious than it had been thought to be by most people, including officials of the Ministry of Education so they responded to the apparent problem by offering ABLE provision. The Ministry of Education also became involved in literacy awareness programmes run by The University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies (UWISOCS) and in introductory workshops for adult facilitators organised by UWISOCS in association with the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA). Government involvement also extended to collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in supporting UWISOCS with the implementation of ABLE provision at the Glendairy Prison. Of the nine ABLE programmes located in 1991 by the researcher, only three were organised and fully

operational. They have been used as the main sources of data for the research study discussed in the following seven chapters which are summarised below.

Chapter one locates Barbados geographically on the map of the world and links it historically and culturally to Africa and Europe. The latter associations are shown to be relevant to the research study in terms of four considerations: (i) the origin of the Barbadian education system as an inheritance from England and the reluctance by local educators to alter practices associated with it; (ii) the origin of the local language, Bajan Dialect as a product of the contact between speakers of African languages and speakers of English during the Period of African Enslavement by the British in Barbados; (iii) the nature of the colonial relationship between Barbados and Britain and its influence in shaping the negative attitudes to Bajan Dialect as a suitable medium of or aid to educational instruction; (iv) a combination of vestiges of African custom and the effects of the colonial experience which informed the unquestioning deference given to authority figures, especially by older people. The links between the above factors and elements of local ABLE provision are discussed in chapter six in the context of inputs to provision from students and tutors.

In chapter two the international background to ABLE provision is discussed as part of the review of a selection of the literature. Much attention is given to the views expressed about the nature of literacy since it is the basic element of ABLE provision. The basic principles of good ABLE practice are identified and it is shown that the concepts of literacy held by providers often conveyed a particular concept of humankind and influenced the type of ABLE provision offered. The place of goals in ABLE provision, as conveyed by the literature, is discussed as part of the observation that the goals informing the provision tended to be linked to the following factors: the providers' political orientation, their views of mankind, and the concepts of literacy promoted. It is suggested that those factors influenced not only which goals informed particular instances of ABLE provision, but also the efforts made to achieve those goals, including the level of government involvement and the degree of success reported by providers.



The Caribbean perspective of ABLE provision is given in chapter three. It is contrasted with the international perspective presented in the previous chapter and the point is made that whereas the discussion about ABLE provision in the international literature concentrated mostly on theoretical issues, the discussion in Caribbean literature focused on the logistics of provision. The difference regarding the orientation of the goals mentioned in both sets of literature is also highlighted. In this chapter a nascent code of good ABLE practice for the Caribbean is distilled from regional literature and it is shown that despite the above differences in focus between regional and extra-regional ABLE providers, the elements of good practice identified for both groups are complementary. Such complementarity is taken to be significant considering that according to the literature, international educators seemed to be moving towards a consensus that there could be no universal standard of literacy or even a common definition of literacy for a particular community but Caribbean providers had actually reached a consensus regarding a common definition of literacy and a common standard of Caribbean ABLE provision, despite inherent diversity among territories in the Region.

Chapter four examines the local context of ABLE provision. In the absence of a clear statement about Government's policy regarding that provision, a picture of the implied policy is deduced from Government documents and statements made by Government officials regarding formal and non-formal education. A brief look is taken of the input made to ABLE provision by the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA) in the form of its advocacy for and provision of training for ABLE facilitators. The ABLE provision discussed in chapters two and three is linked to the discussion of local provision. Finally observations are made with regard to the Government's policy on ABLE provision and these lead into the exploration of the idea that it might not be in the best interest of the Government to have every citizen acquire the level of functional literacy cited in the national goals.

Chapter five traces the development of the research study. Strategies, methods and constructs used for collecting and presenting are identified; the frame of reference chosen for analysing the data is explained and the rationale for their selection is discussed, with regard to both the pilot study and the fieldwork. In addition, the issues,

concepts and emphases which inform the content of the research instruments are linked to the literature reviewed in the preceding three chapters. For the pilot stage, an explanation is given of the process used for exploring the research potential of the topic and setting the parameters of the research study in consideration of the range of issues which that exploration had generated and the constraints of time and resources. Data sources are identified and the significant events of the piloting exercise are highlighted. Descriptions are given of the main activities of the fieldwork stage, which comprised the conducting of unstructured interviews; scribing answers to questionnaires for adult students who could not read or write; and recording and analysing class room observations made from the point of view of the researcher as both passive and participant observer. The chapter ends with a brief description of the format used to sort the research data and a discussion of the framework of input-process-output used for the final data presentation and analysis.

Chapter six is divided into three parts, each focusing on one of the three ABLE programmes offered by the organised literacy centres operating in Barbados between 1991 and 1993: a community-based centre, a prison-based centre and a church-based centre. There is a difference in the amount of data presented for each programme, owing to the limited access which the researcher had to students and sites but there is no difference in the range of data discussed, thus the same format of categories, presented in the same sequence is used to present data for each programme. An overall description of national ABLE provision is given based on data gathered from the profiles of students and tutors in each programme and then it is analyzed within the context of individual, institutional and national goals. The chapter ends with the findings of that analysis.

The summary and conclusion of the research study are presented in chapter seven. These are based on an examination of the general ABLE provision described and analyzed in chapter six. Issues raised in discussing ABLE provision in chapter six as well as those which emerged during the review of literature on ABLE theory and practice in chapters two, three and four are put forward as the bases of future research. Finally, a critical look is taken of the research study in terms of its limitations and the contribution it has made to the field of ABLE provision.

In the absence of any comprehensive, documented information on ABLE provision in Barbados, this dissertation is the first attempt to provide such documentation. It is therefore potentially useful in four ways: as a source of new information which provides a description of local ABLE practice and an initial evaluation of that provision in terms of the goals of the participants, institutions and the Government; as a source of suggestions for current practice; and as an indicator of future issues to be researched regarding the area of ABLE provision. This document is also useful in a broader context. With the exception of the few writers who refer to the literacy programme initiated by the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Learning (JAMAL), much of the international literature on ABLE provision which originates outside of the Caribbean is written as though there were no ABLE initiatives in the Region. By providing a perspective on ABLE provision in Barbados, this dissertation is a contribution to current ABLE research in the Caribbean and a deposit in the international data bank of information on ABLE provision.

## CHAPTER 1.

### LOCAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

Barbados, the most easterly island in the Caribbean archipelago,<sup>1</sup> entered modern history in 1627 with a transplanted population of eighty Britons and nine Africans. By 1668, the population comprised 20,000 Britons and 40,000 Africans, members of a slave society in which the Africans were the chattel of the British. As such the island has always been seen as an interesting paradox: being most African and yet most British. Physical differences between the two races justified the exercise of social inequity which was the basis of the Slave society. They also informed the colonial code which maintained that racial differences indicated the existence of similar differences in "mental, intellectual and corporeal faculties" between the two groups (Watson, 1992:60). From that perspective the African was considered inferior to the Briton as a human and therefore uneducable. It is against this social background that general education was introduced to the island. The nature of that education is discussed below.

#### **1.1. Origins: Restricted Provision**

Unlike the other islands of the Caribbean, which at different times in their history experienced various forms of control by the Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese, Barbados sustained a monogamous relationship with the British, represented mainly by the English but with a liberal sprinkling of Irish and Scots. As the Barbadian society was based on the plantation system, interests focused on profit-making for the British planter class. Matters of schooling were not a priority so no education system was established. Local schooling was provided by private tutors for the children of the planter aristocracy and the wealthier members of the middle class. Generally, the wealthy sent their children to public schools and universities in England. Regarding the extent of private schooling available, Watson (1992) notes that between 1750 and 1816 there were about 5,000 British children to be schooled and there were 46 masters registered to tutor privately.

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<sup>1</sup>See maps on pages 12 and 13

There however seemed to have been some unregistered establishments which also offered boarding and a few private schools specialising in languages such as Latin, Spanish, French and Italian but mostly for men.

The "Poor Whites"<sup>2</sup> (the British who had been brought to the island as indentured or contractual labour) were excluded from any provision above basic education on the basis that education of a higher level was "dangerous" for people who were destined for a poor station in life. Their education was provided by vestry schools which offered a curriculum comprising reading the psalms, saying prayers and engaging in spinning, knitting and "plain work" (Watson, 1992:113). Additional schooling was provided for them through bequests which established Free Schools. The curriculum of those schools was reading, writing, ciphering, Latin and Greek but was offered initially to boys.

When education was finally extended to the Africans it came from the Church primarily as a means of facilitating the Africans' studying of the Bible, an exercise which was expected to make them good Christians and less inclined to rebel against the social practices of the British. Even then that educational provision seemed to have been offered by default, for according to one historian (Bacchus 1990), it was the clergy's failure to raise the standard of the White population that led them to turn their attention to the religious education of the enslaved Africans. The goal of that education, nevertheless, was to impress upon the enslaved community "the great practical duties of piety, mercy, justice, temperance, charity, sobriety, industry, veracity, honesty, fidelity, and obedience to their masters; contentment, patience, and resignation to the will of Heaven" (Watson, 1992:9). The above situation suggests that education was used by the Churchmen as a tool of self defence for when the Anglican priests and other church officers joined the British Colonists in 1645, they did so as an integral part of the British planter society, not to cater to the religious or incidental educational needs of the slaves.

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<sup>2</sup>In this dissertation, colour terms used to refer to race are written with an initial upper case letter to indicate the predominant cultural and racial orientation and not mere colour. If the term is included in a quotation, the writer's style is retained.

In the 1650's, the Quakers, the first non-conformists to visit the island made some tentative efforts to offer Christian education to the various African communities on the island but the effort was not sustained. The education of the African population was given some attention by the Anglican Church 1711 when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts took over the Codrington estates to carry out the will of Christopher Codrington. That will had stipulated that a portion of the Codrington estates be set aside for the erection of a college to train Christian ministers and christianize the Africans on Codrington's plantations. The College for higher learning was established and some basic educational provision was offered to the Africans but no extensive schooling was initiated for the African population until the arrival of the Moravians in September 1765. Their activity among the enslaved population was met with much hostility from planters and Anglican Churchmen so they were not very forthright in their efforts to promote education for the enslaved Africans. The Methodists, who arrived in 1826, were more open in challenging the planters' repressive methods of control and neglect of the educational needs of the African community. They were subsequently persecuted by the planters and members of the White upper and middle classes and did not achieve much.

The Moravian's strategy of implementing moderate provision and avoiding outright advocacy paid off, for by the time the Emancipation Act was passed in 1834, they had consolidated their position within the White Barbadian society and were able to offer basic education to the African population in their three chapels. That provision was in the form of Sunday School for a general audience and daily schooling for infants. The main method of instruction used in those schools was rote learning, based on a system developed by Captain Bell (Watson, 1979). Two such Sunday schools existed in 1812 and by 1827 there were eight (ibid).

More attention was paid to the education of the African population in the wake of intense lobbying from abolitionists in England in the late 1820's and early 1830's. That activity resulted in the Anglican Church finally establishing two dioceses in the Caribbean to cater to the religious education of the enslaved Africans. The diocese in Barbados, under the direction of Bishop William Hart Coleridge is said to have added

a revolutionary spirit of mission and religious instruction to the Anglican Church and with it came the creation of Anglican Church Schools which later expanded the curriculum beyond religious instruction to include reading, writing and arithmetic. By 1844, over seven thousand children and adults were enrolled in fifty six church schools (24 Anglican, 4 moravian and 4 Wesleyan) and 149 private schools (Carter, 1990). Educational provision was primarily basic literacy skills taught at Saturday and Sunday schools and evening classes. It may be said then that initial basic literacy education (ABLE) provision in Barbados was offered simultaneously as formal education for both children and adults.

Support from the Colonial Government for public education, most of which was then basic education came in the form of grant of £750 which was made available in 1846. It was increased to £3,000 by 1850. Over the next fifty years, the grant was gradually increased, a full-time school inspector was appointed, and provision for secondary education was established. By 1890 four education acts had been passed to set up a system of education on the island based on the one operating in England. That system, still basically intact, was last amended in 1981. Schooling offered in the late nineteenth century was, however, restricted to the primary level for Africans and members of the British lower class.

Some White fathers educated their Coloured children and some enterprising Black and Coloured parents, through thrift and some assistance from grateful White bosses managed to educate their children up to the secondary level. By 1966 when Barbados was granted political independence from Britain, various progressive changes had been initiated by a legislature, which by then was dominated by the first educated Black and Mixed-Raced Barbadians. During the Slavery Period, the British in Barbados strove for administrative autonomy in the local legislature while maintaining social links with England in their efforts to re-create Britain in Barbados. When the legislature became dominated by the children of the former enslaved Africans, they upheld that political tradition as well as the social and cultural ones, for like their British predecessors, they aimed to preserve attitudes and types of behaviour believed to be British, and generally rejected behaviours or cultural aspects associated with Africa.

## 1.2. Educational Provision: Convention Versus Exigence

Ideals passed on by those early leaders, precepts promoted by the Church and vestiges of the experiences of enslavement and colonisation have generally been linked to social behaviour which are reflected in some local educational practices. Aspects of that heritage which are relevant to this discussion are the apparent veneration of the "Queen's English" by older Barbadians, especially those educated in traditional grammar schools, preoccupation with rules and structures, the great importance given to social class, extreme deference given to authority figures and an apparently ingrained conservatism. In the school system, those influences have been manifested in the expression of negative attitudes to Bajan Dialect which ensured that it was banned from the classroom as an aid to instruction and discouraged in the school compound, as the medium of casual conversation. Those influences have also been reflected in the predominantly authoritarian style of teaching in which teachers were always assumed to be right and the "good" students were not expected to question or challenge them on anything (Barker, 1991). Such influences have especially been evident in the aloofness which informed the way teachers related to students as well as the manner in which their school principals and officials from the Ministry of education related to the teachers.

The above connections between the colonial experience, the traditional education system and certain attitudes and characteristics of some persons educated in that education system seem to have been supported by the conclusions of a recent survey carried out among the Permanent Secretaries of the Caribbean (Una Paul, 1991). Undertaken as part of an effort to diagnose the administrative and managerial capability of Ministries of Education in the Eastern Caribbean States and Barbados, that survey is relevant to this dissertation on two bases: the Permanent Secretaries were seen as products of the traditional educational system mentioned above and their positions identified them as managers of the post colonial educational systems in the Region which were expect to meet very different educational goals from those targeted by the traditional educational system. For example, traditional education prepared people to conform to a set way of doing things at a time when social and political changes were gradual. It also encouraged people to appreciate the lifestyle and aspirations of upper class society, branded as elitist by some local commentators (Layne, 1992), but made them disposed to accepting much



less. On the contrary, the post colonial system required people to be prepared for drastic and sudden changes; to be willing to initiate change when necessary; to be bold enough to challenge established but non-progressive ideas and behaviours; and to be eager to find innovative alternatives to traditional answers if the latter proved to be ineffective. It also required that people be willing to claim their human right to become what ever they wanted to be and to have the opportunity to strive for whatever they desired.

The survey suggested that Permanent Secretaries in their management of educational provision tended to conform to the rules and regulations of the Public Service rather than risk innovative measures; they assisted in drafting policies but did not take the initiative to make important policy decisions; they tended to respond to changes and events in the their line of duty rather than to anticipate and initiate such changes. Finally, it was suggested that they did not exercise their autonomy as executive officers but rather waited to be offered opportunities. The results of the above survey are significant when considered in relation to the educational goals cited above and the needs of the post colonial Caribbean societies such as Barbados. For example, the broad goals expressed by the Barbados Government in the 1986 Throne Speech suggested that the Government wanted the educational product to be different from the one produced by the colonial system. Furthermore, the statement, quoted below, suggested that the Government was aware that new educational practices would be required to achieve those goals.

Priority must be accorded to preparing the people of Barbados socially, intellectually, physically and morally to meet the challenges of life in today's world. To this end, special attention will be paid to the structure, content and management of the systems and policies for education and culture (Ministry of Education, 1986).

One question arising from the above discussion is whether it is possible for managers with the characteristics listed above to direct an education system which is supposed to encourage the development of opposite characteristics among students. Since the system can be self perpetuating and most teachers have been educated under it, the same question might be asked about teachers at all levels within the system. With regard to adults with literacy problems, the argument might be forwarded that if they were

educated in a system informed by conservative thinking, allegiance to traditional concepts of educational intervention and a general resistance to structural change, the education provision offered to them the second time around should be different. It might be further argued that if the goals of the modern education system are meant to effect different patterns of thinking and different modes of behaviour from those promoted by the traditional system, the educational practices employed to pursue the goals of the modern system ought not to be the same as those employed to effect the goals of the traditional system and should inform all forms of educational provision including ABLE provision.

Regarding the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE), which is the main concern of this dissertation, it could be expected, on the basis of the above arguments, that the ABLE provision offered under a post colonial educational system would differ from the provision which most of those adults might have received as children. If one accepts that the history of African Barbadians as autonomous beings began in 1834 with the passing of the Emancipation Act then one might argue that the development and progress of the African Barbadian has been made possible mainly by education. That might account for education being promoted as the solution for most social, political and spiritual problems in the country. It is not surprising therefore, that one solution offered for dealing with the apparent problem of adult illiteracy, a problem within the educational system itself, has been the provision of more education. On the basis that the provision was offered as a response to an apparent national need, it could be expected that such provision would be guided by the educational goals set by the Government which has acknowledged the need for such provision. In later chapters, these issues are discussed in more detail. That discussion is further informed by a review of selected international, Regional and local literature on ABLE Provision in chapters two, three and four below.

## CHAPTER 2

### ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

This is the first of three chapters which examine the literature on the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE). This chapter reviews the literature originating outside of the Caribbean. It focuses on literacy as it has been defined by international organisations, governments and individual commentators and looks at the implications which those definitions and the ideas informing them have for ABLE provision in terms of good practice.

#### 2.1. Introduction

Adult basic literacy education is confirmed as a field of study in its own right judging from the numerous individual and collaborative publications, conferences, courses and research projects which make it the central issue of concern, the range of methods, materials, strategies and general expertise which have been developed to facilitate its acquisition and the numerous concerns and issues it has raised in the areas of psychology, anthropology and related disciplines. However, as a field of practice, adult basic literacy education cannot be divorced from the established areas of general literacy in formal education or adult education, for it shares the essential subject matter of the former and caters to some of the clientele of the latter. Moreover, since the phenomenon of print now impacts on the lives of all peoples of the world, adult basic literacy is accepted as a requirement in nearly all areas of life in those communities where the use of print is integral to the management of public and personal business.

This chapter reviews a selection of literature on the theory and practice of adult basic literacy education and explores some of the main issues in the field. Those issues which have been highlighted include the definition of literacy; the influence of inadequate definitions on ABLE provision, especially regarding the goals it was meant to achieve; and the extensive changes in application, value and perspective which have emerged as a result of the widening parameters of the concept. Besides serving to place this dissertation among other studies of adult basic literacy, this review provides the international background against which its Barbadian context can be viewed, not for

validation, but for comparison. This point is made in acceptance of the fact that any type of educational provision should be evaluated in relation to the objectives set for that provision and should not be judged from the perspectives adopted by other programmes, no matter how successful the latter have been. However, it is also acknowledged that the efficiency of any programme may be enhanced by strategies used in other programmes no matter how much the programmes might differ. Of particular relevance to the research discussed in chapter six below are those works in the literature which discuss the relationship between ABLE provision and development, both national and personal, those which explore the logistics of ABLE provision and those which seek to distil elements of good ABLE practice from the various experiences of adult education.

In the literature, issues relating to adult literacy education are usually discussed under the headings of adult literacy, adult basic education (ABE) or adult literacy and basic skills (ALBS). The former heading subsumes the latter and whereas the former might embrace all areas of education presumed to be needed by adults, and need not include basic literacy, the latter is usually specifically concerned with the acquisition of literacy skills and the application of those skills in life. In this review, a further distinction is made between adult basic literacy education (ABLE) and adult literacy on the basis that the former is primarily concerned with an adult's initiation into the use of print whereas the latter is concerned with the various levels at which adults can manipulate print, especially within specific subject areas (Mallow, 1991; Grant Hennings, 1991) after they have been initiated. This distinction is important for it defines the range of literature considered in this review and limits the issues which will be discussed.

## **2.2. Defining Literacy: Widening the Parameters**

Although illiteracy is the problem with which the field of adult basic literacy and school literacy is primarily concerned, it is literacy on which the literature has focused. In fact, one might say that most of the issues in the field of adult basic literacy have arisen from the concept of literacy held by providers and policy makers. It is therefore necessary to examine concepts of literacy which have been expressed in definitions, conveyed in policies and applied in practice before examining the issues with which adult basic literacy education is expected to cope.

Given the diversity of human interests and experiences, it is expected that the definitions of any concept will vary, sometimes very widely, depending on the frames of reference used. Like individuals, Governments and international organisations hold varied and changing conceptions which are often reflected in their actions. That tendency has been demonstrated in the many revised definitions, shifts in focus and extensions made to the parameters of literacy by international agencies, institutions and governments worldwide. To monitor those changes as part of the process of examining ABLE provision in Barbados is therefore not a mere academic exercise, but a means of highlighting possible perspectives from which both illiteracy and literacy may be viewed and of informing various approaches to the local provision of adult basic literacy education.

The conceptual shifts referred to above and discussed in more detail later may be justified when one notes that although literacy has been defined and re-defined, it continues to defy adequate definition while demanding it. The importance of having a proper definition is supported in a collaborative work by De Castell, Luke and MacLennan (1986:11) who maintained that:

Only when habitual and unexamined definitions of a problem are made conscious and their inadequacies exposed can appropriate responses to the problem be substituted for inappropriate ones in a manner that allows positive change to take place.

One unexamined assumption conveyed in the definitions of literacy by writers on adult basic literacy is that whatever literacy is, illiteracy is not. Some writers have questioned that assumption (Fisher, 1980:99) and suggested that there might be areas between those extremes that need to be examined. One might also argue that the two concepts, rather than being presented as extreme ends of a literate continuum, could be viewed as parallel states, each with its own continuum. From that perspective it might be discovered that persons categorised as having a particular literate status on either continuum actually share the same literate status. For example, a person who is now considered semi-literate (having the ability to manipulate only some simple texts) may also be considered semi-illiterate, based on the same criteria. The question is what determines which literate continuum is chosen to discuss that person's abilities. That question of whether an

illiterate person was really just a person who was not literate was posed by The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and international policy makers following the failure of early attempts at mass literacy provision, conducted prior to and shortly after the establishment of UNESCO in 1946 (Van't Rood, 1988). That the question was only then being asked suggests that the literacy initiatives operating then might have been implemented on the assumption that literacy was just "the ability to read and write" and it was good thing in itself.

The response to the above question by educational sociologists was that literacy should not have been seen as just a matter of being able to read and write, but one of being able to "read and write what", a suggestion that literacy ought to be linked to a specific purpose. In their contribution to the ensuing discussion, William Gray (1957) and Daniel Lerner (1958) identified the need to focus on the functional and social contexts in which literacy was expected to be applied, thus contributing to the general thesis that if those contexts of use were ignored, literacy would be contained in a vacuum, resulting in the "backsliding" of many neo-literates into illiteracy. Whereas Gray posited the idea that the environment of the person who needed to become literate was the crucial factor, Lerner stressed the need for the development of a "mental mobility" within those persons that would make them favourably disposed to change and willing to apply their skills for adapting to that change. The difference between the two positions may be described as a difference in focus, with Gray's focus being on the physical environment and Lerner's being on the internal or psychological environment.

Sharon (1973) shows that the USA Army had come to the same conclusion as Gray and Lerner that literacy had to be acquired for some purpose. Thus, whereas the US soldiers recruited to serve in World War II were considered to be literate based on their ability to read and write at school, they were categorised as being "functionally illiterate" by the USA Army. In the context of the USA Army they were considered "functionally literate" only if they "could understand written instructions necessary for conducting basic military functions and tasks" (ibid:148). The term "functional literacy" coined then, has since been used globally for its utilitarian element has been reflected in most definitions of literacy promoted by various governments and international organisations.

For example it was that functional element mentioned above and the potential transforming nature of literacy which were highlighted at the Montreal conference in 1960. Discussed under the theme of "Adult Education in A changing World", literacy was promoted as a phenomenon to be understood not in isolation but in consideration of the particular social contexts in which people were to use it. Furthermore, it was presented not just as another set of useful skills to be learnt but as a tool which could empower learners to improve their lives and change their communities. Illiteracy, on the other hand, was associated with the under-development of both individual and community and it was seen as a barrier to a society's entry into the modern world of industrial development and technology. As knowledge and technical skills were the commodities being traded on the international market, their attainment was the essential goal of ABLE programmes.

Regarding the changes in ideas about what constituted literacy it is appropriate to focus on UNESCO because the policies and the concepts promoted by that organisation greatly influenced the educational policies of both 'developing' and 'developed' countries. The following examples reflect the conceptual shifts in the definition of literacy over four decades.

A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group (Gray, 1956:24).

A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all the activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group or community. (UNESCO Committee for the Standardisation of Educational Statistics, 1971:144)

A functionally literate person is one who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading and writing and calculation for his own and his community's development. (UNESCO, Compendium of Statistics on Illiteracy, 1988:30).

The shift in focus was from a view of literacy as a composite of reading and writing, which were skills and knowledge to be applied, to one which suggested that a person had to have other knowledge and skills besides the ability to read and write in order to be considered literate. Finally, it was implied that in order to be considered literate, a person had to be able to read, write, calculate and have the ability to use those skills not only in specific and personal situations but also in wider, more general and public contexts. Thus literacy, once seen as an essential acquisition on its own, had become firmly linked to the individual's public responsibility. That is, people were not only expected to function in society with the aid of print but was also expected to use that medium in making a contribution to their society.

The changes in perspective cited in the above definitions have been connected to three time periods: 1945-1964; 1965-1974; 1975 and beyond, constituting "international literacy trends" (Lind and Johnston (1986:19). In the first period, the perception of literacy as a skill to be acquired for its own sake was changed to one which held literacy to be a means of achieving economic development, an achievement expected to be marked by "personal development and community progress" (Gray, 1956:17). Literacy was next conceived of a facility still useful for economic development but one which was best acquired through the functions which constituted the learner's life. The third conceptualisation of literacy was as a humanising facility which had to be acquired not only to facilitate one's performance of various life functions but also to ensure a place in one community.

With each change in the concept of basic literacy came an apparently new approach to its provision, in terms of the overall type of programme delivery and the methods used for educational intervention. It is evident that countries differed in their choice of both, nevertheless, they still seemed to maintain a link between the concept of literacy they held and the delivery system they chose for facilitating its acquisition. For instance when literacy was seen as a combination of reading and writing as two skills needed for their own sake the methods used to facilitate adult basic literacy education were the traditional methods of teaching used with primary children. Words were taught in isolation, larger language units were used specifically to encourage familiarity with the graphic system



used by the language and the teacher was in charge of the learning process. The early UNESCO programmes (Lind and Johnston, 1986) and the experience of individual countries such as Indonesia between 1945 and 1970 (Napitupulu, 1990) testify to the failure of programmes based on that conception of literacy. The conclusion seemed to be that language-bound, teacher-focused and child-oriented methods of facilitating adult literacy education were not very effective.

The 'modern' conception of literacy cited in the first of the "international literacy trends" above (1945-64) typically influenced a delivery system connected with work. Given the commercial bias of modern industrial countries and the attempts by other countries to follow their example, it was expected that literacy provision conveyed via the avenue of income generating activities would be successful. The programmes of that type sponsored by UNESCO were the "Fundamental Education" programmes which did not achieve the goals set for them. Their failure was attributed to many administrative problems (Lind and Johnson, 1986), but it must still be noted that despite the potential financial benefits they promised, they did not generate much motivation among the adult students. Those goals had been primarily focused on the needs of the countries and had been set with the apparent expectation that the benefits derived from achieving them would have made it possible for individuals to achieve their personal goals.

The concept of literacy as a functional facility which prevailed in the second period (1965-1974) was, like the others, marked by a specific mode of delivery, a functional approach, but one based in community activity. That approach was introduced by UNESCO in association with The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the form of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP). The economic purpose of literacy was still accepted but it was expected to be realised through daily community tasks which the adult learners performed. Through the operation of the EWLP, UNESCO was able to test the efficiency of functional literacy as a tool for combatting mass illiteracy which was seen as a hindrance to economic development. The main goals of that programme, according to the Secretary General of the United Nations, were to provide information on how literacy related to social and economic development; make sure that the programme had a considerable impact on economic

development during the Development Decade in the countries where projects were to be conducted; and prepare the way for an eventual World Campaign for the Eradication of Mass Illiteracy (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976).

The rationale for promoting the economic potential of literacy had been based on the assumption that "the population groups working in fields of economic priority would have the greatest need to become literate" and that "the motivation problem [associated with previous programmes] would therefore not constitute an obstacle" (Lind and Johnston, 1986:21). The extent of how confident the providers might have been of achieving literacy through that method may be inferred from the twelve countries<sup>1</sup> in which the EWLP was launched. They were in the most 'underdeveloped' areas of the world (Africa, Asia and Latin America) and were associated with poor, rural and illiterate populations.

In keeping with the idea of literacy as a functional phenomenon, the programme provision of the EWLP was focused on the community, the place where functions were performed and therefore the most appropriate base, it seemed, from which projects for personal and national development should be built. The functional purpose of literacy was therefore characterised by the attempt to teach literacy skills in association with practical skills and tasks relevant to a particular community. The delivery system which seemed most compatible with that perspective was the non-formal one for it was more flexible. For example, it could be deliberately planned, staffed and funded as formal education usually is and it could also be unrestricted regarding time, place, place, duration and need, like informal education.

Whereas the EWLP programme itself was portrayed as being people-centred in that the materials and methods were specifically adapted to the needs of the people in each community and the adults were to be involved in the assessment of their own learning, one gets the impression that the people in the project communities were also seen as objects to be developed. That impression is reinforced not only by the reference made

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<sup>1</sup>The countries were Algeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Guinea, Mali and Tanzania in Africa; Ecuador in Latin America; and Madagascar, Iran, Syria, and India in Asia.

to the people as "human capital" but also by the emphasis placed on the need for programme evaluation to ensure that there was good return on the capital invested in that venture. Unlike physical capital, however, the adults in those communities had other areas of being. As Lind and Johnston (1986) suggested, problems of programme management were cited as possible contributors to the failure of the programmes but one had to consider the fact that work seemed not to have been a strong enough stimulus to motivate the adults to learn to read and write. Despite such failures, however, the economic goals attached to basic literacy have prevailed in most literacy campaigns regardless of the political system of the supported government which initiated them or the cultural orientation of the people. Evidence of that connection is present in the reported cases of the Tanzanian campaign initiated by a socialist government (Mpogolo, 1990), the Russian mass literacy programme mobilised under the former communist regime (Kabatchenko and Yasnikova, 1990), the communist literacy campaign in China (Li Jiyuan, 1990) and the adult basic literacy efforts in the some democracies such as the Philippines (Lasam, 1990), Britain and the United States (Street 1984), Canada (De Castell et. al., 1986).

The third conception of literacy as a humanist factor (evident from the 1970's and extending into the 1990's) seems to have been arrived at as a last resort in the wake of failed literacy programmes which had been informed by the other conceptions. The UNESCO response to the failure of the EWLP appears to support that observation for in its assessment of the programme UNESCO acknowledged the need to widen its concept of literacy and development. It suggested that the concepts of functionality must be extended to include all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural development was not only economic growth. It was also suggested that functional literacy should aim above all to make the individuals critically aware of their social reality, and to help them to understand, control and change the course of their lives (UNESCO/ UNDP, 1976).

That shift, which reflected the humanist conception of literacy, did not signal a new direction in adult basic literacy provision but a different focus for it still linked literacy to functions. Commenting on the influence of that change on formal literacy provision

in Canada and the United States, De Castell et al. (1986) described it as a move from a focus on the "too particular", which emphasised performance and measurement to the "too general", which highlighted relevance, values and intrinsic worth. It is that "too general view" of literacy which has been promoted by the United Nations and UNESCO in the series of declarations made to the international community since the culmination of the EWLP. The Declaration of Persepolis, issued in 1975, presented literacy as a tool with which people could reshape their world and contribute to an authentic development (Bataille, 1976). That concept was reinforced at the Udaipur Declaration in 1982 which stressed the need for humanist principles to be exercised in the delivery of education especially to women and the disadvantaged (Bhola, 1984). Finally, access to literacy as a branch of learning was raised to a human right in the Declaration of the Paris Conference (UNESCO, 1985).

It seemed that having established the intrinsic human value of literacy, the international community felt confident to tackle illiteracy. It therefore seemed logical to launch International Literacy Year (ILY) in 1990 with the aim of mobilising communities to contribute to the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000. The tendency to conceive of illiteracy as the flip side of literacy was maintained for whereas literacy was promoted as a package of benefits, illiteracy was presented as a phenomenon of disaster for both individual and the community and by extension, the world community. That attitude was conveyed in the language of disease used by UNESCO's to express the aim of the ILY campaign: that of eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000 (UNESCO, 1990). Despite the promotion of the human value of literacy, providers have still focused on literacy as an essential contributing factor to economic development and that focus has dominated policy statements about adult basic literacy provision in particular and education in general. The above observation was also made by Lind and Johnston (1986) but they also noted that the functionality which was still associated with literacy was perceived in a "broad sense" and therefore it allowed for the acceptance that "literacy is only the first step in achieving the objectives set out" (Ibid.: 23).

It is surprising, however, that the current broad view of literacy took so long to be reached, considering that it existed as far back as the early twenties in the writings of

Lindeman (1926) about education in general. He had reasoned that if education was life and life was education then experience should be the adult learners's textbook and that was exactly what the new definition of literacy was implying. Furthermore, during the time that the EWLP was being implemented, another educator, Paulo Freire, was applying his education for conscientization in Brazil, based very much on similar principles, albeit with a specific political agenda and a more militant spirit. It seemed that Freire had also acknowledged both the physical and psychological contexts of literacy, referred to in the works of Gray, (1956) and Lerner, (1958). The above observation is supported by the following statement.

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorising sentences, words, or syllables - lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe - but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context. (Freire, 1973:48)

Although UNESCO and international agencies seemed to promote the human element of literacy conveyed in the statements by Lindeman and Freire there appears to be one difference in their philosophy: whereas the UNESCO definitions and declarations since EWLP conveyed the idea that the people living in a community comprised the human resource of that community, the statements by Lindeman and Freire conveyed the idea that individuals in all communities have their own human resources, which were manifested as the potential and actual abilities and the other factors that identified them human. Whereas the former concept portrayed people as objects to be "developed" to fit a job or the particular needs of a country's economy, the latter concept portrayed people as individuals existing separate from what ever specific jobs or responsibilities they might have but needing to enhance their human resources in the interest of their humanity. The difference in providers's concept of people appeared to have influenced how they defined literacy and determined whether the basic adult literacy education which they provided was focused on the physical or psychological environments of the adult students.

### 2.3. Refining Literacy: An Extended Metaphor

In view of the unsatisfactory results of mass adult basic literacy provision and the apparent conflict between the rhetoric of official statements and the logistics of literacy provision, many researchers, writers, community workers, teachers and interested persons from other professions still acknowledged the need for definitions of literacy and illiteracy. That acknowledgement was demonstrated by many writers who formulated their own working definition of literacy after dismissing those given by others. Yet there seems to be agreement among other writers and literacy facilitators that there can be no single definition of literacy which might be used as a universal standard.

Among those writers who accepted that there could not be one definition of literacy was Pattison (1984). He said that literacy was always changing and therefore if it were re-defined in terms of past ideals rather than with modern ones, the current view of the literacy crisis would be different from what is. Accepting that literacy was primarily consciousness of the problems posed by language and secondarily skill in the technologies such as rhetoric and writing used to express that consciousness, he argued that since different cultures had different concepts of language and different technologies to express those concepts there could not be a universal standard of literacy. Heath (De Castell et al, 1986) came to the same conclusion as Pattison. She affirmed that the meaning of literacy varied for different groups since they invariably used literacy for different purposes. She based her position on research carried out among the Berbers (Cohen, 1958), the Cherokee (Walker, 1981), the Vai (Scribner and Cole, 1981) and her own work in the USA among a community of ninety Afro-Americans between 1969 and 1978. Mace (1990) connected the lack of a single definition of literacy to the apparent inability of providers or educators to find a "universal formula" to eliminate illiteracy. She saw the lack of consensus about a single definition as a fortunate situation for according to her there would always be "a plurality of literacies" as long as societies varied in their use of literacy.

The idea that it was impossible to define literacy was reinforced by many writers who, rather than attempt to formulate definitions, chose to discuss the processes involved in acquiring literacy (Tuinman, 1986) or propose list of elements which they thought should

be included in an appropriate definition (Soloman, 1986). For example, Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke and David MacLennon, in a collaborative article, "On Defining Literacy" (De Castell et al, 1986). Instead of attempting to define the subject, they drew on the work of researchers in three other fields of study and arrived at a set of factors elements which they said ought to be considered in formulating a definition of literacy. From the field of language studies, they selected the idea of "expanded competence" which covered the ability to use language competently in an infinite number of sentences in an infinite number of ways. From classical studies of discourse, they identified knowledge of and ability to apply grammatical structures, seen as "defined skills" and "appropriateness" respectively. From the area of communication theory they took the focus on pragmatics, that is, the use, functions and effects of what constitutes literate behaviour. As a distillation of ideas from those sources, they presented the following ingredients of literacy:

Functional literacy has therefore to embrace not merely knowledge of rules and the ability to follow rules, but also the capacity to think, reason, and judge beyond existing social rules. For where the citizen has rights and duties with respect to social, political and economic organisation, the intelligent exercise of such rights and duties necessarily presupposes competency above and beyond the ability to carry out limited interpersonal and specific occupational responsibilities (De Castell et al, 1986: 11-12).

In view of the above situation one may suggest that if the core concept of literacy cannot be defined then it is difficult to list variations of that concept and discuss their manifestations at great length. For example, fields of study which focus on distinct "literacies" have emerged, each with its own area of specificity. These include literacy in relation to the location of its use such as family literacy and work place literacy; the type of text with which the individual is to interact, that is whether it is print or graphics (Zimmer and Zimmer, 1978) and texts used in specific fields such as those of advertising. There have also been studies of organisational literacy (Darville 1989) which explore how literacy is used to "write up" information so that it can be used in the organisational process rather than to "write down" data for later recall or for self expression.

Considering the claim that no one definition of literacy exists, one may ask about the implications which such a claim has for effective communication among diverse world communities which currently rely on the manipulation of print to conduct their daily business. One may also query the nature of the work on literacy being carried out by writers, teachers and researchers which suggests that they have all identified and accepted some factors as being essential to the phenomenon called literacy and that despite their arguments and extensive questioning they teach, write and conduct their research within the parameters of those elements. Furthermore, the question may be raised regarding the common denominator used by educators, as researchers, practitioners or both, in their literacy work among people who do not belong to the same social or cultural group to which they belong. It is evident from the literature that they have identified the basic elements of literacy as the knowledge and application of reading, writing and calculating and they have used those elements as the basis of an extended metaphor which defines literacy as the comprehension and application of any skill required by humans to cope in modern societies.

#### **2.4. Re-evaluating Literacy: A Humanising Factor**

Since literacy became a metaphor for knowing and being able to apply what is known, it has been promoted as humanising element and its value has been placed in its ability to undo the apparent dehumanising effects of illiteracy. A very strong account of the negative attributes of illiteracy forwarded by Ahmed (1990) is given below. His statement is quoted extensively to convey the pervasiveness of the ill-effects he conjured up in association with illiteracy.

An illiterate person finds himself or herself placed among the disadvantaged in society - disadvantaged economically, politically and culturally. The person so placed - deprived of access to much of society's store of knowledge, information, skills and understanding - is unable to help himself or his family and children pull out of the disadvantage they are in. Illiteracy of parents leads to their children's non-attendance in or early drop out of primary school - thus perpetuating a chain of illiteracy. The connection between mother's literacy and the mortality rate and nutrition of children as well as the small family-sized (sic) has been well established. Not being able to contribute to or participate in community life effectively, the illiterate has a diminished sense of self-esteem (Ahmed, 1990:5).



One may assume that if the effects of illiteracy on the individual are so dire, the effects on a society with many such individuals must be catastrophic. That is the very conclusion reached by Ahmed who noted that "for society and the nation, illiteracy is the disadvantage of the individual multiplied a million times" (Ahmed, 1990:5). A closer look at the statement made above and others which support the ideas expressed in it show that the source of problems faced by illiterate individual is not their illiteracy but rather the people who have given specific social and economic values to literacy.

A similar observation was made by Jules (1990) with reference to the "exploitation, abuse, ridicule and oppression" experienced by illiterate adult learners in the Caribbean. He, however, did not present ordinary people as the exploiters but focused on those who held political power and noted that illiteracy was used by the powerful or the privileged to justify "disempowering" social groups. The example he cited was the inclusion of a clause in the Act of incorporation of the St. Lucia Banana Growers's Association which stated an individual could not become members of the managing committee of a district branch if they could not "read the English Language with a degree of proficiency to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the management committee." That example was considered to be particularly crucial since in the St. Lucian setting, the majority of the banana farmers would have been peasants and would have been fluent speakers of St. Lucian Kweyol whereas minority, comprising the plantocracy, would have been English speakers.

It may be true that "there is no substitute for the extensive use of written words in a complex modern society with an infinite demand for transmission of knowledge and information which keep multiplying at an ever faster rate" ( Ahmed, 1990:5) and that a person who cannot manipulate the written text is "as handicapped as one is by physical or mental disability (ibid)" but such a handicap seems to exist only in relation to the context of situations requiring literacy skills and not in all aspects of the individual's life. In the literature, however, illiteracy has been presented as having devastating effects on individuals and communities. It has been shown that women in rural communities in non-industrialised countries have been particularly disadvantaged (Brown 1990; Chlebowska, 1990).

The general impression conveyed by the positive claims for literacy and the negative claims for illiteracy is that the individuals who are not literate are almost sub-human. Such claims have been contradicted by the works of educators and researchers which highlighted the wisdom of pre-literate people conveyed in such oral records as folk songs, fables, proverbs and accounts of how they effectively managed their social and political affairs (Finnagan, 1968). There has also been works recording the means by which people with limited literacy skills have been able to cope effectively in modern literate societies (Levine, 1987; Heath, 1986). in the Carolinas in the USA (De Castell, 1986).

This mentioning of the initiatives, intelligence and language competence of non literate people is not forwarded in promotion of the existence of "the wise illiterate" (Ahmed in Street, 1990:5), the modern day version of "the noble savage" but rather to draw attention to some of the assumptions which lurk behind the numerous attempts to make sense of literacy. The following two observations may serve to highlight the significance of those assumptions for ABLE provision. One is that even if some advantages co-exist with literacy as some disadvantages co-exist with illiteracy, it is often difficult to make the literacy or illiteracy the cause of either the benefits or disadvantages. That observation has been supported by Jules (1990:38) in the following comment:

Nowhere in the world has literacy by itself created employment, cured disease or built houses. Is it correct to assume that teaching people to read everyday materials and to fill out commonly used forms would give them a better life? Did we really believe that, merely by becoming literate, hundreds could get jobs and become productive?

The other observation is that in countries where mass adult illiteracy existed among adults its existence and the instances of injustice, abuse, exploitation, poverty and lack of basic education with which it has been associated have been attributed to literate persons (Freire, 1972; Jules, 1990). Despite that situation, statements from the international community have highlighted the need to alter economic and political structures in order for basic literacy to have a liberating effect on people but have not focused on the fact those repressive structures might have been maintained by literate

people. It is therefore ironic that given those facts, illiteracy has been highlighted as a dehumanising element but the fact that literacy has been used to effect that dehumanisation has been apparently glossed over. This fact alone, calls into question the lofty expectations and revolutionary changes which are claimed for literacy, no matter whether its parameters be widened or narrowed. Rogers (1990) in his review of Literacy and Power: The South American Battleground, by Archer and Costello (1990), makes a similar point in response to the notion that literacy gives power and illiteracy renders the illiterate " singularly powerless." He noted:

It can be argued that it is the power systems, not literacy, which determines the power that literacy has in any society" ( BALID Newsletter 5.1., 1990:23).

It is appropriate to note here that whereas "power systems" cited above are usually conceived of as being based on economic wealth and political control, there might be an even greater power system which guides both, a belief system. That observation has been supported by research which suggests that attitudes and beliefs held by people, both the leaders and the led, may ultimately determine how they handle people and situations and select priorities (Bem, 1970; Apps, 1973).

In much the same way that illiteracy has been shown to be a devastating element in the lives of individuals and a deterrent to the development of societies so literacy has been promoted as a sort of panacea for the ills of the individual and the society. It has been suggested that the acquisition of literacy allowed individuals to contribute to the liberation of man and the development of his full development potential (Bataille, 1976). It has also been said that literacy was a very decisive factor in the liberation of individuals from ignorance and exploitation (Bhola, 1984) and that it was expected to be a revolutionary force in the lives of those who acquired it (Chlebowska 1990). In fact, Chlebowska (1990) noted that literacy training should contribute to higher wages; improve the living conditions of rural women by helping them to escape poverty, marginalisation and inferiority; enhance personal well being, provide greater confidence and self respect; boost women's awareness of their value; make individuals aware of

their creative abilities and trigger the realization that one's limitations are not immutable. Some assumptions about literacy and women conveyed by Chlebowska and repeated by other writers were that literate mothers were better able to deal with critical situations such as diarrhoea; they were more prone to break traditions which had negative repercussions on health; and that since they were more likely to see health benefits as a right rather than as a favour they would be more inclined to feel comfortable about claiming them. In other words the acquisition of literacy was expected to facilitate better decision making, encourage assertiveness and lead to greater social benefits.

## **2.5. Applying Literacy: Community Development**

Considering the pervasiveness of the ideas cited above, one might say that the awareness of the power of attitudes and the belief that literacy could contribute to attitudinal change helped to inform the choice of literacy as an instrument for use in community development. Consistent with that awareness and belief would have been the concept of literacy as a vehicle for using language in many ways to record and shape experience as well as to determine the structure of life. From those perspectives, literacy was itself a potentially powerful facility and it was appropriate to introduce it on those bases considering the failure of the predominantly economic-oriented literacy and community efforts mentioned above. Its application in terms of the above ideas was also an opportunity for providers to demonstrate its humanising nature, mentioned earlier. In the above contexts, Healey (1982:39) saw literacy as a "pre-condition to full human and social participation", and Nelson (1986) considered such participation to be an essential factor in community development. In fact, the significance of the role which literacy was expected to play in community development may be inferred from the outcomes expected of such development. An insight into those expectations is gained from the following definition given at the Paris Conference "Towards an Authentic Development" (Healey, 1982: 130):

Development is a voluntary process aimed at providing access to resources to meet basic human needs. There can be no development without justice. Development seeks to create self-awareness leading to self-reliance and, ultimately, to full realisation of human potential, thus providing liberating power to the individual, the community the nation and the world.

Literacy as a tool in the type of development mentioned above was therefore a vehicle of social action, a means of helping people to adjust to unexpected, rapid and overwhelming changes. It was also to facilitate their self actualization and defend themselves against various forms of oppression if they perceived themselves as disadvantaged groups within a particular community. That liberating function of literacy had been advocated by Educators (Freire 1977; Postman and Weingartner, 1969) and social commentators (Toffler, 1981; DeBono, 1990) who perceived people as change agents. As such they saw literacy as a tool of change. In fact, it has been accepted in many 'developed' societies that the use of general literacy is one means by which people can make changes rather than just adapt to them. That idea was expressed by Nelson (1986) in the context of adult literacy in Australia when he noted that it was not sufficient for the individual to cope by merely adjusting to change if that adjustment was successful. He suggested that it was also essential for the individual to be influence the nature and direction of that change.

Suggesting that people with inadequate literacy were not an asset to the community, Nelson cited the problem of illiteracy as being a "menacing" one for the community especially since it occurred among the poor, unsuccessful, inarticulate and generally most disadvantaged people of a community and their growing numbers and dissatisfaction could result in the self destruction of the community. One implication of his statement was that such destruction might come from these disadvantaged people as their revenge against affluent members of the community whom they might have blamed for the growing gap of inequity between them. The other implication, which seems to reinforce the traditional stereotype of non-literate people as being ignorant, violent, destructive and lacking in self control, was that those with inadequate literacy were expected to account for most of the evils of the society.

He therefore suggested that for literacy to be effectively used as a tool in the development of the community it needed to be related to issues of poverty, juvenile delinquency, the availability of adequate facilities for education and recreation. His rationale was that if the issues mentioned above were considered as inputs to the content

of literacy programmes those programmes would attract the involvement of government authorities, institutions and associations of education as well as those not directly connected with education such as the media, international agencies and well-off citizens. He referred to such total involvement as the "whole community approach" (Nelson, 1986:29-31). Expanding on the concept of the "whole community approach" he made a point which may be used to raise the question of the essential purpose of literacy. His point was that research had to be a part of the "whole community approach" since there was a need to find out the needs of groups within the community, evaluate the efforts taken to meet those needs and find out about the attitudes to the problem of inadequate literacy held by those who experience it since that was an area which "we know very little about" (ibid).

The admission prompts one to ask to what extent the perception of inadequate literacy as a problem for the individual and a potential menace for society has been that of the literate affluent groups in a community rather than that of the groups for whom literacy has been provided. That query raises the issue of problematization advocated by Freire as part of his attempt to facilitate people's socio-political awareness of their living situations. The concept, defined as the "key to perception of perception" (Freire, 1972:9), involved adults questioning reality as it was perceived by them and by others. Given the acceptance of illiteracy as a "menacing" problem by literate educators, one may therefore ask to what extent the promotion of mass literacy is a strategy for the self protection of privileged groups rather than or in addition to being a potential benefit to disadvantaged, assuming that they comprise the literate and the illiterate respectively,

From the above discussion emerges the concept of literacy as an instrument of self defence. That concept of literacy has not been promoted in the literature on adult literacy provision but it can be inferred from the work of some writers who spoke of social destruction as one of the potential by-products of illiteracy as they linked it to crime, corruption, violence, poverty and unemployment (Healey, 1982:15). The idea has also been implied by those who highlight the fact that mass literacy was seen by some leaders as a threat to their position and power, owing to the potential of literacy to provide the impetus for challenging the status quo (Postman and Weingartner, 1969;

Freire, 1972) and that some leaders use literacy to keep people domesticated ( Freire, 1972). It may be said that those groups who withhold literacy provision are conversely using mass illiteracy as a tool of their self defence, for they assume that an unlettered populace would be ignorant of the way they are being governed, not being privy to the written records of business and government, and would therefore be less likely to challenge how they are governed. Such assumptions obviously overlook the fact that the effects of government are felt, not read about and are therefore understood from experience and not from printed texts.

In view of the above discussion, one may forward the following argument. If self preservation is supposed to be the main instinct of the human, then a great motivator for people to become literate might their being able to conceived of literacy as a tool for their self preservation in modern societies and therefore as an essential aid to their survival. Literacy would need to be separated from knowledge, the ability to be dialectical and "operacy". That term used by Edward de Bono (1990:25) to refer to the application of thinking skills to our knowledge base, seems appropriate to this discussion of literacy parameters, for it covers the application of all skills used by humans to cope with life situations and is congruent with the extended metaphorical use of literacy. An example of their distinctness is provided by Australian educator, Kath White (1986) who, judging from her ability to analyze and reason about the dynamics of her community, may also be considered dialectical, but yet she admits to her lack of 'operacy' within that community.

I am aware, even as a literate person, that I feel helpless to effect much change in the course of events that are determined, it would seem by big business, or government and its bureaucracies, or powerful individuals. I refer to things like military spending, nuclear weaponry, the commercialisation of the ABC, land 'development' and bureaucratic clumsiness and waste. I have occasionally done something about it: the odd letter to the Editor or the Council, one telephone complaint to a TV station, a few rally attendances. Mostly I just don't act because I think the forces stacked against me are too powerful. How can my literacy enhance this society, arresting some rot or fostering some fair growth? Can adult literacy be a means of increasing awareness for us as Australians or as World citizens? (White, 1986:39)

Considering the situation which White described, it seems that one way to extract literacy from the muddle of concepts and definitions is to promote it as a means for enhancing one's knowledge, one's ability to be dialectical and one's 'operacy' rather than as a composite of all three. White's statement lends support to the need to put literacy back where it started, as a tool of social control through the manipulation of the printed symbol, not as a romantic or ethereal facility. The difference between modern literacy and the literacy of earlier times is that whereas the latter was controlled by a minority as a means of oppression the former can be controlled by the majority as a means of social use. The narrowing of the parameters of literacy therefore suggests that liberation and humanisation, outcomes associated with literacy, ought to be attributed to their rightful source, which is people's basic humanity, not their basic literacy.

## **2.6. ABLE Provision: Extracting Core Elements**

The above discussion leads to the matter of facilitating literacy, a task that must first be done before people can reap the so-called benefits or achieve the expected goals. It is therefore seems necessary to know exactly what is being facilitated. The definitions cited earlier, both those which guided the literacy campaigns of UNESCO and programmes initiated by individual governments as well as those suggested by individuals included two recurring elements: (a) familiarisation with and the ability to manipulate printed characters and symbols for reading, writing and calculating; (b) acquisition of the knowledge and ability to apply reading, writing and calculation to various situations in life, with minimum error. The existence of the core elements of reading, writing and calculation suggests that the elaborate definitions forwarded might not only be unhelpful but might be overstepping the bounds of literacy and entering the area of "operacy", explained in section 2.4. above.

Given that individuals who effectively demonstrate many of the above skills are not usually considered to be literate unless they can also read and write even at the most basic level considered acceptable by their community, it follows that a working knowledge of the sound and writing system of a language is enough to constitute basic literacy. The impression conveyed by the extensive discussion above is that the literal meaning of literacy has been incorporated into its metaphorical extension and has created



unnecessary theoretical confusion. That observation is supported by the fact that texts which attempted to discuss the facilitation of literacy inevitably focus on the core elements of reading and writing and calculating. Rogers (1990:24) put it quite when he said that "Literacy must surely have something to do with written words."

Having accepted that adult basic literacy comprises reading, writing and calculating and that those skills are necessary in any community which relies on the printed medium for the effective management of its affairs, some writers and researchers in adult education have focused their attention on devising ways of facilitating the acquisition of those skills by adults. Reports of their efforts have augmented the literature on adult literacy by generating debate on appropriateness of approaches used in teaching adults.

The current ideas on ABLE provision may be summarised in the three principles of guidance proposed by the participants of the research project in Caboolture community in Australia. Those principles were diversity of provision, an understanding of literacy, and primacy of the learning support model of delivery (Grant, 1986). The rationale for those principles have been given respectively as follows:

1. The multiplicity of needs and contexts for adult literacy and basic education point to the necessity of diversity of programs and plurality of provisions.
2. A broad understanding of what becoming literate entails should inform all aspects of policy making implementation, program provision and evaluation research.
3. The participatory learning support model of program provision should be used to facilitate equity of access.

The first principle has implications for the selection of target groups, the aims and expectations of the programmes, and the provision of opportunities to match the situations for which such provision is needed. The second principle is relevant in the of course content, materials and support services and the third principle is important with regard to management of the ABLE programme including its structure, factors for sustainability and the roles of the persons involved.



## **2.7. ABLE provision: Facilitating Core Elements**

The wide range of expertise, materials and strategies devised for facilitating literacy to adults, many of them conflicting with each other but most being complementary, now constitute a part of the field of educational practice called andragogy, the range of techniques and approaches used to facilitate the learning of adults (Knowles, 1990). That is contrasted with pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children. The influence of the concept of andragogy is discussed below in terms of the main aspects of adult basic literacy provision: curriculum design, programme planning, choice and development of materials, preferred methods of teaching the core elements of reading and writing, and the nature of the roles assumed by students and facilitators.

### **2.7.1. The ABLE Curriculum**

Given the need to move away from the subject-based curriculum of the formal school it has been suggested that the curriculum for the adult literate student should be integrated, covering as wide an area as the interests of the students would allow. For example topics are expected to include legal knowledge, health and hygiene, civic education, vocational training, local history and culture (Fox and Powell, 1991). Essentially, the adult basic literacy curriculum is expected to be context bound if the literacy it facilitates is expected to be "defined by the purpose for which it is to be put" (Graff, 1987:373). As such, the subject matter as well as the sequence, focus and presentation of the subject matter within the literacy curriculum are expected to be determined by the personal needs and interests of the learner, that is it should be learner-centred (McBeth, 1986). That approach to curriculum design has been promoted regardless of the type of group being taught. For example, it has been introduced in work-based literacy programmes such as those pioneered in Canada Frontier College to cater to men working in the lumber industry (Pearpoint, 1987). It has also been used in domestic communities whose needs cover a wide spectrum of areas, such as the Bangladesh community of which Jennings (1990) wrote. The student-based curriculum has worked as well for mixed communities, such as the prison, which has elements of both types of groups cited above, in that the adult literacy students in prison live and work in the same place and therefore have needs which are very personal, yet strongly influenced by the prison setting (Isabelle, 1986).

It is worth noting here that even though the personal and the community content of the curricula are usually spoken of separately this seems to be a difference of direction rather than of kind, for very often the individual's personal needs are related to some function or task linked to community life. Direction here refers to whether the impetus to meet the particular literacy needs came from the individual or from other sources within the community. It is this apparent overlap of personal and community boundaries which seemed to have encouraged the dismissal of the personal element and contributed to the promotion of community needs or national needs, both expressed as goals which the ABLE programme is meant to achieve.

In any case, whether the curriculum is geared towards meeting personal, community or national needs, the adult literacy students are still never really in charge of their learning curricula. Even with the move away from the teacher-centred and book-based curriculum (Hamadache, 1986), the adult students are still not the ones to initiate the curriculum; rather, they are invited to contribute to it. They do not decide on the philosophical framework on which the curriculum would be based; rather, their input is made part of the frameworks set up by international agencies such as UNESCO, programme planners or well meaning individuals, who encourage them to participate within certain parameters of freedom, albeit fairly wide ones.

The above observation can be made from an examination of suggestions for curriculum planning which have been included in the literature on adult basic literacy provision (Soifer, 1990; Singh, 1976; Hamadache and Martin, 1986; Freire and Macedo, 1987) the many texts on adult literacy programmes. So far the literature about the provision of adult basic literacy education has not cited any incidence of non-literate adults setting up their own programme, recruiting their own tutors and fully controlling the curriculum, in that they request facilitators to provide what they want through negotiation and consultation initiated by them. Even those who promote progressive forms of ABLE provision see the facilitator as the person in control of the adult basic literacy curriculum and as such responsible to some extent for the adult learner's literacy experience (Brookfield, 1986; Soifer, 1990).

### **2.7.2. The ABLE Programme**

The programme planner, like the curriculum planner, is expected to be someone other than a member of the group of non-literate adults. The justification for this apparently unquestioned situation is the amount of record keeping needed in the administration of the ABLE programme requires literacy skills. The requirement such documentation has been occasioned by the need for accountability in the provision of adult basic literacy programmes. For example, practitioners and theorists writing about programme planning cite the following elements as being vital for the success of a literacy programme: identification of the goals of the programme as well as the outcomes; the extent of the need for the programme; the philosophy which guides the programme the rationale for curriculum design and the bases on which the choices were made regarding setting, facilities, staff, modes of publicity and student recruitment (Soifer, 1990:158).

### **2.7.3. Instructional Materials in the ABLE Programme**

It has been accepted that the reading materials in the adult classroom "must be relevant to people's daily lives" (Fox and Powell 1991) must validate the students' culture and "voice", and as such ought to include the students' own texts; and the language used should be "everyday, useful, relevant and functional (Soifer et al, 1990:). Singh (1976:32:34), suggested that in preparing the materials for adult literacy classes, the facilitator should also pay attention to media, form and sequence. He said that the use of various media allowed the adult to pay attention to the different ways in which language can be coded and decoded, such as in calenders, diagrams and posters. By form he meant narrative, dialogue and computer software which allowed for various degrees of participation and self teaching. The sequencing he said could not be rigid for it should be governed by the interests of the student.

Generally, the choice of materials for the adult basic literacy student have been between material that corresponds to the adult's reading-level, often measured in relation to the reading level of primary school and material consistent with the adult's age and interests. Since adults' interests and experiences usually cover a wide range of topics, pre-packaged materials have not been recommended, (Soifer, 1990). Children texts have also not been recommended although it has been acknowledged that their use with adults

might permit the adult to progress easily at first. The objections are usually that the texts are belittling to adults, having been designed for children or that they are not meaningful (Singh and Singh, 1989). The rationale for selecting materials on the basis of the adults's age and interests has been that they would provide greater motivation for the adult to read and that they might be more meaningful since they could actually be related to the particular reason why the adult decided to attend the classes. Reasons include the need to pass a driving test, fill out bank forms or write up an inventory of tools at work. Other appropriate materials cited have been texts from the environment such as signs, popular songs and such texts as the TV guide. Another set of authentic materials recommended for use with the adult have been the adult's own personal text developed by using the language experience method (explained below) or the organic primer approach, which entails the tutor writing materials for the adults based on their knowledge of the adult's interests and reading level (Amoroso, 1985).

In a bid to bring the adult basic literacy student in line with the demands of a technological society considerations of materials have included not only decisions about levels, content and sources but also the medium. Included in this latter category is the increasing use of software packages for teaching literacy via the computer as part of the current offering of computer assisted instruction (CAI). Many advantages have been cited for this mode of instruction. First it is seen to be more versatile owing to it being a "multimedia resource that can serve as text, test or tutor" (Vacc, 1989: 283). One other important factor is that the computer is seen to interact with adults learners rather than react to them as human tutors do. One might add that the text presented via the computer does not remain inert in the same way as normal text does.

The computer has also be promoted as a tool for adult literacy students because it caters to all types of learners. It offers visuals and a range of graphics for the visual learner; it can be adapted to suit the auditory learner by adding a speech synthesizer, an added bonus for the visually impaired; the requirement of the key board provides the tactile stimulus needed by other learners (Vacc, 1989) and it provides much drill and practice for those who learn best that way.

It may also be added that for those who need immediate results or who like the sense of doing things themselves, the computer also provides both elements. Specific characteristics of the adult learner are also said to be best catered to by the computer (Soifer, 1990). For example, research with secondary school children have shown that it takes less time to learn some subjects on the computer and since it has been accepted that adults take longer to learn as they get older, it has been suggested that CAI would be ideal for the adult (Cross 1982). Another time-related factor cited was that as some adults do not have much time to commit to the learning programmes the time saved in learning certain skills is to their advantage.

Regarding computer education and its role in adult literacy one would expect that an adult would need some experience with print to use the computer but some educators think that the adults' motivation to experiment is even more important than initial skill since adults do not deliberately put themselves into situations which lead to failure (Soifer et al., 1990). They therefore recommended that the facilitators of adult literacy classes use oral instructions to supplement the written computer instructions and take the opportunity to use the adults for peer teaching, an activity which demonstrates that "the best way to learn is to teach someone." Incidentally, that practice would also be in keeping with the current idea of adult learning through participatory activity among learners and between learners and tutors.

#### **2.7.4. Instructional Methodology in the ABLE programme**

Like the other aspects of provision, current suggestions for methodology have not strayed too far from the suggestions made by Lindman and Gessner (op cit). For example, L.S. Saraswathi (Street 1990:63) has placed a focus on participation in groups through such activities as games, role play, discussion, problem analysis and project planning. These elements however might have more to do with the idea of 'operacy' cited earlier than with acquiring the core skills of literacy. One example which seems to support this assumption is provided by Moss (1987:40). She referred to an account given to her by one of her former "fresh start" students in which the student attributed her new found assertiveness to the role play activities in the programme. The student in her narration of how she made the decision to stop rushing to serve coffee to her

chauvinistic boss, had said, "I just don't let things go past now that I would have a few years ago [...] Before, I would have just jumped up and got it for him."

Regarding the actual teaching of reading and writing, various facilitators and researchers and writers have promoted various approaches with rationales to justify them. The traditional alphabet method of reading which began with the learning of the alphabet and then progressed to whole words and sentences has now been denounced by writers, some of whom see it as irrelevant to reading (Smith, 1985), confusing (Gudschinsky, 1977a) or too complex an exercise (Hildreth, 1958). The phonetic method, which also entailed getting familiar with the alphabet through the sound of the letters rather than the name, has both supporters and opposers. The former claim that learning the code aided in comprehension of the text (Chall, 1967); whereas the latter saw that method as a possible distraction (Smith, 1985:50).

Some practitioners and theorists preferred the use of larger units of language which they said were more meaningful so they advocated the application of methods which focused on the word, the sentence or larger units such as short stories or whole books. The first group includes those who promoted the "sight word" method. The words are chosen either because their form was easy to remember (Gray, 1956) or because they frequently occurred in the language (Singh, 1976). Commenting on the advantages of this method, Jennings (1990) notes that it is easy to control the vocabulary that is learnt, but he acknowledges the difficulty of preparing frequency lists and the possible loss of meaning for the reader who concentrates on mere word lists.

One other word method has been widely adopted and adapted by facilitators owing to its successful use. This is the "key word method" used by Paulo Freire in Brazil. Freire, using sixteen to seventeen basic phonemes in Portuguese showed the adult literacy students how they could generate real words by linking different phonemes and then they were able to generate words that were meaningful to their environment and their daily activities (Brown, 1975). A sobering note to those who would want to choose this method above others is offered by Jennings (1990:134) in the following observation:

The primary value of key words is that they give a meaningful base for starting a literacy lesson. How they are used otherwise depends very much on the particular approach of which they are only a part.

Promoting the "sentence method" of teaching reading some writers reason that the sentence and not the word or letter is the true unit in language for it expresses whole thoughts which are the units used in thinking (Jennings 1991). That assertion, though basically true, overlooked the natural tendency of people to convey thought not in complete sentences but in fragments which are still understood, using various meta-linguistic cues such as tone or non linguistic cues such as body language. Objections to that method, however were based on its apparent "neglect of vital features in the development of visual discrimination and basic directional habits" when "taken to the extreme" (Holdaway, 1979:28). The "language-experience" approach was another method used to facilitate adult literacy instruction. Involving the tutor scribing the students' exact words, that method became the basis of much personal writing done by adult literacy students. It has also become a vehicle for the emergence of collaborative writing between adult literacy students and their tutors, which has led to publication (Mace, 1992 ; Hamilton et al, 1992). That method has been considered "linguistically sound" since it allowed the learner to have "insight into the relationship of reading and writing in way he can control" (Margaret Meek, 1982:70). Jennings (1990) saw the major advantage of the method as its facility to demystify the literacy process. Criticism of the method have been on the basis that all connections between written and spoken language cannot be taught from the learner's personal writing (Holdaway, 1979) and that it is a time consuming exercise which demands committed and well trained facilitators.

The various methods all seem to be advantageous depending not on the method but on how the methods are used, which in turn seem to be dependent on the willingness of both student and tutor to be committed to the teaching-learning process, the operative word being 'process'. Soifer et. al. (1990) supports that emphasis on process, in the following definition of reading. It also reflects the principal of "dynamic interactions" underlying that process in adult literacy education:



Reading is an active process in which the reader connects information from the text to information in the mind. The connections are made by a reader in the act of fulfilling a purpose in a situation that is meaningful to him or her. In short, reading is dynamic and interactive, and prior knowledge and purposes of the reader are significant elements of the process. Reading is an active process, not a series of skills to be learned. the result of reading is new insights and knowledge in the reader's mind, not simply answers to comprehension questions or paraphrasing of text. (Soifer, 1990: 4-5)

The above statement seems to cover the full spectrum of issues being debated in the area of reading as it relates to literacy whether it be that of the child or the adult. In fact, it is worth noting here that there is basically no reason why the difference between the two should be stressed so much since it is possible that if reading had been introduced as such a dynamic and meaningful process to some adults when they were children, they might not have become students in adult basic literacy classes.

Regarding the issues highlighted in the above quote, meaning as the essential ingredient in reading has long been promoted by Freire and Macedo (1987) as part of their argument that one cannot say a text has been read if all an individual did was recognise the words used to convey the message in the text and then accepted the message without question or without an awareness of its significance for that individual or the sender of the message. That type of reading according Gray (1956:198) was "word reading" and did not help the student to understand the "sense" of the text. He also noted that when reading was introduced with a focus on thought learners paid more attention to content, but did not develop very quickly in their word recognition skills or the ability to follow lines of printed text. With such a wide range of choice, the logical direction of for facilitators of adult literacy has been towards eclectic methods which include combinations of the above techniques of reading at various stages in the learning process. Adding a word of caution about being so liberal in selecting methods, Jennings (1990) make the following comment:

Such programmes [eclectic], without a clear theoretical basis can generate into a confusing mixture of opposing aims and goals. An effective eclectic approach must be developed on (sic) the field with each method or technique playing an essential and explainable role (Jennings, 1991:139).

One eclectic but structured method which has been promoted has been the "whole language" method used by Rene Soifer et al (1990). Supporting the caution made by Jennings (1990), those authors have stressed that the "whole" in whole language approaches should mean using the whole words, sentences, paragraphs and texts optimally for interaction among students and between students and teachers, with an awareness of both content and context. Accordingly, it has been expected that classroom activity would focus on language in action involving talking, asking questions, reading, writing and reacting to as well as extending ideas. Those activities for both student and facilitator, it was suggested, must also be in the pursuit of particular goals: organising and interpreting information; constructing new meaning and applying understanding to their own lives.

### **2.7.5. Roles and Relationships in ABLE Provision**

Inherent in the above approaches is the suggestion that there ought to be a different relationship between the tutor and the student and the roles they play in the provision of adult education. This topic has been given some attention in the discussion of both adult education in general and in adult literacy provision in particular. The issue seems to have been given much attention for it has been proposed that whether the adults are engaging in the literacy education for the first time or as a part of their continued efforts at self improvement the experience of the adult literacy class room should help students to use literacy skills to enhance their coping skills rather than highlight their actual or apparent inadequacies (Lindeman, 1926).

One step towards reflecting that perspective has been the choice of terms used to refer to the participants in the adult basic literacy class room which signal the move away from the imbalance power positions inherent in the traditional, school-oriented idea of the teacher being a know-it-all whose job is give information to the ignorant student. In the literature persons are said to be recruited not as 'teachers' or even as the more academically-related, 'tutors', but as 'facilitators', a term extensively explained by Carl Rogers (1969). His rationale for that choice was that the term 'teacher' was associated with giving knowledge but in a changing world, one could not really give knowledge to any one else for by the time it was given and accepted as a truth, it would have also

have been challenged and replaced. As such, he conceived of the facilitator as one who could lend assistance to others in their efforts to learn and help to create the appropriate conditions under which individuals can learn.

When Knowles (1990) spoke of adult learners as a neglected species he was referring primarily to the adult students, but the characteristics required of adult facilitators have made it possible for both facilitators and students to be conceived of as learners (Francis, 1990), a term which projects a dimension of equality into a relationship which was once one of inequality. The concept of the facilitator as a learner was consistent with the suggestions made by Rogers (1969) that such a person should be able to create a climate of trust in the class room and encourage relationships based on genuineness, respect and empathy. It may be argued that in order for such physical and psychological environments to exist both groups of participants would need to not only "learn about" each other but also to "learn each other". The learning would however, need to be not only affective but also cognitive. This observation seems to be supported by the work done on individuality in learning by Francis (1990). The basic idea promoted in that work was that success in the teaching-learning situation was dependent on there being mutual understanding and sharing between each student and the teacher regarding tasks that are to be taught and learnt. Francis (1990:52) expressed that idea in the following five principles:

1. Aims in selecting a topic should be meaningful and desirable to both parties. Both teaching and learning must be motivated.
2. Both student and teacher function as learners with respect to the topic and each other. The teacher has knowledge and strategies which the student has not yet acquired but is expected to learn. The student also has knowledge and strategies, some of which might be useful in some contexts. Some might be novel to the teacher.
3. Ways of working on a topic should be demonstrated. Students need to see how teachers want them to do things, and teachers need to see how students are actually doing them, both unaided and with help. Each needs to learn how to operate as the other does in order to evaluate what they do.
4. Ways of working should be evaluated by both teacher and student in terms of their utility in relation to their aims.

5. Ways of working on a topic should be explained. Both teachers and students should be able to explain to themselves and each other why they prefer any particular way of working. Students have not learnt adequately if they cannot and teachers have not taught adequately if they do not. Students' preferences or choices of strategy are not usually stupid or random, but may rest on partial or mistaken understanding. Sometimes a student's strategy might even prove to be superior to the teacher's within the teacher's own aims!

Although the concept of learner and teacher as reversible roles was discussed in the context of students being treated as individual learners in Further Education (FE) it is applicable to adult literacy students and is particularly relevant to the issue of the roles and relationships of the students and their facilitators. Where such respect for the individual is not given and the status of 'adult', shared by student and facilitator, does not supersede the social status of 'teacher' and 'student' then the observation made by Tennant (1991) regarding adult education maintaining the status quo could be seen as a legitimate one.

The modern role of the adult literacy teacher as a facilitator was implied in the description of the most appropriate relationship between adult basic literacy students and their tutors made by Lindeman over seven decades ago.

None but the humble become good teachers of adults. In an adult class, the students' experience counts as much as the teacher's knowledge. Both are exchangeable at par. Indeed, in some of the best adult classes it is sometimes difficult to discover who is the learning most, the teacher or the students. This two-way learning is also reflected by shared authority [...] Under democratic conditions authority is of the groups (Lindeman (1926:166).

His perception that adults needed to be self-directing suggested that the role of the teacher should primarily be that of engaging with the adult students in mutual discovery about the subject rather than that of a conveyer of stored knowledge. That approach, according to Meek (1983) actually worked with adolescents. She reported that the students learnt best when they composed the texts, when the roles of teacher and student were reversed and when the student's frame of reference dominated. Meek's comment

on that approach with regard to the gap between tutor's intention and the possible outcome highlight the difficulty of negotiating and changing traditional roles.

We wanted to make them 'consociates'. If in our attempt to revise our relationship we still took more control of the operation than we really wanted to, the reasons for this are interesting in themselves.

Writing about the needs of adults in further education (FE) Francis (1990) cast some light on the expected difficulty which facilitators and students might have in negotiating or switching roles when she commented that for the teacher such role adjusting might be difficult since "through the process of social stereotyping they might have come to see themselves either as all knowing people or as people who ought to be all-knowing" (ibid:4). One might also add that the students, by the same process, might have also come to see themselves as unknowing or as people who need to be taught everything.

Adding support for theory from the experiences of practice, Francis cited the following comment from one of the tutors who participated in an FE staff development training programme. The instructors in the programme had applied the above principals in training teachers to use them and this is one participant's response:

It [the course] served the purpose of highlighting weaknesses in my own teaching and enabled me to be objective, whereas previously, I would concentrate on the student's learning and not my own learning.

Carl Rogers (1983), speaking about learning situations in general, seemed to support the above suggestion about roles in his statement that there ought to be "a participatory mode of decision making in all aspects of learning in which students, teachers and administrators have a part" (ibid:31). Referring specifically to the art of teaching, he noted that "teaching is more difficult than learning because the teacher has to learn how to let the student learn without interference (ibid:18). That ideas recalls the one forwarded by John Adams (1938) that teachers must teach so that they become dispensable to their students. Commenting on the role of the student, Adams noted that just as "a cat does not caress us, but only caresses himself against us" so the student

should "educate himself against the teacher (ibid:13).

The range of implications which the roles of the participants have for ABLE provision were implied in the assumptions which Lindman held about adult learning, for they and are reflected in the current good practice guides issued by some providers. His observation that adults are motivated to learn in accordance to the extent to which their experience, needs and interests are incorporated into class activity implies that those factors should be the source of the teaching materials, the reference points of the class content and the basis of discussions. Those elements may be said to belong to the learner as a "unique individual" (Francis, 1990: 5). Lindeman also spoke of adults being life-centred, a concept which would reinforce the need for relevance in the ABLE subject content. His observation that adults learn best through experience suggests that the literacy lesson should allow for interaction between students and participation between students and facilitators. His highlighting the fact of students' inherent differences and the idea that people became more different as they grew older presented a challenge for literacy provision to be innovative enough to cater to such differences not just with regard to subject matter but also with regard to the choice of materials and methods and the organisation of the learning environment.

The literature on adult literacy provision promotes the above measures as essential inputs to the learning situation and inherent in them is the primacy of the needs of the individual learner. The key principles of learning cited above are as much relevant to the adults in literacy programmes as they are to adults in Further Education (FE). Relating each principle to an implication for instruction and to characteristics of the learner, Francis (1990) referred to learners as unique beings with their own peculiarities and potential for both understanding and misunderstanding; as developing persons who were not locked in a mould but could change their ways of doing and learning; as social individuals who were all engaged in making sense of the world and in contesting meanings; as active persons who needed to be involved in their own learning; as choosers who selected how they approached tasks based on various rationales and as understanding individuals who needed to know why tasks were performed in a particular way and why a particular manner was considered better than another.

With relevance to the adult literacy classroom, one may reason that the above individual elements apply to both facilitator and student and make it essential for negotiation and consultation to be the main strategies of interaction. Those two strategies further imply that the adult literacy student's relationship to the adult literacy tutor would be more one of partner or client but definitely not one of patient as has been implied by the associations of disease attached to illiteracy. In that case the education taking place in the ABLE classroom could be termed "adult" not only as a means of identifying the group for whom it is intended but also as an indication of the maturity which informs it. Maturity in that context refers not to age but to attitude, and the extent to which the facilitator dares to risk being more caring and honest and open-minded and accepts the consequences of such personal exposure.

## **2.8. International Theory and Practice: Overview**

The issues emerging from theorising about teaching literacy and from actual practice in the formal classroom, community projects and FE colleges have not stopped short in the adult literacy classroom. They have been transferred to actual research of the subject and are generating another range of studies in the area of research methodology peculiar to the field (Ivanic and Baynham, 1985; RaPAL, 1992, occasional paper 1). Application of the principle of participation with adult literacy learners being considered equal in adult status to their facilitators has resulted in adult literacy students being part-owner of the research about themselves (Hall, 1984); (Hautecoeur, 1992) as well as collaborators in research with their tutors (Mace and Moss, 1988) and (Mace and Baynham, 1986). Summing up the philosophy behind that development, Hamilton, Ivanic and Barton, in a collaborative article wrote:

Participatory research and action is the logical model for literacy work because of the philosophy behind the teaching and because literacy is about creating knowledge (in Freire's words: reading the world); strengthening voices that have been silenced (writing who you are) and telling others what you have discovered (reaching an audience) (Hautecoeur, 1992: 115).

One useful outcome of ABLE practice and the theoretical debates about elements of practice has been the development of codes of good practice. That development in turn has begun to inform the evaluation of ABLE provision. The ones produced so far in Britain (ALBSU, 1992); the USA (Soifer et. al 1990) and Ireland (NALA, 1991) have been fairly comprehensive in the areas they cover, such as the factors discussed in 2.6.5. above, and in keeping with the trend of debates some have begun to generate reactive debates on their usefulness ( RaPAL, 1993). Those debates, it seems, have begun to influence the revision of those guides and thereby contribute to the further improvement of ABLE provision. Those principles of good practice have also been consonant with the declaration regarding learner involvement by the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL, 1988) and the suggestions for ABLE provision (ITFL, 1990).

A noticeable factor about the literature on adult literacy is that whether the works focused on theory or practice they reflected an individualistic orientation. That is the goals, aims and objectives all related to the learners as individuals even when the idea had been forwarded that the literacy skills were to be applied in the community. Also, in none of the good practice guides was there been any indication that it was useful or essential to have a systematic identification of the needs of the literacy students as well as the needs of the community or the particular country so that the goals of the ABLE programme could accommodate both and so make it possible for students to achieve at more than a personal level.

The omission of those three sets of goals seems important in view of the fact that some students do not see the acquisition of literacy as an intrinsic personal need and they attend classes in response to pressure exerted by others (Mace, 1984) and might therefore need some extrinsic goal of value to motivate them. The assumption here is that if the goals of the lessons in the adult literacy classroom are connected to actual community goals with which the adults could identify the adult students might be more inclined to pursue their literacy education in relation to those goals. This point is however being made in consideration of the earlier suggestion that literacy may be used as an instrument of self defence for it is evident that not all the goals of a community would be conducive to the well being of every individual and people would need to be



aware of them as such and be prepared to challenge them. This suggestion also relates to the earlier distinctions made between literacy provision which focused on the students' psychological environment and that which was primarily concerned with their physical environment. The suggestion also takes into consideration the distinction made between people as individuals with their own human resources to be developed and as a human collective which in the interest of a community or country becomes a human resource.

These issues are linked by the following assumptions. The personal goals of the adult literacy students will identify them as individuals and will be connected to their psychological environment which includes their needs, desires, expectations abilities and the various other resources they have as humans. Conversely, the goals of the community will be connected to the physical environment, and practical or functional elements such as health, sanitation, food production or neighbourhood safety and as such, would require the members of the community to be resources in the effort to achieve goals connected to those factors. The connection with ABLE provision is that if literacy is to be used for the benefit of both the students and the society it should be facilitated with an awareness of the goals of both rather than with the goals of one or the other with the expectation that the benefits will be transferred. That idea of transferral has informed the UNESCO campaigns and those of individual countries been as has been indicated in the literature.

The research project discussed in chapter six provides the data for a case study of ABLE provision in Barbados. That data is then examined from the perspective of goals, not only those of the individual students as is usually the case, but also those of tutors, the institutions offering the provision and the country in which the activity is taking place. The issues discussed above are considered in the discussion of those goals to see to what extent information from current research and practice have been accounted for in the means use to achieve any goals that might have been set.

## CHAPTER 3

### ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE: CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVES

#### 3.1. Adult Illiteracy: A Common Concern

In recent years, the dynamism of Caribbean regional diversity has had to be channelled towards finding strategies for coping with ABLE provision, a concern which the Region shares with the rest of the world as the review of extra-Regional literature in the preceding chapter indicated. Each country has faced the problem with its own concepts of literacy and adult education, which had invariably been shaped by each country's needs and in turn had influenced the type of provision each offered. Inherent differences in geography, language, educational systems and political fortune of the islands have dictated that such common problems be handled differently.

#### 3.2. ABLE Provision: Varied Responses

In terms of topography, all the islands but Barbados are mountainous, a feature which has created isolated communities, despite the small size of the islands. That factor of isolation has been associated with difficulty in the distribution of various services, including education but some positive outcomes have been attributed to it. For example, Ellis (1990a) has noted that isolation has allowed some communities to become amenable to participation in community-based, self-help projects, thereby facilitating non-governmental organisations in initiating adult education programmes to entire communities with much success. Another geographical difference between the islands is that the Leewards and Windwards, because of their position in the Atlantic, have been more prone to direct hits by hurricanes than Barbados, the most easterly of the islands. As a result, the financial resources of most of them have been severely taxed in the constant efforts at rebuilding after such disasters and the accompanying loss of revenue from the destruction of staple crops.

The territories also differ in their language situations. Historically, St. Lucia and Dominica have been shifted from French to English domination, a factor which has created for them a language problem which is more drastic than that faced by all the other territories. Whereas the English speaking territories have English as their national language and the majority of people speak an English Creole, these islands have English as the national language but the people speak a French Creole. In the Dutch speaking islands the situation is similar but the indigenous creole, Papiamentu, which has French, Dutch and Spanish influences, has been accepted as a national language, a status which has so far been denied to the French and English Creoles.

Variation in general education provision is equally striking. For example, the twin island state of St. Kitts and Nevis has a system of compulsory and free education for children in the age range 5-16. Montserrat enjoys that provision too, plus access to secondary level without exams. Barbados, on the other hand, provides free education at all levels up to and including university level. At the other end of the scale of general educational provision lies St. Vincent and the Grenadines with no compulsory primary education policy and not enough places to accommodate the children, even if there were. The other islands fall between these extremes but all have to deal with the same phenomenon: the presence of a significant number of adults who cannot read or write well and who are therefore thought to be incapable of functioning effectively in their societies.

With the variation in educational provision, there have been different estimates of rates of illiteracy among the territories. For example, reported figures range from between 30 and 50 per cent in Dominica, St. Vincent and St. Lucia to 18 per cent in Jamaica and 2 per cent in Barbados (Ellis, 1990a; JAMAL, 1990a). Those estimates must be taken with caution, however, for whereas the figures given by some countries (Barbados and St. Kitts/Nevis) relate to total illiteracy, the figures given by others relate to functional illiteracy. Among the latter countries some base their figures on the population above the age of fifteen and others base theirs on the population above the age of sixteen.

Given the different situations faced by the Caribbean territories, the apparent variation in the range of illiteracy and differences in the means of estimating literacy rates cross

the region, attempts to cope with adult basic illiteracy and functional illiteracy have been equally varied both in level of urgency and extent of effectiveness. At the Regional Consultation On Adult Education, held in Guyana in April 1989, adult educators took a step towards narrowing the variation in approaches to the issue of adult basic literacy provision when they accepted the following definition of adult education, the category under which ABLE provision is offered in most Caribbean territories.

Adult education is the whole range of activities designed to prepare adults to adapt to existing situations, or to change these situations as appropriate, in the interest of individual enhancement, social and economic development, social equity and cohesion. Adult education encompasses formal, non-formal and informal provision.

One year later at the UNESCO-Sponsored Regional Conference on Literacy in the Region, adult literacy providers agreed to the following substantive definition:

[Literacy is] the ability to read and write and compute at all levels at which the individual should be able to function effectively in his/her environment, and meet his/her personal and societal needs -and which level is equated in the Region to a minimum of Grade Four in the formal system (JAMAL, 1991:11).

Regional educators seem also to be moving towards establishing a common standard of Adult basic literacy provision to which all territories can aim but that code of good practice has not yet been formally identified. In the meantime, despite the many common elements shared by the countries in the region, each one is still translating ABLE provision within the framework of its own social, political and cultural peculiarities. Most of them share the common experience, of having the literacy initiatives started by non-governmental agencies long before they were acknowledged or supported by the respective Governments.

### **Cuba and Grenada**

Cuba and Grenada stand out as two exceptions to Government initiated ABLE provision in the Region. In each case, the literacy programme was initiated as a part of a political revolution and was therefore seen as an integral part of the nation building effort. That

common goal was used in both cases to mobilise individuals and non-governmental organisations to make the effort a national effort at mass literacy provision. In both cases the goals of the programmes were also integral to the economic and cultural development of the countries and expressed in the statements of national policy, which also paid attention to the specific elements of provision such as material and methods.

### **Jamaica**

In Jamaica most ABLE programmes have been initiatives of The Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Learning (JAMAL) which has been receiving full support from the Government since 1954. On account of that support JAMAL has been able to gain access to enough resources to facilitate an intensive island-wide campaign with significant effect: the rate of illiteracy fell from 32 percent in 1975 to 18 per cent in 1987 (JAMAL, 1987). JAMAL, one of the most successful initiatives in the Caribbean has also thrived as a result of support from a cross section of the society and has been able to produce its own reading and teaching materials as well as radio programmes.

### **St. Vincent**

The initial effort was started by the St. Vincent Union of Teacher (SVUT) in the 1970's as their response to the growing problem of illiteracy. Out of their expansion in the 1980's came the National Association for mass Education (NAME) 1986 and it has since been co-ordinating the adult education initiatives of over 56 non-governmental organisations. The St. Vincent Government was finally roused into action in 1986. It established the Adult Education Unit (AEU), manned by an education co-ordinator, and provided technical, material and financial assistance to groups and offered quarterly training sessions for facilitators.

### **St. Lucia**

The dynamism of NAME in St. Vincent was replicated in the operations of the National Development and Research Foundation (NDRF) in St. Lucia. As was the case in St. Vincent, the St. Lucian government eventually lent its support and set up an Adult Education Unit managed by an education officer whose role was to promote and co-ordinate all adult education ventures. At the end of 1990, thirteen centres were in

operation with 1,000 registered students being catered to by 100 facilitators but there were still 30,000 illiterate individuals in St. Lucia for whom there was no literacy provision (Harvey and Williams, 1990).

### **Dominica**

Like the governments of St. Vincent and St. Lucia, the government of Dominica gave its support to the literacy drive subsequent to initiatives being implemented by non-governmental organisations in adult education. The support offered by the Dominican Government for the literacy initiative came in the form of an eleven member Council for Adult Education DOMCAE, whose role was to formulate policy and monitor adult education activities. That initiative boosted the adult literacy programme which had been started by the Adult Education Centre in 1981, for it became the basis of the national programme which was administered by the centre and has since served over fifty rural communities (Ellis, 1990a).

### **Santo Domingo**

The literacy effort in Santo Domingo has been part of the educational programmes offered by the Secretariat of Education, Fine Arts and Culture, non-Governmental organisations and the Catholic Church. That country seems to have been the only one besides Barbados, where church personnel are actively involved as providers in ABLE provision.

### **Haiti**

Plagued by political and economic problems for decades, Haiti seemed not to have been able to make any serious effort at offering extensive literacy provision until 1961. In that year, workers in rural community development services and those in urban adult education services combined to form The Office National d'Alphabetisation et d'Action Communautaire (ONAAC) which took on the responsibility of organising various adult education programmes including adult literacy programmes. Unlike other territories in the region that Government seemed not to have welcomed ABLE initiatives with much enthusiasm, for according to some providers, ABLE initiatives have been associated with the promotion of militant and anti-establishment ideas, and have therefore been seen

as potentially threatening to the political directorate.

### **Belize**

According to literacy educators in Belize, the need for an extensive adult basic literacy and general education programme in that country was triggered by the influx of immigrants from the neighbouring territories. Besides providing basic literacy instruction, the adult literacy programmes in Belize have been aimed at providing education for the immigrants and as such required Government involvement (Harvey and Williams, 1990).

### **Guyana**

In Guyana, which has been in a state of economic crisis for a long time, the adult education thrust had to be consistent with the economic situation and therefore it incorporated a strong agricultural component which stressed the need for self sufficiency in foods, the substitution of local products for imported foods and increased production. Recent efforts in Guyana seemed limited to awareness programmes (JAMAL, 1991:20) and appeared to have been prompted by UNESCO promotions at the beginning of International Literacy Year (ILY), rather being on-going programmes.

### **Antigua**

The most recent ABLE efforts seemed to have been in Antigua which began with 35 students and five facilitators in 1990. Like the other territories, with the exception of Jamaica, the initiative began without knowledge of the extent of adult illiteracy on the island (JAMAL/ UNESCO, 1991). In an earlier report, Harvey and Williams (1990) had noted that although there had been no official figures of illiteracy, educators were aware of a need and had begun to sponsor workshops in association with CARCAE. In one of those introductory literacy programmes non-literate adults had participated so the recent literacy class could have been a product of those initial public awareness efforts.

## **Aruba and The Netherlands Antilles**

As was the case for the French Antilles the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba,<sup>1</sup> believed that they had no illiteracy problems among the adult population. A recent survey has indicated that there is such a problem (JAMAL, 1991) and the Government has responded to the report of the survey by commissioning a non-governmental group to investigate the problem and make projections on what would be needed to deal with the situation. It must be noted that prior to the Government's acknowledgement of the need for adult literacy provision in the Netherlands, non-governmental organisations such as Inisiativa Particular Korsou (IPK) in Curacao and the Methodist Agogue Centre (MAC) in St. Maarten were involved in literacy work as part of adult education provision. In Curacao, the literacy and welfare needs of young women have been catered for by Foundashun Mangosa, a family- managed organisation based in the home of the founder, Beatrix Musa.

## **Trinidad**

In Trinidad as in Barbados there has been no official estimate of the rate of illiteracy among adults although there is a common belief that it exists. In both countries the efforts have been more in line with formal educational approaches than with the community-based, informal and non-formal initiatives in the Leeward and Windward islands. Michael Rudder reported (JAMAL/UNESCO, 1991) with teacher training at the University of the West Indies. In another report (Ellis, 1990b), however, it had been noted that the Extension Department of the Ministry of Education had been offering classes across the country in the areas of basic reading, writing and mathematics.

### **3.3. Coordinating Regional Provision: CARCAE**

The task of co-ordinating the provision of adult basic literacy and general education in the Caribbean has been taken on by the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education (CARCAE), which was set up in 1976 as the regional branch of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE), which is based in Canada. The Council

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<sup>1</sup>Aruba, formerly part of the Netherlands Antilles has been granted "separate status" from the other islands but has still maintained its affiliation to Holland (Harvey and Williams, 1990:187).



which has been based in Barbados and Antigua shifted its base to Curacao in 1993. The following objectives have been cited by the council:

1. to promote and facilitate cooperation among nation continuing education organisations and agencies in the non-Spanish speaking territories
2. to advance activities of member associations and institutions and to encourage cooperation among them
3. to promote awareness and recognition of the importance of continuing education and to seek and encourage adequate funding from governments
4. to serve as an advisory body to governments on regional matters relating to continuing education
5. to initiate and /or to support the mounting of conferences, seminars, training courses, workshops, and so on, as well as undertaking (sic) research in the field of continuing education and the operation of a documentation centre and a publications programme. The council's membership comprises individuals, national associations from the various islands and territories as well as non-affiliated organisations and agencies.

The organisation has therefore been instrumental in coordinating activities aimed at bringing representatives of the regional territories together to share experiences and exchange ideas to their mutual benefit. These events have taken the form of collaborative efforts on surveys and seminars and workshops, national conferences and symposia, all aimed at sensitising regional educators about the nature of their task. The first literacy seminar in the region was held in Jamaica in 1960 and it attracted participants from the English, French, Dutch and Spanish speaking territories. The effort has since been revived and between 1980 and 1990 there have been four regional /sub regional events with a focus on literacy: A meeting of Experts from Adult Education Institutions (St. Lucia, 1980); A Sub Regional Seminar Workshop On Adult Education and Literacy (Antigua, 1983); A Sub Regional Seminar On The Exchange Of Innovative Experiences and Training Of Specialists In Adult Education and Literacy (St. Kitts, 1985); Projection Of Educational Policies And National Strategies For The Next Ten Years (Barbados, 1990).

Those events were jointly sponsored by UNESCO and the Caribbean Regional Council For Adult Education (CARCAE) and were organised within the framework of UNESCO's Major Project For Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. They provided a forum for participants to network and share ideas about the literacy provision; discuss the implications of adult illiteracy for national and regional development; explore and examine policies, strategies and mechanisms for eliminating illiteracy in the region and make recommendations for common regional adult basic literacy practices.

Those events have been more a stimulus for generating documentation on adult literacy practice in the region than for making contributions to international debates on theoretical issues. This observation may be supported by a perusal of the documents listed in the Caribbean Bibliography of Literacy Materials (1990). Ellis, (1988:10) gave what might be taken as the rationale for that tendency when she noted that "in the Caribbean there is a greater need for a large number of competent practitioners than for professional adult educators." Yet in what seemed to be a contradiction of that statement, Ellis later acknowledged the need for the current course for adult trainers to be accredited by the University of the West Indies so as to "provide a cadre of professional educators. The initial conclusion may be challenged on two bases: all practice is carried out on the basis of some theory; professionalism may be taken as a badge of status based on knowledge of theory or it may be taken as label of competence grounded in applied theory. Given these two perspectives, one might assume that it might have been on the basis of the second concept of professionalism that Ellis had cited the need for academic recognition for the CARCAE course and she was not therefore being contradictory.

One of the main sources of documentation has been that same course, The CARCAE "Three-year Certificate Course for Teachers of Adults", owing to the course requirement that students write a research paper on literacy efforts in their territories. As a result those studies have been generating additional data on regional adult literacy practices every three years. Additional sources of documentation have been the CARCAE triennial reports on its activities in the regions; individual reports from specific training programmes for facilitators, trainers of trainers and specific developmental projects such

as the Report of the Regional Workshop on Leadership Development prepared by Rosaline Corbin (CARCAE, 1989). Evaluation reports have also provided valuable documentation both on specific projects such as CARCAE's certificate course, already mentioned (Ellis, 1985); regional evaluation reports on general adult education projects commissioned by regional agencies (CARICOM, 1976, 1982); and reports on regional literacy initiatives sponsored by international organisations (JAMAL/UNESCO, 1991).

Important documentation some of which has informed regional practice has also been generated by research initiatives undertaken by regional and international agencies. The first significant research efforts began with the Survey On Adult Education Activities in The Caribbean (CARICOM, 1975) which indicated that illiteracy was present in a sufficient number of countries to warrant the implementation of adult literacy programmes. That was followed by the UNESCO funded study on Literacy In The English Speaking Caribbean (UNESCO, 1980) which provided statistics on literacy levels for some of countries. During the 1980's more detailed information about adult education and literacy programmes in the region was unearthed by the Survey Of Community Based Literacy initiative in Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent (NRDF/CUSO, 1987); The Evaluation Study Of National Literacy Experiences in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and St. Lucia (UNESCO/CARCAE, 1989). The most recent research project has been A Survey of Adult Education In The Caribbean in terms of policy, practice, impacts and projections, which covered fourteen countries including English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking territories (CARCAE, 1990).

It has been observed from studying a sample of the documentation on adult literacy education and general education in the region that except for the reports on literacy initiatives in territories which have had no documentation much of the general data on the region seemed to be updates on perviously documented literacy programmes. One may attribute this to the fact that the regional conferences are usually attended by the faithful pioneers of adult education. As expected, the suggestions and projections made at the conferences as well as those resulting from reports and surveys tend not to differ much. One may also consider whether such repetition is usually motivated by the need

to convince providers of adult literacy provision, both governments and individuals, that they ought to bring their provision in line with the ideas or whether it is a symptom of the need for new voices or stronger advocacy. One positive outcome of this constant activity is that it has kept the public's attention on the issues of adult education in general. However, that overt awareness seemed not to have had the effect of mobilizing people to get involved, especially people in countries like Barbados who have been led to believe that their country's illiteracy problem is minimal.

One other observation must be mentioned in order to link the documentation mentioned above to the following data on good practice which have been extracted from those documents. It is that many reports do not distinguish between the broad field of adult education and the specific activity of adult basic literacy education. For example, in some general surveys on adult education, there is sometimes no mention of literacy provision even though it has been known to be on offer. Given the comprehensive regional definition of adult education, there seems to be no indication that such a distinction is necessary. The following ideas on good practice with regard to adult basic literacy education provision have therefore been inferred from ideas forwarded in the regional documents about teaching adults as students in three contexts: adult literacy students (the non-literate); students of adult literacy (tutors and trainers); and adult students in general.

#### **3.4. Code Of Good ABLE Practice**

Given the similarity in suggestions and ideas coming out of the various reports mentioned above, one may assume that a statement about what regional literacy providers consider to be good adult basic literacy provision may exist in the common ideas which they have been expressing. Since most of the ideas have come out of regional events and publications to which the main providers of regional literacy have been contributors, it might not be too far fetched to refer to such a statement as a consensual one. Given that there is a regional definition for adult education and one for adult literacy, the next logical step seems to be the formulation of a regional code of good practice. The following outline of common ideas is not an attempt to create such a code but an attempt to see whether such a code has begun to emerge. It should then

be possible to gauge the extent to which the regional and international codes differ and more importantly, the extent to which current adult literacy practice in Barbados, the basis of this research project, deviates from or conforms to such a code. For convenience and appropriateness of presentation, the various comments about adult basic literacy provision made by regional educators are listed below under categories corresponding to the context of provision in which the ideas had been expressed.

### **Course Content**

The content of the programmes must be "negotiated" to ensure that the [students'] expectations, needs and priorities are met (Ellis, 1988b:17). Curricular content should cater to the students' education as well as their livelihood for "While the former is geared to the acquisition and upgrading of skills in literacy and basic education, the latter emphasizes the links between literacy, occupational skills training and the world of work" (Ellis, 1990b:11).

### **Teaching Methodology**

Participatory methodology is most appropriate for it encourages the use of interactive techniques which stimulate dialogue between students and tutors. The techniques should be used to encourage people to communicate with each other in groups. Such grouping could begin with two or three people and expand to incorporate the whole class. Some techniques which are useful as a means of generating ideas, soliciting feedback, releasing tension or explaining concepts are role play, drawing exercises, songs, poems or games (Robinson, 1988). It is considered more advantageous to use more than one technique preferably in combination (Ellis, 1988b).

The use of a participatory approach in the provision of adult literacy education is more appropriate for the Caribbean. Such an approach emphasises the process of learning rather than the product and as such, the main aim of the techniques used under that orientation is to enable students to "systematically and consciously reflect on [an] exercise and their participation in it" (Ellis, 1988:22). Reflection in this context is seen as "an activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it" (ibid:5) and it is believed that it is "as a result of this reflection that

learning takes place" (ibid). Generally, the various teaching strategies should be effective in helping students make useful connections between how and what they learn in the class and their particular personal circumstances. It is also anticipated that such an approach would help students to be aware of their own learning styles and what motivates them and therefore enhance their current learning (Ellis, 1988c).

### **Instructional Materials**

The instructional materials used to facilitate adult literacy acquisition should not be the same as those used to teach children. A variety of materials should be used to enhance instruction and their choice should depend on the students who will use them and the purpose for which they are to be used (Ellis, 1988:25). They ought to include indigenous material such as texts prepared for and by popular theatre groups, which draw on the people's language and culture; folk songs, calypsos, riddles and regional stories. The materials, while maintaining a relevance to culture, should also cater to the students' interests and abilities.

### **Medium of instruction**

In keeping with the need for the content of adult literacy lessons to be relevant to the adult student's needs and interests, the language by which the literacy skills are to be conveyed should also be native to the students. Given the fact that most students who decide to attend literacy classes in the Caribbean will be speakers of a native language which, depending on the country of origin, will differ to varying degrees from the language in which they are expected to use their literacy skills (Jules, 1988:3), it is necessary for bridges to be made between the students' language and the target language. This relates to both the role of tutors as facilitators and the role of students as joint owners of their own learning in a class room partnership for it involves tutors and students accepting the linguistic and cultural legitimacy of the students' language whether it be Kweyol, a French-based Caribbean language; Jamaican Dialect or Bajan Dialect, both English-based languages.

Choice of class room medium is also connected to methodology for it requires the facilitators to find ways of countering the contempt usually held of those languages by

the same students as well as by literate speakers of French and English. It follows that giving due consideration to the choice of class room medium thus requires the facilitator, often a speaker of one of the European languages, to bridge not only the linguistic gap between the languages but also the assumed social gap between them and the students, which could function as a block to effective provision, either from the point of view of the students' learning or the tutors' teaching.

### **Purpose of instruction**

The purpose of facilitating adult learning is the development and maintenance of competence in the particular area being taught therefore instruction should focus on areas of new knowledge, needed skills and the reinforcement or alteration of relevant attitudes (Ellis, 1988). Competence may be manifested in students reaching a state of actualization where they are able to explain and apply what they have learnt. Instruction therefore ultimately aims to change the student who can influence changes in the community and ultimately have an impact at the national level. The objectives of the adult learning-teaching situation, in addition to being guided by students' personal factors, should also be guided by sectoral factors so that the changes effected by the learning can be felt at three levels: the individual, the community and the country (Harvey and Williams, 1990).

### **Roles of students and facilitators**

The relationship between the adult student and the adult tutor is usually informed by the roles played by them and those roles in turn depend on what tutors and students think of themselves and of each other. The nature of the students' role is therefore seen to be participatory. The rationale for selecting such a role is based on the knowledge that each student brings to the learning situation ideas, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, needs, interests, aspirations and experiences (Ellis, 1988) and that as adults they learn better when they identify their own needs and can see a practical use for what they have learnt (ibid). It is further accepted that adults, as humans, must be treated with respect for each one is a potential leader and each one is accustomed to making decisions (Robinson, 1988).

The participatory role expected of adult students and instructors in the teaching-learning situation therefore implies that the inputs to adult basic literacy provision from students should not only be in the form of their needs and interests but also in the form of contributions to the programme through involvement in planning the lesson content, producing and collecting materials and evaluating both learning processes and outcomes (Robinson, 1988). Considering the amount of involvement the student is expected to have in the ABLE programme the literacy tutors's role as facilitator or one who "enables learning to happen" (Ellis, 1988b:34) would involve not merely giving facts, but helping students to discover the contextual relativity of all knowledge, values and behaviours.

### **The facilitator's qualities and training**

The facilitator is expected to be sensitive to others feelings, analytical and creative and to have the ability to effectively apply management skills, inter-personal skills and communication skills to the teaching of adults. In addition, the facilitator of adult basic literacy learning is expected to know not only about the subject of literacy which the adult students need to learn but also about how adults learn and about the various means of facilitating that learning (Robinson, 1988). The training of the adult facilitator is therefore expected to include an introduction to the following areas of knowledge: psychological and educational theories as they relate to adults; planning and management of educational programmes; the design and production of instructional materials; techniques of problem solving; and techniques of counselling.

### **ABLE Management: Provision Informed by Students' Needs**

The programme of learning is supposed to be based on a systematic identification and assessment of students' needs (Ellis, 1988a; Joyce Robinson in JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990) in order to make it relevant. Therefore, besides meeting the learning needs mentioned above, adult literacy programmes ought to provide for those domestic and psychological needs which could interfere with the students taking full advantage of the educational provision. The provision of child care is one essential domestic need because of the number of women who attend adult basic literacy classes. Another need which is a potential block to efficient learning is the absence of environments which are conducive to learning (Ellis, 1990b; JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990). Adequate provision to meet this



need should include class rooms fitted with good lighting, furnished with seats appropriate for adults and offering adequate space for comfortable interaction; and buildings in good physical condition with hygienic facilities.

### **ABLE Management: Provision Guided by National Policy**

Even though adult literacy programmes might be managed by non-governmental organisations, they ought to be informed by policies formulated as part of national development plans. Those policies should be conveyed in unambiguous statements about the place adult literacy has in the general education system; the role it has to play in national development; and the availability of funds and personnel to set up, maintain, monitor and evaluate literacy projects. For effective functioning regional literacy programmes must be linked to five sources: a government which decides on policies; literacy experts who design and organise the structure of the programmes, materials and evaluation instruments; an administrative body which helps facilitators to implement programmes, supervisors various activities and monitors the progress of the programme; the adult literacy students and the facilitators (JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990).

### **ABLE Management: Provision Structured at Three Levels**

In keeping with the need for positive and comprehensive change to be an outcome of adult learning, the adult literacy programme is expected to be structured to offer activities at three levels: the individual, the communal and the supportive (Harvey and Williams, 1990:13). The following activities have been suggested for each category:

#### **A. Individual**

1. continuous professional development
2. skills training
3. academic upgrading
4. life skills (social coping mechanisms)
5. literacy

#### **B. Communal**

1. consciousness raising
2. entrepreneurial activity
3. religious/spiritual activity
4. cultural activity
5. integrated community development/mobilization

### C. Supportive

1. institutional development
2. adult education studies/methods
3. research development and documentation
4. project preparation, appraisal and evaluation
5. advocacy

### **Provision Related to Developmental Sectors**

Even though the above activities have been suggested as relevant frameworks for general adult education provision it has been deemed possible for each to be relevant in the adult basic literacy programme. In that context, those activities would be incorporated into the programme during the literacy task analysis (Whiteman in JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990:30) which must take account of the adults' needs, interests and ambitions. The above activities would then be directly related to any of the following sectors of the national development plan: economic development, social development, science and technology, infrastructure and communications and information (Harvey and Williams, 1990).

### **Funding and Budgeting**

In order to ensure that programmes are not suspended or that adequate provision is not compromised by the unexpected withdrawal or reduction of money promised to programmes, providers should not rely as much on money from local, regional and international agencies as they have done. In addition to those sources, providers and their students would need to help raise their own funds. This would be best done by including fund raising as a part of their operation and have the activities planned and managed by a fund raising department. Such a department "should be established at the national and local levels, with full-time functions to negotiate and obtain contributions for financing programme[s]" (JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990:15). Even though on-going fund raising would benefit from student participation, the main activities would have to be initiated long before the students have been recruited in order to ensure that adequate money is available to cover the budget for both establishing and maintaining the programme.

Programmes should also have built-in provision for periodical mobilisation, recruitment and advocacy, three areas of activity intended to stimulate interest and involvement by the general public, adult literacy students and the political directorate, respectively. In addition, it is expected that for regional programmes to be more effective providers would have to keep themselves informed about the results of up-to-date research on adult basic literacy (both regional and extra-regional) and where possible apply the suggestions to the literacy provision offered by their programmes.

### **Support Systems**

One main source of support which the programme managers are expected to develop is voluntary assistance from the community, not only as a cost-cutting strategy but also as a means of initiating self help practices and as a way of altering prevalent negative attitudes to the adults who are not literate. Another is the news media, for given the diversity within various islands and the many adult literacy activities being conducted in various communities the services of the news media are required to disseminate up-to-date information across the region to all the participants involved in adult literacy provision. Those services are also indispensable in making the general public aware of what provision is being offered and in recruiting their help in various ways and challenging their prevailing negative attitudes to non-literate adults. Programme managers are therefore obliged to document and disseminate their efforts, successes and needs and through mass media initiatives with the type of effectiveness evident in the radio and television programmes developed by JAMAL in Jamaica for different audiences; the programme, "Breakthrough" produced by the St. Vincent Ministry of Education for adults literacy students; and the one-year UNESCO/CARCAE radio programme, "Caribbean Drum", which targeted educators and potential adult literacy facilitators.

### **Evaluation of the ABLE Programme**

In view of the various areas through which it is possible to convey adult literacy education, constant monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes are deemed to be essential to ensure that those programmes are offering what they were set up to offer. The evaluation instruments must be reliable and valid for measuring literacy in a

particular setting; a systems approach should be used to relate outcomes to stated objectives and the set time-frame of the programme; the options, regarding the requirements of validity and reliability, ranged from quantitative evaluation instruments for measuring the performance of students and the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes (Ellis, 1990b) to oral means conveyed through discussions or drama (Robinson, 1988). Besides looking at the students' performance in terms of reading and writing tasks, evaluation of regional adult literacy provision is also expected to measure two other elements: "the growth of the individual in areas of increased self confidence, attitudes of responsibility to the group and to the wider community; the change and development of the community as a whole" (Robinson, 1988:29).

### **3.5. Code Confirmed: Regional Consensus**

The above ideas for good adult literacy practice and programme planning have been extracted from reports of successes and shortcomings of individual adult literacy initiatives; suggestions from the numerous conferences, workshops, consultations and surveys and publications. Because of their comprehensive nature, the ideas might be seen as the nucleus of a regional code of adult basic literacy practice and programme provision. Confirmation that there has been some consensus about those ideas being the nucleus of a regional code has been provided by two regional documents. The first, A Manual for Caribbean Adult Education Programmes (Robinson, 1988) reported three case studies of adult education from Grenada, St. Vincent and St. Lucia in which many of the ideas were applied in practice. The second document, Final Report and Draft Plan of Action of the UNESCO-Sponsored Regional Conference, Literacy in the Region: Strategies for the 90's (JAMAL/UNESCO, 1990) appeared to be a summary of the ideas. The basis on which the above practices may be taken to be regional in application was further provided by the fact that the Draft plan was agreed to by the fifty-four participants, representing the four language areas of the region, who attended the conference. The plan, which was "geared towards eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000" (JAMAL/ UNESCO, 1990:26), was expressed as the following statement:

The Draft Plan, as agreed by the participants, calls for inter alia: the need for countries to define illiteracy; come to terms with growing [the] incidence of illiteracy; critically survey the extent of the problem, the available effective solutions and existing materials, using appropriate tools and methods and regional expertise; develop strategies and programmes which are generic to the region; use or adapt available materials which we have produced; determine to have local and regional oversight of any programme which is implemented to monitor achievements; step-up public awareness efforts at all levels; provide appropriate training for ALL levels of participant (sic) involved in the programmes of delivering literacy training; ensure sufficient budgetary allocations; provide proper accommodation for the learners and help them identify incentives for their attendance at programmes; mobilize all necessary interests in the community.

Evaluation - formative and summative is crucial.

### **3.6. Regional ABLE Theory and Practice: Overview**

From the above discussion it is clear that the agenda of facilitating adult basic literacy education in the Caribbean comprised four main items. The first is advocacy of the ABLE provision. That seemed to have been necessitated by the apparent reluctance of some Caribbean Governments to acknowledge that many of the adults in their countries have inadequate basic literacy skills despite being schooled in the formal system of education. Following from that non-acknowledgement of adult illiteracy has been the non-commitment of those leaders to fund and or support ABLE programmes as part of their country's general education provision or as one of their country's national development projects, despite promoting education as essential for national development.

The second item on the regional agenda is the management of the logistics of provision. Given the lack of full government support and the fact that most providers of ABLE programmes in the region are non-governmental organisations, there have been inadequate funds and limited access to other resources so the efforts of providers seemed to have been channelled towards finding means of implementing and maintaining the programmes. The third item is training of trainers. This item relates to the second for invariably, training often utilises much of the limited resources. The general impression conveyed regarding training has been that providers believe that it is necessary to ensure the availability of well trained facilitators before the hands-on literacy instruction is

undertaken. Thus the provision of training has been the major concern of most seminars and workshops in the region. The fourth item, which relates to the third, is educational intervention. That activity, although it may be considered the central element in the provision of adult basic literacy education seems not to have been given as much attention as the other items. However, it seems to have been taken into consideration as part of the training of facilitators received. That assumption is based on the promotion in some regional training programmes (Ellis, 1988; Robinson 1988) of the use of indigenous elements as innovative inputs to ABLE practice.

One issue which has not been included in the agenda has been the direct link between the goals of individuals, the community and the nation. Students' needs have been cited as being essential to the planning of any programme and the whole endeavour of facilitating basic literacy has been seen as a benefit to the community and a long term benefit to the country but there has been no report of how those three levels of goals have been systematically linked to the literacy provision of any regional programme. This is one element which Regional ABLE provision shares with extra-Regional initiatives: the absence of such tripartite goal-setting. In industrialised countries such as Britain, the United States of America and Canada, emphasis was usually placed on the goals of students as individuals. In Latin American countries, Africa and Asia the main goals highlighted were those of the community. In countries which initiated their literacy programmes as part of political reform, such as the communist countries of Russia, China and the Socialist Tanzania, national goals were highlighted.

The above review of Caribbean ABLE initiatives serves to give a Regional perspective on ABLE provision. In that context it is important to see the extent to which the experiences of nearly thirty years of regional ABLE practice has informed the Barbadian initiative, which was initiated in 1980. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, neither descriptive nor evaluative reports have been written about that first initiative (the community-based programme discussed in chapter six below). That programme and the more recent ones therefore constitute the basis of a case study of ABLE provision in Barbados which can be viewed in the context of the regional code of good ABLE practice identified in section 3.4. and complementary international codes of good practice.

## CHAPTER 4

### ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE: LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

#### 4.1. Local Education Policy: ABLE Provision

In Barbados, there is a stated philosophy of education for the primary school, the Statement of Philosophy Relating to Primary Schools of Barbados (Ministry of Education, 1980), but no stated philosophy seems to exist for the other levels of education. It may be assumed that as primary schooling is the foundation of the national educational system that the philosophy of education devised for that level was meant to be expanded for application to the other levels of the educational system. That assumption is supported by the fact that sentiments expressed in the statement of philosophy are echoed in the national development plans in relation to the provision of education at the secondary and tertiary levels and for special and continuing education. Given that education is seen as the tool which enables Barbadians to contribute to all sectors of national life, it is surprising that there is no mention of adult basic literacy education in the national development plans and that the principles outlined in the statement of philosophy have not been shown to be as applicable to that level of educational provision as they have been shown to be regarding the other levels.

The apparent omission of adult literacy education from local educational policies seems, however, not to have been a reflection of Government's lack of interest in the educational needs of non literate adults for it has openly supported efforts made by non-governmental organisations to provide adult literacy education. For example, it has expressed appreciation to the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA) for its work in adult teacher training and it has lauded the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies (UWISOCS) for coordinating literacy classes in the community and in the prison. Furthermore, the Government has been collaborating with UWISOCS through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice in the provision of basic literacy skills in the prison. The Government's apparent concern about adult illiteracy

has also been evident from its involvement in local activities hosted to mark International Literacy Year (ILY) in 1991 and from its endorsement of statements made by the international community regarding the importance of eliminating illiteracy by the year 2000.

If one assumes that a policy exists only if it is stated or written unequivocally, then one can say that the Barbados Government has no policy on the provision of adult literacy education. However, if one accepts that a policy may not be stated but may be implied by actions or even by what is left unsaid, then the Barbados Government has an adult literacy policy which is nascent in existence and ambivalent in expression. By using the principles in the Statement of Philosophy as a basis, and supplementing them with principles, expectations and statements expressed in recent National Development Plans: 1979-83, 1983-88, and 1988-93; and the 1991 manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), the party comprising the current Government, it is possible to compose a picture of the country's educational policy as it relates to adult basic literacy provision. Such a picture is composed below using the above strategy in order to provide a local context in which to discuss the adult literacy provision described in chapter six, draw conclusions and make suggestions.

#### **4.1.1. Philosophy of Primary Education**

According to the statement of philosophy, the main goal of the educational system in Barbados is to develop a nation of people who are "creative, well adjusted, and willing to make some contribution to the social and economic development of their community" (Ministry of Education, 1980:4). In view of the definitions given for development in the introduction, the educational goal cited above may be translated into two expected outcomes: the enhancement of the individual's capabilities and personality and the improvement of community services and facilities, both of which are considered essential for facilitating national development. In the statement of philosophy, guidelines for effecting the individual's development were given as a list of essential personal attributes needed for improving self and relating to others, the community and the environment. There were also suggestions of how those qualities could be taught through education. The personal and interpersonal qualities included a sense of equality with other humans,



pride in oneself, an appreciation of Barbados' national symbols, heritage and achievements and an urge to cooperate with and to be of service to others. Skills and aptitudes cited as being necessary for coping with the environment included self confidence and the ability to analyze problems, find solutions, anticipate results, act appropriately and complete tasks. The activities in which individuals were to engage in order to develop the above qualities were experimentation, discovery, questioning, seeking answers to questions and expressing ideas clearly all of which were to be part of the "deliberately contrived experiences" (Ministry of Education, 1980:1) to which individuals would have been exposed in the class room.

Regarding specific skills needed to achieve both personal and community development, the Statement of Philosophy emphasised the need for individuals to be trained to listen attentively and discerningly; speak and write well; and read with understanding. It also advocated the need for individuals to build a wide vocabulary, and gain experience in manipulating a variety of texts in different forms. The rationale given for the importance of such skills was that communication skills were central to an individual's cognitive development and that "the inability to use language well limits social development and lack of the ability to read shuts out some of the vast world of literature available" (Ministry of Education, 1980:2). In the above statement the general term 'language' implies English, an assumption which has implications for instruction in the ABLE programme. Those implications are discussed in section 6.1.1.1 of chapter six below.

Three main roles were assigned to the teacher in the statement of philosophy: interpreter of the social and physical world for the student, provider of opportunities for participation and a source of reference in the class room. The personal attributes which teachers were expected to manifest were broad-mindedness, the ability to assess, develop and direct students' abilities, and a knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subjects they teach. The expected benefit of recruiting teachers with the above attributes to provide the suggested educational activities to children from the primary school level upward was the production of a generation of individuals with a range of characteristics deemed vital for the development of the nation. These qualities included the following: a sense of responsibility, the capacity to base one's life on reasoned principles, behave in

socially accepted ways, perform tasks in an orderly and efficient manner and develop the habit of being thrifty. According to the document, such individuals would also be aware of the "interdependence of mankind" (Ministry of Education, 1980:4); they would recognise the value of agriculture with reference to how it can be used to help the community to feed itself and reduce imports; they would be willing and able to "assist in maintaining the physical health of the society" (ibid) and they would have an aptitude for appreciating the aesthetic value of various art forms especially in the context of Caribbean culture.

The statement of philosophy also gave some insight into the rationale for promoting the type of education proposed above:

There would be fewer psychological barriers to personal and environmental development, and thus there would be greater possibility towards the leading of a fuller, more satisfying life, and the enjoyment of a higher quality of life (Ministry of Education, 1980:10).

The rationale given for introducing the various principles of provision at the primary level was the following:

The primary stage of education is considered to be the key to the success of the whole system. This implies that the subsequent level reached by the individual depended in no small measure on the curricular offerings in the form of contents, instructional methods, learning experiences and class room atmosphere which are presented to him at this stage of formal training (Ministry of Education, 1980:1).

The above attributes might be translated into goals for they were expected to be outcomes of the educational provision. The implication for educational provision is that practices meant to effect those attributes should inform teaching practice at all levels of the society where educational provision is being offered. This observation is supported by the fact that the above qualities are consistent with those associated with adult literacy facilitators identified in the literature reviewed in chapters two and three above.

#### 4.1.2. Philosophy of Post Primary Education

As was already mentioned, the philosophy behind current secondary education and other forms of educational provision was not stated in a document but may be inferred from development plans, Government's political manifesto, interim plans, the educational act and the Government's practices. One may justifiably go as far back as 1945 for such sources for it was in that year that education in Barbados came under the control of a director of education who replaced the statutory board. That was also the year in which the newly appointed Director of Education, Howard Hayden, presented to the Department of Education a memorandum entitled, "A Policy for Education" (Hayden 1945)), a document meant to contribute to the development of education in Barbados. That memorandum seems to have influenced the educational provision which later governments offered or planned to offer.

Prior to 1979, educational policy was concerned with the political aspect of education such as the aims, objectives and structure of the curriculum; and the administrative and technical aspects such as the provision of facilities and the availability of adequate personnel in the formal school system. There seems to have been little concern for the development of individuals as a worthwhile goal in itself or as an important aspect of national development (F.B. Scott, 1980). That view is supported by an examination of the policy for education proposed by Howard Hayden in 1945. As Director of Education he apparently conceived of educational policy only in political and technical terms when he proposed that the education system be "developed in accordance with modern educational theory and practice and in relation to the economic situation and development in the island" (Hayden 1945:3). There had been no mention of personal development as an educational goal or of educational provision for adult non-literates. General education for adults was mentioned as being part of the social agenda of village clubs and as an area of provision which the Government had promised to introduce.

By 1948, adult education was being provided by the Barbados Evening Institute which was set up to offer the Government's adult education programme. In keeping with the thinking of the time it was job-oriented and focused on the economic development of

of the community rather than the personal development of individuals. As such, that programme was essentially a supplement to the formal school system, for according to Government's assessment of that early programme, it was aimed at improving the qualifications of those who had graduated from elementary school and wanted either to enhance their job prospects or go into higher education. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's the Government's programme expanded and its profile changed to match the shifts in employment: prospects of business expansion influenced the inclusion of commercial subjects in the early 1950's; emigration raised the need for domestic services in late 1950's; and political independence in 1966 and the new expectations of industrial development and the expansion of the service industry necessitated courses for work in the hotel and catering industry. However, in all of that activity, even with the focus on economic development and the connection with the workforce, nothing was mentioned about provision for those adults with inadequate literacy skills, some of whom would have been employed.

The omission of any consideration of personal development, in general, and educational provision for non-literate adults, in particular, from the Haden Memorandum as well as from the actual Government provision does not necessarily mean that individual development was considered to be unimportant or that ABLE provision was insignificant. On the contrary, both principles could have been inherent in the educational "modern" theories and practices which were to inform the system. Whatever was the reason was for not showing any concern for individual development in the 1940's and 1950's, the national development plans indicate that policy makers had reversed their thinking by the 1960's. For example, the 1960-65 Development Plan proposed that provision be made for the development of the people in terms of their health and education. The rationale given for promoting those two aspects of individual development was that investment in education was a pre-requisite for economic development and that a healthy population was not only essential for but was also a stimulus to a developing economy. Thus by the beginning of the decade of the 1970's it was accepted that the development of the individual was necessary for economic development and that education was the essential vehicle through which both forms of development could be achieved. Yet, no attention was paid to the provision of adult

basic literacy education. One possible reason could have been that there was no need for it, but given that universal primary education had not yet been achieved and there had been no survey to determine the need, that rationale would have been questionable. Considering the importance given to education, the omission of ABLE provision is itself also questionable.

The focus on the individual's development was maintained in the 1973-1977 Development Plan which presented three principles as the basis of educational provision:

- (i) Education and training should enable the individual to develop his potential and broaden his outlook so that he can make the fullest use of his talents in the pursuit of worthwhile goals;
- (ii) [Education should] encourage the citizen to believe that he is part of an identifiable social, cultural, and political entity to which he owes allegiance and in which he can feel justly proud;
- (iii) [Education should encourage the citizen to] produce the range of skill required in a dynamic and modernizing economy .

As the above statements show, the 1973-77 Development Plan embodied the main ideals promoted by the statement of philosophy (mentioned earlier) as the desired outcome of individual development. Those principles were patriotism, industriousness, creativity and broad-mindedness, all of which were expected to be manifested by Barbadians in their pursuit of personal interests and in the performance of work. As in the previous plans those qualities were associated with formal education and adult education in general but not with the education of non-literate adults.

One may say therefore that the national development policy of Barbados as it related to education between the 1940's and the late 1970's shifted from a political orientation based on the perception that national development meant primarily economic development to an orientation which acknowledged the importance of individual development as a vital factor in national development. The latter position was supported by the Government in the following affirmation made in the statement of philosophy

(Ministry of Education, 1980:1)

In order to develop a nation it is necessary to try to develop the talents of each individual of which it is composed and to influence his attitudes in such a way that he would be motivated to use these talents for the good of his community.

It is clear from the above statement, that the Government acknowledged the importance of personal development but not in an altruistic way. Rather, its utilitarian value was highlighted in its being promoted not as a legitimate goal on its own but as a means of achieving economic development, Government's primary objective.

Educational provision for non-literate adults or those with inadequate literacy skills was again omitted when the Government's Adult Education Programme was reorganised in 1971. The categories into which the programme was organised, were academic, commercial, technical/vocational; and practical home economic all of which, with the possible exception of the last one, excluded persons who could not read or write for they were literacy-based subjects.

Non-literate adults and those with inadequate literacy skills were again not mentioned in the Government's plans to expand adult educational provision presented in the 1979-83 Development Plan. Issued under the theme, "Planning For Growth", that plan was aimed at initiating a comprehensive review of the educational system at all levels in order to determine future policy and make current programmes more relevant (F.B. Scott, 1980:12). It was therefore introduced as being representative of "the first phase of a process of longer term planning that will see the eventual transformation of Barbados into a modern self-reliant, industrialised society" (National Development Plan, 1983:128). The focus was still on economic factors but there was an acknowledgement of the social factors as is evident in the statement that education was "an important instrument in the social and economic development of the country" (ibid) and in the following goals:

Not only will education help to build a just society but it will also help provide equality of opportunity for

individuals to develop their potential and skill to play a significant role in the life of the community; and participate critically in its political and social institutions (ibid).

Judging from the above statement, one might assume that adult students in continuing education as well as adult literacy students would be included among the "individuals" mentioned. By the publication of the 1983-88 Development Plan the Government's adult education programme had been evaluated and temporarily discontinued for "it had failed to meet the needs of an adult population seeking to acquire technical and other skills demanded by changes in the working environment" (National Development Plan, 1983: 140). In the government's assessment of the programme, its discontinuance was cited as a justifiable casualty of the "economic squeeze" on the country (Ministry of education, 1983:1), showing that economic considerations were given priority.

That decision was consistent with another apparent shift in the focus of education and development policies back to a more economic basis in the 1980's. That observation was supported by statements made in the 1983-88 Development Plan which was issued the year after the suspension of the Government's adult education programme. There the general educational goals were defined primarily in economic terms rather than in the personal terms which had been used in the previous two five-year plans. For example the Plan stated that education and training must "underpin the industrial sector by providing an educated trained labour force to support its efforts to expand, diversify and strengthen its industrial base" (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1983:146) In a tone similar to that which informed the plans of the 1950's, the plan gave the following expected outcomes of education:

The educational system must produce school leavers who can be readily absorbed into the world of work rather than school leavers who experience difficulty in finding employment because their education and training have been found inappropriate (ibid.).

Even with the shift back to an economic focus which implied that all adults ought to be

equipped to cope in all areas of the economy, consideration of literacy education for adults was not shown. When the proposal for the restructuring of the entire programme was accepted in 1984, adult students in general education were considered but not adult literacy students. Under the new programme, students had to pay; the provision was offered in secondary schools, not community centres; more subjects were offered and there were strict administrative measures but the programme was directed at the same target group. In addition, the principles outlined in the earlier programme were present in the definition of continuing education, the new label of the programme:

A process which supplements education offered in the formal school and other institutions in which persons are allowed to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or academic qualifications in order to participate fully in the social economic and cultural development of the community (Ministry of Education, 1990:1).

The major objectives of the programme were as job-oriented as the previous programme. According to the proposal for restructuring the programme, the provision was to offer individuals further opportunities to gain qualifications, either as repeaters or first timers, in subjects of their choice; provide participants with qualifications for jobs; foster self confidence and increase interest in achieving desired goals; enhance learning and provide motivation for those persons considered dropouts from the formal system and create learning experiences for self satisfaction and knowledge for its own sake. The target groups for this provision were expected to be school leavers who needed additional qualifications; drop-outs from the formal school system ; those who, not having dropped out had been unsuccessful in achieving their goals or had postponed the effort; persons seeking a career whether academic, technical or vocational; persons needing to improve their qualifications for career advancement or to gain employment in industry and those individuals who were interested in cultural and aesthetic activities for personal fulfilment.

The expected outcomes of the programme, summarised in the following statement, mirrored those which had been cited for the earlier programme and maintained the emphasis on education for work:



It is expected that continuing education in a non-formal system will complement learning for those school leavers with inadequate qualifications and provide opportunities for the study of any subject area which school leavers may wish to be further exposed (Ministry of Education, 1991:2).

Other outcomes mentioned for the programme reflected the personal factors mentioned above. For example the programme was expected to stimulate minds and provide opportunities for persons to seek diversity in life. The rationale offered was that education had to be continued outside of the "normal system" to make it available to citizens of all ages so that they could "improve the quality of their lives and achieve some measure of personal satisfaction and reward" (ibid:5). Despite the inclusion of a commitment to social development which must include personal factors, there was no Government policy directed at making provision specifically for those adults in the work force who could not read or write at all or whose literacy skills were not adequate for the requirements of most of the jobs that were available.

Economic aims formed the basis of the 1988-93 Development Plan but they were supplemented with references to personal development, in the same way that the 1979-83 Plan had been. Described as a plan designed with an awareness of the need to prepare the people of Barbados to "meet the social and economic challenges of today's world and that of the coming century", the 1988-93 Plan, also highlighted the need for "an educational system which enables all persons to realise their talents to the fullest possible extent" (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1983: 63). That aim was reinforced by the promise that strategies and programmes would be implemented to enable the education and training system to execute the following goals:

1. encourage mature and critical thinking
2. orient individuals to knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for productive living and for enhancing the quality of the labour force
3. develop wholesome interpersonal and social relationships
4. foster patriotism

5. deepen an awareness and an understanding of the Barbadian heritage
6. reaffirm basic spiritual and moral values

It is noticeable, however that although the educational policy was more oriented towards personal development, the literacy component, the foundation of the system, was not accounted for. This is clear from the fact that the six aspects of individual development cited above could easily have been listed for a pre-literate society. Not one of the goals, with the probable exception of item 2. above, needed literacy as a pre-requisite for its fulfilment. In addition, the goals associated with the development of individuals in a literate society excluded the objective of providing access to literacy and furthermore did not propose that such access should be not only for children, as expected, but also for adults who needed it.

The above omissions are also significant for they are inconsistent with the following statement made by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his party's manifesto (Democratic Labour Party, 1991:4) which made a strong case for literacy being essential for personal development in a country like Barbados.

I envision a Barbados that will evolve into a truly educated society [...] I envision a society sustained by the highest possible levels of literacy on which is based a comprehensive curriculum and body of learning experiences for living and for livelihood implemented through a life long network of formal, non-formal and informal settings.

On that vision was based the following set of national objectives which also combined economic and personal factors: to increase production and employment but lower inflation; to increase the country's export capability and its investments, but keep the national debt at sustainable levels; to increase food production and improve security; to enhance the values and the self esteem of the people; to improve health, education, training, housing, and the general infrastructure.

In the manifesto the DLP had also pledged to enhance primary education, train teachers and public servants, encourage private industry to provide training for their employees

and provide a fully taxpayer funded university education. Literacy was mentioned, as it had been in all the previous government documents, but in relation to the formal school system and as provision for children. For example, there was an acknowledgement of the need for systems to be set up to diagnose both literacy and numeracy problems within the schools. There was also the expression of a need to offer special educational provision to the physically and mentally disabled as well as gifted children. There was also the promise of provision for non-formal training and assistance to private organisations to provide "a comprehensive system of continuing education and training. As was the case of all development plans since 1946, the Government's manifesto made no specific provision for adults who needed basic literacy skills. That omission was again significant considering that the manifesto was seen as the draft of the Government's development plans for the remainder of this "decade of literacy" which also marks the end of a century and the beginning of a millennium which is expected to usher in numerous global changes.

The impression was that the government's general political outlook was as re-active as the educational programmes it initiated. That observation seemed to be supported by the educational objectives through the Democratic Labour Party expected citizens to be trained to cope effectively with the challenges of the 1990's and beyond.

1. ensure a primary school system with high standards of functional literacy and numeracy for all pupils
2. allocate more resources to remedial and diagnostic work
3. upgrade skills of resource persons
4. make provision for the development of exceptionally talented students
5. recognise continuing and adult education, in consultation with interested groups such as the unemployed, workers' and employers' organisations, to enhance job opportunities for the unemployed."
6. ensure that the mass media, particularly television, are used as instruments for non-formal and continuing education related to aspects of our social and economic development such as parenting and acquisition of skills to enhance personal business decisions

Despite the "vision" of a literate society revealed above and the affirmations that education was the key to any strategy of people oriented- development" and "an important plank in our strategy of achieving greater social and economic justice" (Democratic Labour Party, 1991), there was no mention of provision for non-literate adults so that those statements could be extended to all Barbadians. That omission was even more serious when one considers that the manifesto was published in 1991 at the beginning of International Literacy Year (ILY). In view of the quotation made earlier regarding justice, one may query how just a society might be if its education system is promoted as being geared toward the development of all people, especially the disadvantaged but it persistently makes no provision for members of one group, no matter how small that group may be.

The oversight by the DLP party may be seen to reinforce the message that the educational needs of illiterate adults were not important enough to be among the immediate objectives for achieving the development of the country. Such an oversight seems likely also to contribute to the social stigma already associated with not being literate in a society such as Barbados which not only places a high value on literacy but also boasts of having almost achieved total literacy. Maybe the omission was also connected to the apparently entrenched belief that there is no illiteracy problem and therefore no need for adult literacy provision.<sup>1</sup> It can be expected that illiterate or functionally illiterate persons in that society, knowing of the attitudes held about them, would think of themselves as a real rarity and might therefore be very reluctant to be reveal their illiteracy even for the probable benefit of enhancing their education.

If the provision of adult basic literacy has been consistently omitted from Government's provision both within the formal school system and outside the system in general adult education because the Government is aware that one does not require literacy to be functional, useful, or self sufficient then one might ask the following questions: why has literacy been made compulsory at the primary level? why are most courses in adult

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<sup>1</sup>This was the position taken by one education officer during an interview with the researcher. He conceded that Barbados might have a problem with lapsed literacy (incidence of people having forgotten their literacy skills through not using them) but not a problem of illiteracy.

education structured and presented to cater to persons who are literate and why is the society so proud of being considered a literate one? If however, as the policies for the past fifty years have shown, literacy is considered by the Government of Barbados to be essential to the functioning of its business at all levels of operation then that facility should be accessible to all citizens.

Furthermore, since the DLP Government of 1991 aimed to "pursue policies that promote creativity and self-reliance among our youth" and strengthen educational opportunity (Democratic Labour party, 1991:24), then educational provision should have been clearly made available by that Government for people with all levels of literacy skills to pursue those goals. There are many areas where such provision could have been accommodated without the Government having to make non-literate people seem more conspicuous "special group" and thereby run the risk of reinforcing the social stigma attached to their illiteracy. For instance, under community development, it could have been included along with the assistance promised for councils which included training of workers, planning programmes for all ages, upgrading centres, management skills and the organisation of choirs. Under the provision offered for the prisons, adult literacy provision could also have been specifically mentioned and offered along with the promised provision of individual supervision and counselling. In addition, it could have been added to the provision of rehabilitation through formal education and vocational education. Even at the probation level, for those who would be over sixteen, it could have been included with the package offering technical aid and training to assist the courts, the victims, the accused and their families.

Considering the non-specific way in which Government's goals are usually expressed, one might have expected adult basic literacy provision to have been included in Government's references to adult education. That assumption, is unlikely, however, when one considers the following definition of adult education given in the Revised Education Act 1981-25:

Adult education is part-time education and leisure time occupation in organised cultural training and recreative activities suitable to the requirements of persons over the compulsory school age (Ibid: 13-9a)

It also seemed unlikely that adult literacy education could have been offered under special education considering the definition given to that form of education as well:

Special education is education suitable to the requirements of persons who are deaf, mute, blind, mentally retarded or otherwise handicapped. (Ibid: 13-9a)

It was possible, nevertheless, for adult literacy provision to have been offered by Government under the Act, owing to the width of the following definition given to educational institutions:

Educational institutions mean any school, technical institution, training centre or teachers' college, excluding institutions of higher learning in the formal system such as the university of the West Indies, Codrington College and "such other institution as the Minister may by order specify. (Ibid: 2-3)

The above definition suggests that the Minister of Education was free to include adult literacy centres as educational institutions. With such a designation it would then have been possible for adult literacy students to be offered literacy provision on three bases. It could have been offered as special education, thus focusing on the adults being "handicapped" socially. Even though it might be considered a desperate strategy, it might have been used as one way to turn the public's attention away from illiteracy as a personal fault towards literacy skills as a range of social functions. Adult basic literacy education could have been accounted for under the act as adult education in its own right since in keeping with the stipulations outlined there, the learners were usually over 16 years and the provision was invariably part-time. On those bases, inherent in the Act, the Minister of Education could have legitimised adult literacy education thus bringing it within the financial and structural ambit of programmes coordinated by the Ministry of Education.

Given the above arrangement, private providers need not have been excluded, for cooperation between Government and other agencies was cited as being an essential factor in the success of Government educational ventures as the following statement from the National Development Plan, 1988-93 shows:

Government strongly believes that education is a life long process involving the home, school, church, workplace and the community at large. This cooperative involvement is crucial to the success of Government's policy on education. (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1988: 63)

Furthermore, in keeping with the concept of democratisation of education promoted in the Democratic labour Party Manifesto (1991) institutions could have managed adult literacy provision in a decentralised manner with the administration of provision being provided by an adult education organisation or more specifically, an adult literacy council with accountability to the Ministry of education for resources used. As part of the Government's plan to maintain internal and external efficiency in the educational system that body could have been made subject to appraisal both internally and externally by personnel from the Ministry, the council and non-governmental agencies.

Adult literacy provision was finally mentioned in a document identifying the roles which educational institutions were expected to play in the provision of adult education (Ministry of Education, 1986). The following connections were identified: secondary schools were to provide remedial education to young people who wished to improve exam results; cater to persons needing to pursue additional science subjects to go towards the full component of subjects for integrated science; offer the opportunity for persons to improve qualifications and extend the use of the facilities to the wider community. The Division of Continuing Education at the Erdiston Teachers' Training College was to offer a wide range of courses on credit and non-credit basis for self development and the improvement of professional competencies. The Barbados Community College was to provide non-certificate courses for enrichment and self development. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic was responsible for offering technical and vocational course as well as courses in communications and home economics. The University of The West Indies School Of Continuing Studies was to

offer broad-based community programmes including basic reading and writing skills for Adults. Parent Teachers Associations were to provide a forum for discussions, seminars and workshops using resource persons to discuss such issues as drug abuse, teenage pregnancies and sexual promiscuity.

The one instance of adult literacy provision mentioned above was established as an educational initiative of the Extra Mural Department of the University of the West Indies and not as a Government offering.<sup>2</sup> Even in the context of parent education cited above, adult literacy was not considered as one of the possible areas of educational need for adults, judging from the following rationale that was given for including parent education in the provision of adult education:

Life-long education is needed for parents in a democratic society [...] Equalisation of educational opportunities, both for children and parents will lead to greater respect for parents as role models [...] A satisfactory system of education must assist in fostering attitudes of life-long learning by promoting parent education for self enrichment as well as guidance. Many parents need to become informed about the dangerous elements that threaten the very existence of their children and the society itself (Ministry of Education, 1986)

The inclusion of adult basic literacy provision in parent education might have been an effective way of merging literacy naturally with general education for it would have highlighted the involvement of adults in the educational system not only as individuals needing their own education for its own sake or as a means of making up for inadequacies in their primary education, but also as part of an attempt by parents to make literacy a family venture.

Considering that people with inadequate literacy skills are included among the people who make up the workforce,<sup>3</sup> and given that the focus of national development has

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<sup>2</sup>The provision of the adult literacy class was acknowledged as a personal initiative by the Tutor of the Extra Mural Department (now the UWI School of Continuing Studies) during an interview with the researcher.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the data described in chapter 6, it is clear that people with various levels of inadequate literacy skills perform important tasks in the three major sectors of government: agriculture, industry and services.



consistently been the industrialisation of the nation's economy, and that the educational policy outlined in the national development plans was always aimed at servicing the demands of industry, one would expect the efforts made to upgrade qualifications and the skills of the literate section of the work force would be equalled by efforts made to upgrade the basic literacy skills of the non-literate sector of the work force. That seemed not to have been the case. One opportunity for including non literate adults as workers into the general educational provision was in the innovative programmes which the government initiated to link productive work and education throughout the educational system. The rationale given for linking work and education was that such provision "enables one to acquire the range of skills required in a dynamic economy" (UNESCO/CARNEID, 1990: 2). That path of educational development cited above was charted as early as 1979 in the National development Plan which, as part of its attempt to achieve the external efficiency of the educational system, cited the need to make the system more relevant to the overall development strategy of the economy and the rest of the world. This use of outside models to guide internal policies was stated more specifically in the explanation that the above path had been chosen because the Barbados Government anticipated that the development strategy of the world economies would focus on the following:

1. changing forms of technology,
2. finding ways of increasing worker productivity and
3. developing and exploring various uses of indigenous raw materials

It was therefore reasoned that demands of the local educational system would be for "a broader base of manpower skills at primary and secondary level and, vis a vis generalised tertiary levels," (UNESCO/CARNEID, 1990:8) and that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic would be the major instrument to produce those skills. In all of that planning, those people who cannot read or write well were not catered for neither were they mentioned in the future plans for an integrated programme of education and productive work (UNESCO/CARNEID, 1990: 8). Their inclusion need not have been a problem however, for there was a precedent in Trinidad and Tobago, where the vocational courses were evaluated by oral examination to accommodate those students

whose literacy skills were inadequate (ibid).

The final observation regarding local education policy and practice is that the current educational provision at formal, non-formal and informal levels all seem consonant with international ideas and ideals. For example, during the past decade, the value of linking personal development with national development in the educational sector of national development plans has been highlighted by local commentators ( A. Straughn, 1991; Ellis, 1991) as well as Regional and extra-Regional agencies. There have also been many suggestions from the same sources as to how the two forms of development might be effected so that each complements the other. A similar consensus seems also to have been reached regarding access to education being a human right and life-long education being an essential part of human existence. But, adult basic literacy provision, an international issue as well as a local concern, has not been approached with the same official enthusiasm locally as it has been in the region and internationally.

With reference to the principles, goals and rationales cited for primary school provision in the statement of philosophy, the various national development plans, the DLP Manifesto and other official documents, the following five arguments are forwarded as the basis for suggesting that the Government of Barbados should issue a definitive policy statement regarding adult literacy provision.

Firstly, since the Government of Barbados has made the enhancement of the economic sector of community development its main priority, but accepts individual development as a pre-requisite for that goal to be a reality, every effort should be made by the Government to ensure that individuals have access to the means of facilitating their personal development.

Secondly, since the Government considers education to be the primary vehicle for achieving the individual's development, then all efforts should be made by the Government to provide all the components of education which would make that goal achievable.

Thirdly, since the Government accepts that literacy is the foundation on which the knowledge component of education must be built, the efforts made by the Government to provide sources of that knowledge component should be matched by efforts made to establish the literacy base, regardless of which level of education the need for that base is found.

Fourthly, since adults, not children, are always the individuals who make up the "current" labour force in Barbados at any time, and are therefore always directly involved in affecting the quality of the products of that labour force, the development of all adults should be as important as the development of all children. It follows then that the literacy component of adult education should be as much a priority for Government as is the literacy component of children's education. These acknowledgements therefore create the need for work place literacy to be considered as in government employment as well as a collaborative form of adult basic literacy provision between the government and private enterprise.

Finally, since a survey commissioned by the Government of Barbados (Ministry of Education 1986)<sup>4</sup> has found that the educational level of parents has some bearing on the educational achievements of their children, that finding should provide an added reason for the Government of Barbados to make the provision of adult literacy education a priority in its educational policy rather than leave it to be an appendage to the programmes offered by non-governmental organisations. Furthermore the finding of that impact survey should be seen as an incentive to explore the provision of adult basic literacy education via the route of family literacy.

#### **4.2. Local ABLE Theory and Practice: Overview**

Based on the provision that actually exists adult basic literacy seems to be generally an

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<sup>4</sup> The National Competencies Survey was conducted by the Barbados Ministry of Education and Culture in association with UNESCO in 1986. It was undertaken, not as a literacy survey, but as "impact research" to gauge the extent to which students in secondary and post secondary institutions seem able to function effectively in Barbados.

non-governmental organisation responsibility conducted with the appreciation of the government to those who have chosen to take the initiative. Prior to and after International Literacy Year (ILY) 1990, the case for adult literacy provision was forwarded by citizens and representatives of non-governmental organisations rather than by Government. One event at which the case was forcefully advocated was a national one-day symposium on literacy held in February 1990, under the theme, 'Literacy in National Development'. Sponsored by the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA) to launch ILY in Barbados, it was expected to bring together representatives from community groups, educational institutions as well as concerned individuals (BAEA, 1990) in order to raise public awareness and consciousness concerning the issues related to literacy and national development in Barbados (BAEA, 1990) and generate suggestions of how to cope with the prevailing problem (ibid).

The areas of major concern highlighted at the symposium was literacy as it related to development, the world of work, technology and continuing education. Out of that symposium came recommendations to identify and coordinate resources, maximise the use of the news media for information dissemination and teaching, train tutors as well as other resource persons, and organise regular events to keep the public informed and pressure the Government to "pay serious attention to the issues of literacy" (BAEA, 1990b). The call for Government's involvement was made against the BAEA insistence that its own role was one of catalyst and facilitator for other organisations and bodies interested in adult literacy and that dealing with that issue was "not our task alone" (ibid).

It had been expected by some adult educators that the appointment of Dame Nita Barrow, to Governor General of Barbados would have had some effect on the Government's provision of adult literacy. This expectation was based on the ideas she held on adult literacy and her involvement in the field as a former president of the International Council of Adult Educators (ICAE). For example, in her speech at the launching of ILY in Bangkok she had acknowledged that literacy was not only about reading and writing but also about the wider implications of how people functioned in developed and developing societies. Those expectations seemed to have been ill-founded

for the Government had made the same acknowledgement but did not translate it into any policy or radical efforts even during ILY.

In fact, one suggestion coming out of a meeting of the National Committee which was set up for International Literacy Year was that the Government should conduct a national literacy survey and that for convenience and immediacy, it should be appended to the population census which was about to take place. The response was that the merit of the survey was acknowledged but it could not be done until October 1990 because the statistical department was almost ready to conduct the census and it was already committed to carrying out a number of other surveys (BAEA, 1990).<sup>5</sup>

During ILY the Government's involvement in matters concerning adult literacy seemed to have been limited to sending representatives as participants to meetings, workshops and seminars and it seemed not to be heeding the call to become more involved in adult literacy provision. The Government had indicated that it was aware of adult illiteracy being a possible product of the shortcomings of the formal education system. That indication was given in the following statement made in Government's report to the Eleventh Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers:

That questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the [education] system is an indication of our serious intention to improve the quality. The Ministry of Education, the schools and the nation at large recognise that there is no room for complacency if standards of literacy and numeracy are to be maintained and improved (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1990:5).

Having acknowledged that weakness in the formal education system, it seems that the Government has decided to focus its efforts on upgrading the literacy skills of students in the formal school system in attempt to prevent them leaving school with inadequate literacy skills, rather than concentrate on those persons who have already left the system functionally or totally illiterate. For the Government, the way to improve the quality of

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<sup>5</sup>Up to the time of writing, September 1993, the survey had not been conducted.

education, that is, improve basic literacy and numeracy and ensure a relevant knowledge base, was through curriculum development, assessment procedures and teacher training (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1990). It seemed mindful of the need to educate non-literate adults too judging from their statement that they were "intensifying co-operation with interested groups and organisations to formulate a plan of action to try to eliminate illiteracy on the island" (ibid:6-7). However, the organisation which the government mentioned was the Barbados Association of Reading (BAR) which does most of its work in schools but there was no mention of the BAEA which is concerned with illiterate adults. Moreover, no details or progress reports were given of any collaborative efforts which the Government might have made regarding adult literacy so one might assume that there was none. That assumption is supported by the Chief Education Officer's statement that the Ministry of Education was still looking forward to "holding discussions on ways in which the Ministry, Barbados Adult Education Association and other agencies can co-operate in efforts to promote adult education at its various levels" (Boyce, 1991:4)

With regard to efforts at reducing and preventing illiteracy in the formal school system, there have many reports about the reforms implemented to improve both the literacy and knowledge base of education provision in schools (Walker, 1990; Commonwealth secretariat, 1990; Boyce, 1991; UNESCO/ CARNEID, 1990). The measures implemented between 1985 and 1990 which were aimed at coping with literacy were both preventative and remedial and were implemented from pre-school level to the secondary level (Walker, 1990). For example in 1990, Government provided training in early childhood education for ninety teachers at a six-week in-service training course; the previous year it had made similar provision for thirty more at a one-year full time post-certificate course at the Erdiston College. At the primary level, basic and supplementary reading material was provided in addition to such hardware as tape recorders, language masters and the appropriate software; specialist training had been made available to ninety-five teachers in three one-year in-service programmes; and teachers were trained to use a reading assessment kit which had been made available to schools.

In addition, a pilot project was implemented in twelve schools in which teachers with specialist skills taught one subject to many classes. The subjects taught were mathematics, language, science and social studies. At the secondary level, fifteen teachers from composite and senior schools were trained at a one-year post certificate course in remedial education and there was another pilot project involving five schools in which teachers were trained in providing basic education to 11-14 year old students (Walker, 1990).

In view of the above developments, one may assume that the Government did not become involved in adult literacy provision because it felt that it could rely on non-governmental agencies to manage that sector of education. That assumption was supported by the congratulatory statement made to the BAEA by the Chief Education Officer at the opening of a forum /discussion sponsored by the that organisation to discuss the adult education of disadvantaged groups:

I note with interest that the Barbados Adult Education Association is targeting its programme at that section of the population that is not enrolled as full-time learners at an institution of formal education. As such, the work of the Barbados Adult Education Association is complementing the programme in the formal institutions. [...] Your co-operation with the School of Continuing Studies in organising training courses for tutors in the school's adult literacy programme speaks volumes for your commitment to the enhancement of personal and national development. You have also accepted the challenge thrown out by the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety to join in a renewed attempt to deal with the problem of illiteracy and general education among prisoners (Boyce, 1991:2).

Even regarding the basic issue of what was meant by 'literacy' in the context of Barbados, the government seemed not to have decided on the parameters relevant to Barbados. In fact, in the Statement of Philosophy relating to Primary Schools in Barbados, which spelt out the purpose and goals of education for that level, there was no specific definition of literacy. It was at the symposium on literacy mentioned above that literacy was defined as:

the acquisition and development of knowledge and skills including reading, writing and numeracy needed to function effectively in one's society for the pursuit of personal and national goals.

This was consistent with the regional definition cited in section 3.2 of chapter three as well as the definition forwarded by Linda Fields from the department of Linguistics and at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. In an unpublished manuscript entitled "Literacy and the University", Fields (1989) gave the following definition of functional literacy:

I take it that this means that the level of literacy of the individual should be developed enough so he or she can read, understand and complete correctly all the various types of documentation the average person encounters in every day life which need to be processed in order for the individual to function satisfactorily in the real world (Fields, 1989:1)

It was also at the Symposium on Literacy that the value of adult literacy to the island was also spelt out clearly in a public forum for the first time. A local educator, Ada Straughn speaking on the relation between literacy and continuing education made the following assertion:

Through the application of literacy, people begin to participate in the development process because normally the improvement of literacy skills should lead to their application in living and working conditions (Straughn, 1990:2).

There was no objection to the statement either by Government representatives or other participants so it must be assumed that the statement was accepted and that no one thought it necessary to stress, on behalf of illiterate individuals (who were not represented at the symposium) that there are illiterate people participating in the development of Barbados while some literate persons are being idle or counter-productive. Furthermore, in attempting to put a strong case for the value of providing literacy education for adults, Straughn even suggested that in a society like Barbados those illiterate persons could become useless (Straughn, 1990:4).



In an increasingly complex society, the illiterate - functionally illiterate find themselves obsolete in due course. The status of all their adult life has been determined and fixed at a low level. They become alienated from participation.

Again, there was no challenge to the above statement. It was not pointed out that such persons were not really alienated, for even though they tended to be assigned jobs which were considered too low status for literate people to do, it was clear to both literate and illiterate individuals that the performance of such jobs was essential to maintaining the health of people and the community. Even more importantly, it was not noted that the possible obsolescence of illiterate adults depended not on their level of illiteracy but on the attitudes of literate people. Furthermore, there was no suggestion of the possibility that some illiterate adults might not define the "status of all their adult life" by the level of their literacy.

Without a policy from the Government there seemed to have been no basis on which to challenge such statements or clearly articulate alternatives. Those statements merely reinforced those made at other gatherings about the value of literacy and the devaluation of illiterate people. One such statement which echoed those made above came from the Hubert Charles, Coordinator of the Caribbean Regional Network of Educational Innovation and Development (CARNEID). In his address to the Annual General meeting of the BAEA in October 1990, he responded to the query of whether illiteracy was a major concern for the English speaking Caribbean with the following statement:

Illiteracy, no matter how minuscule, is problematic. Illiteracy dehumanizes and isolates its victims, denying them access to information and ideas which could benefit themselves and their families.

Even though the first part of his response may be acceptable the second part can be challenged. However, the silence which his comment received seemed to suggest that no one had considered that illiteracy does not dehumanize any one since one's humanity is not dependent on the ability to manipulate print in any way. Similarly, no one noted the possibility that illiterate adults might not be victimized by their illiteracy but by other

individuals both literate and illiterate, who directly or indirectly make life difficult for them when their inadequacy in literacy skills has been made known. It also needed to be said at that meeting that illiteracy deprives people of access to written information and the ideas contained therein only via the route of their manipulating the print themselves. However, it is well known that illiterate adults access knowledge from print with much ingenuity through literate people. Yet literacy in the above statements, was seen as the measure of the human and illiteracy was portrayed as a factor of human devaluation or as "nothing less than a scourge", according to Nicholas Frederick, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture in St.Vincent, in his address to the Task Force On Literacy (UNESCO/CARNEID, 1983).

Given the above ideas expressed about the meaning of literacy one can see how without an official policy on adult literacy to outline its scope, value and the parameters of good practice, that the provision of adult literacy education could be influenced by providers' personal biases, ideals and rationales about what and how adults should be taught. It seems reasonable to argue that if the government expressed its policy in relation to the National Development Plan and general educational provision that there would be a base for tutors and students to work from, and a framework against which they could examine alternative ideas and modes of provision. One would also expect that in keeping with the Government's ideas about participation and democracy in education that such a policy would need to be planned in consultation with adult literacy tutors, educators and the adult literacy students.

Reviewing the government's involvement in adult education, one local educator commented on the need to have such provision cater to the needs of the goals of the individual, the institution and the society Straughn (1990). Those three needs seem appropriate as a base of any education policy whether it be for the school system, adult education in general or adult literacy in particular but one cannot say what the Government's position is on either. As such, most of the ideas expressed by adult literacy tutors and other educators seem to have come from other sources and tutors appear to be guided only by their convictions or their intuition.

As for training for tutors of adult literacy, it has been the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA), which has taken on that responsibility. Set up as a voluntary, non-profit organisation in 1979, the BAEA was not primarily an adult literacy organisation. In fact, adult literacy, though implied, was not mentioned among its concerns neither were adult literacy activities included in the main objectives of its constitution. Prior to 1989, the BAEA aimed to coordinate the activities of adult education in Barbados, both formal and non-formal, support member organisations in planning and implementing their programmes, represent Barbados at regional and international meetings concerned with adult education matters and provide resource persons to member organisations.

In a report on the activities of the organisation for the triennium 1986 - 1989, the organisation included literacy programming in its future plans. In keeping with that commitment, most of the BAEA's activities since 1989 seemed to have been concerned with plans for the improvement of adult literacy provision from the administrative side rather than actual involvement in the teaching. Nevertheless, the organisation has been paying more attention to organising training for facilitators of adult literacy groups than to finding out the extent of the need for adult literacy classes, the areas where such a need might be concentrated, the possible target groups, the number of resource persons who would be available for teaching or assisting with material resources. It has however set itself the following tasks:

1. to provide guidelines on the techniques and methodologies for resource persons and institutions involved in adult education
2. to assist in providing training for resource persons in the field of adult education
3. to carry out research into the programme content and methodology of existing programmes

At another workshop held in association with UWISOCS, "Working With Adult Learners" pertinent questions were raised concerning the following issues:

- the nature of literacy
- characteristics of adult learners; factors that hinder or help their learning; ways of

- creating a positive learning environment for them;
- the development of relevant programmes using instructional learning materials
- methods and techniques for improving literacy through learner centred participation individual instruction and small group work and peer teaching.

That forum was obviously needed for in their evaluation of the programme, the BAEA noted that "most participants felt that the training had given them a deeper understanding of the learning process in adults and insights as to how to cope with some of the problems which they faced" (BAEA 1990:4). As a result of BAEA's initiatives, the YMCA included literacy as one of the themes for their regular summer camp; members of the Barbados Popular Theatre Organisation (BAPTO) conducted orientation sessions for both counsellors and campers. Commenting on its own work, the BAEA feeling pleased at having fulfilled the obligations of its role as catalyst for stimulating other non-governmental organisations during ILY, made the following statement which helps to justify this research study and highlights the need for other research studies not only on ABLE provision but also on the extent of the need for such provision.

The many activities which BAEA organised or facilitated during ILY have certainly contributed to making the general public more aware that Barbados does have a literacy problem. It is now widely accepted that Barbados does not have a literacy rate of 98 per cent, and in fact significant members of school age students and school leavers, as well as the adult population have problems of literacy and functional literacy which have implications for national development (BAEA, 1990:7)

Considering Government's awareness of the need expressed in the above statement, the persistent exclusion of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) from general educational provision within the formal school system and from the governments's adult education programmes outside of the system does not suggest Government's denial of an adult literacy problem but that the Government has adopted a hands-off policy with regard to ABLE provision. Evidence that there is official recognition of the importance of literacy at all levels of educational provision was provided by Government's insistence that universal literacy is essential for the progress of the country, its commitment to improving educational provision in the formal system, at great cost, in an attempt to

raise the standard of literacy, and its expressions of appreciation for the work done in adult basic literacy by other agencies. The difference between government's statements regarding literacy for all and its actions regarding literacy provision might be seen either as a contradiction or as part of the official hands-off policy mentioned above whereby the Government has decided that ABLE provision should be the responsibility of non-governmental agencies such as the BAEA which is committed to adult education.

Given that the Government has acknowledged the shortcomings of the formal system and has taken the existence of non-literate adults as confirmation of such shortcomings; and considering the government's emphasis on education as the vehicle via which it could achieve its national development goals, one would expect there to be some guidelines for ABLE provision created with two possible objectives: the remediation of learning and the remediation of teaching. The first would be necessary to facilitate the adult students' acquisition of the literacy skills they did not learn as children. The second would be essential as a potential guard against adult literacy facilitators making the same errors in their teaching practice with adult literacy students as had been made with some of those adults when they were in primary school, and which might have contributed to their inadequate literacy skills. Furthermore one would expect the ABLE guidelines, to include ways in which adult literacy education could be connected to national goals, in view of the fact that the Government had stated that education and work were to be closely linked in the effort to attain those goals.

The existence of ABLE programmes in Barbados with the apparent absence of any guidelines suggested the need to examine the practice of those programmes in the context of the issues raised in the above review of national policy. The main issue worth examining was the degree to which providers were informed by the goals of the three potential beneficiaries of ABLE provision: the adult learners, the educational institutions and the country. Since goals like policies may be implied rather than stated, such an examination would need to look at all aspects of provision to see which goals were being aimed at or if none seemed apparent, to discover what provided the impetus for local ABLE provision. In chapter six below, such an examination is made using data collected from three structured ABLE programmes managed by three different

institutions and catering to three different types of clients. The advantage of having such differences (though an occurrence of chance rather than choice) is that one can view local ABLE provision from three perspectives and so obtain a potentially fuller picture.

## CHAPTER 5

### A CASE STUDY OF ABLE PROVISION IN BARBADOS: RESEARCH METHODS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter documents the progress of a case study research project, the main aim of which was to examine current provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) in Barbados from the perspective of individual, institutional and national goals. Here the research effort is traced from its origin as an area of interest through the stages of identifying issues for investigation; developing, selecting and modifying procedures and instruments for data collection, presentation and analysis. The research topic required a conceptual framework within which the data would be collected, ordered or analyzed and that arose from an awareness of adult basic illiteracy education as a concern among local, regional and international educators and agencies. As a case study, the research involved various types of activity usually restricted to or defined in terms of particular methodologies or approaches but no attempt is made to place it into any methodological slot. The study, which dealt entirely with qualitative data was developed using elements associated with scientific and naturalistic research for data collection, presentation and analysis.

Given the range of tasks needed to be done in the research, various approaches and methods were employed. For data collection pre-programmed instruments were designed based on guidelines taken from the literature on regional and extra-regional adult literacy practice. Those guidelines were also used in constructing a structure for managing the data during the stages of collection and analysis. Despite being pre-determined and structured, the instruments were also flexible for given that there had been no previous information about adult basic literacy provision in Barbados and the centres on the island were not known to the researcher, the instruments had to accommodate all data peculiar to Barbados or to particular centres. The range of activities outlined above were essential to the research, given the nature of the data required; constraints of time and resources; and the researcher's preference for a systematic and respondent-friendly way of collecting data.

## 5.2.

## Research Design

### 5.2.1. Selecting The Research Topic

The topic, "Provision of Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) In Barbados", was selected on the basis of the following rationale. There had been no detailed research or reports on adult basic literacy education in Barbados, although there was much information of adult literacy initiatives in the Caribbean, so for Barbados, the provision of adult basic literacy education on a mass level was a new area of research. The topic was commanding national interest, much of which had been generated through the UNESCO International Literacy Year (ILY) campaign: local adult education practitioners were planning new ventures, members of the public were seeking help with their literacy problems and government officials were expressing their ministries' commitment to "join in a renewed effort to deal with the problem of illiteracy and general education among prisoners" (Ralph Boyce, 1991:4). Regarding the value of researching that topic, it seemed to be the opportune area to study for adult educators and other concerned citizens were beginning to link adult education provision to the economic status of the country (Farley Brathwaite 1991) and were pointing out the need for research in adult literacy with special regard to its role in national development (Straughn, 1990).

### 5.2.2. Conceptual Framework

The structure on which the examination of local ABLE provision was based was inspired by a suggestion of a Barbadian educator (Straughn, 1990) that all local adult education efforts should be viewed from the perspectives of individual, institutional and national goals. The decision to focus on those three points of view was reinforced by five factors. Firstly, they were the viewpoints from which representatives of local, regional and international educational agencies had presented the need for the provision of adult literacy education. It must be noted, however, that those representatives tended to speak in terms of 'development' rather than 'goals'. Secondly, it had been noted by concerned local educators that there had been no previous examination of local literacy from those three perspectives and there was need for such information. Thirdly, the issue of goals as it related to those three interests had been raised during the initial stages of the research, in the 'brainstorming' exercise; it was included among questions to be piloted



on the basis of the first reason; and its relevance seemed to have been confirmed by the second reason. Fourthly, the literature had cited the importance of goals by emphasising them as being essential for effective programme development (Lind and Johnston, 1986); programme maintenance (Toffler, 1977; Blanchard and Johnson, 1992); programme assessment and justification (Cronbach, 1980). Fifthly, as was noted in the previous three chapters on international, regional and local provision, no direct link had been made between specific goals and adult basic literacy in the context of individual participants, educational institutions and the nation beyond the need of adults to become literate or the objective of institutions and countries to facilitate such literacy.

On the above bases, it was decided that the research would be an evaluation of the provision of adult basic literacy education with a focus on the goals of the individuals, institutions and the nation but it was acknowledged that the data from actual practice in Barbados might highlight another perspective or prove that the focus on goals was unwarranted. The aim of the research was therefore to provide not only a description of what provision was being offered to whom, by whom and how, but also to discover whether the inputs and outcomes of the provision related to any of the goals expressed by participating adult learners, educational institutions and Government departments. To look at the research topic from the point of view of individual, institutional and national goals, the perspective from which the problem of adult literacy was being presented, was therefore taken to be appropriate.

Given the focus on goals, the following argument underpinned the research study: if as the Government said, education was a vital element in "any strategy of people-oriented development," one would expect the following three conditions to exist: (i) government-supported educational programmes would be guided by the developmental goals on which such a strategy was based; (ii) such programmes, regardless of the academic level, would reflect their people-orientedness by being guided or informed by the goals of the people for whom they had been established; (iii) the government would ensure through appropriate monitoring and other means that both of the above conditions obtained. Those were the additional issues which the research data was expected to address.

### 5.2.3. Parameters of The Pilot Study

The next step in the research process was to explore the topic to see the range of issues it could generate. To facilitate that task the literature on adult education and adult literacy education was consulted and the result was the twenty two categories cited in checklist 5.1 on page 124 below. That list was information from regional and extra-regional sources as well as the researcher's experience of the educational system in Barbados. The input from the Caribbean came from a report on the literacy campaign in Jamaica (Robinson, 1990) which identified the following criteria as being essential factors to be considered in any literacy programme: extent of need for literacy; criteria used to define literacy; bases of deciding on the need; the reasons for offering the programme; beneficiaries of the programme and means of funding. Two useful extra-regional sources were Covert (1976), and Vinayagum and Gary (1990). Focusing on the evaluation of literacy programmes, Covert highlighted the need to pay attention to people's experiences, feelings, attitudes, needs, beliefs, and thoughts. Vinayagum and Gary (1990) cited the following factors as important elements of literacy provision: funding, programme administration, recruitment of students and tutors, instructional materials, logistics, media input and student output.

Two procedures used for relating the categories in checklist 5.1 to the research topic were taken from the fields of business and journalism, two areas of which the researcher had some knowledge. From the field of business was taken the exercise of 'brainstorming' (Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, 1986) and from journalism was taken the familiar 'wh'- word approach to questioning, both effective ways of attempting to obtain information. 'Brainstorming', a practice, initiated in the business sector of North America was initially used by policy makers as a creative problem solving exercise. During the exercise participants focused on a problem from various perspectives and offered suggestions or solutions, no matter how implausible or ridiculous they seemed. Those suggestions were later tested or explored to their limit to find the most appropriate ones. 'Brainstorming' has since been used in many settings not only for straight problem solving but also as a means of unearthing sub-themes from within major themes, and unpacking connotations which might be embedded in particular concepts.

In this research, 'brainstorming' was also used for generating ideas on a particular theme but more importantly, rather than being used to solve a problem, it was used in this research study to help create one. Used in conjunction with an extensive reading of the literature, this technique was employed to generate sub-issues which marked the parameters of the research topic. Two deviations from the usual exercise were that questions rather than suggestions were generated and that the exercise was not done in an intense session at one sitting. The rationale for those differences was that given the context of the research, sources of possible answers and alternative or additional questions had to be found in the literature and other sources over a period of time. That process of questioning was therefore continuous.

The 'brainstorming' exercise was further informed by use of the 'wh'-word questioning which made the questioning more structured than a usual 'brainstorming' since each question began with one of the following words: who, whom, what, when, where, where and why. That choice was made not to be restrictive but rather to ensure that most questions would be open-ended and would therefore lead to further questioning, depending on the range of answers given to each question. Where no answer could be given to a question from the available sources, the unanswered question was taken as an indication that the research itself might be helpful in providing such answers. Some of the questions asked are cited below:

Q: What does the term, 'provision' in this context suggest?

A: ...a service is being provided for people by others.

Q: What does the provision of that service imply?

A: ...the belief that those people have a 'need' or 'needs'.

Q: How is (are) the need (s) assessed, if there is assessment?

Q: What is the extent of the need(s)?

The outcome of the above exercise was a list of miscellaneous questions (appendix 1). Those questions were then categorised according to the factors of provision cited in the literature (referred to earlier on page 122). The questions and categories in that final list (checklist 5.1 below) were used to form the basis of the pilot questionnaires.

## Checklist 5.1

### 1. Need

- What is the most recent statistic on adult literacy in Barbados?
- How was it determined?

### 2. Current provision

- How many literacy programmes are being offered?
- How long have they been in operation?
- Who are offering these programmes

### 3. Publicity

- How and where are programmes advertised?
- What agencies are involved?

### 4. Sponsorship

- How much involvement comes from government/ private enterprise?
- What difference does this make to tutors' salaries and students' fees in particular programmes?

### 5. Tutors

- How are they recruited?
- What percentage is volunteer/ paid?
- Who are they? (e.g. students, age groups, gender, teachers in service/ retired; other professions.)
- What training is provided for them in adult teaching methods?
- What incentives are available for tutors?

### 6. Students

- Where do they come from? ( rural/ urban; local/ regional)
- Who are they? ( age, gender, schooling, employment status)

### 7. Orientation

- How are students and tutors prepared for these classes?  
(open day, one-on-one meetings/ other )
- How are students allocated to classes? ( e.g initial assessment to determine literacy level/ needs/ other)

### 8. Access

- How are classes financed? (sponsored/ fee-oriented /other?)
- Where are the classes held? (buildings, location)
- How often are classes held? (once/ twice weekly; other)
- When are classes held? ( parallel to school term/ other)

9. Programme
  - What is the turnover in tutors/ facilitators?
  - What is the accepted ratio of students to teachers?
  - What type of syllabus is used? (pre-planned, negotiated, other)
10. Content
  - What particular skills are taught? (literacy, numeracy, communication)
  - What is the focus? (student, subject, other)
11. Materials
  - What texts are used? (local, regional, foreign, mixed)
  - What target group were the texts designed for? (children or adults?)
  - What other teaching aids are used? (made for child/ adult)
12. Language
  - What is the main language of instruction?
  - What place is the Bajan dialect given? (Is there voiced/ tacit attitudes to Bajan? (by students or tutors)
  - What links are made between Bajan and the students' learning problems? (by students or tutors)
13. Methods/activities
  - What emphasis is placed on traditional/ innovative methods?
  - What part does culture play in choice of method?
14. Goals
  - What are the short/ long term goals of the tutors, students, administrators, Ministry of Education?
15. Conflict/concord of participants' goals
  - What parity exists between the goals of the following:  
student and tutors; tutor and administrator; tutor and facilitator;  
Ministry of education and providers
16. Relationship between message and method
  - What is the relationship among goals, methods, and materials in the classroom?
17. Literacy and employment
  - What links are made between these factors by the students/ tutors?
18. Internal blocks to effective provision
  - What expectations or experiences do the students/ tutors think are affecting provision negatively?

19. Internal boosters to provision
  - What elements/characteristics do the students/tutors think help to enhance provision?
20. External blocks to effective provision
  - What factors outside of their control do tutors/students blame for affecting provision negatively?
21. External boosts to effective provision
  - What factors outside the classroom do the tutors/students acknowledge as having a positive effect on provision?
22. Literacy and national development
  - What links exist between current provision and the national development goals?

In the literature reviewed, the areas of literacy provision cited above, most of them concerned with practical issues, were constantly being linked directly or by implication to various issues and concepts by theorists and practitioners. The following issues were identified as being very important in the ABLE provision, at both regional and international levels: the place of student autonomy and participation in the provision of basic literacy education; individuality as an essential factor in facilitating learning; adult basic literacy education as a tool for effecting change in the individual, the community and the country; the importance of goals in guiding the programme; the importance of participants' attitude in all aspects of provision; literacy as an instrument of different forms of development and the link between low self esteem, self efficacy and illiteracy.

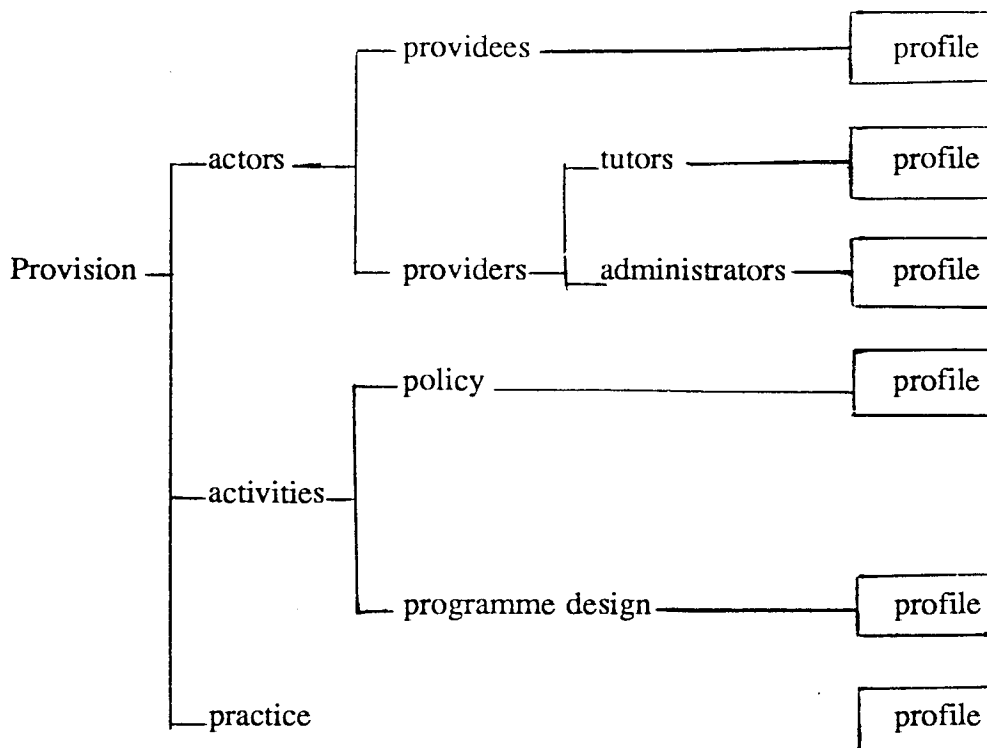
Two issues which the researcher had not located in the literature but which she thought might be significant, given the importance attributed to adult learners' previous experience, were the effects of adult students' previous schooling and learning on their current learning experience and the influence of tutors' work experience and training on their current practice. Those issues were marked for inclusion in the research instrument, not on an a priori acceptance of their relevance to the Barbados situation but on the basis that since they had been accepted as essential considerations in the development of good adult basic literacy practice they would constitute a useful backdrop against which to view local provision.

#### 5.2.4. Data-collecting Framework

Despite deciding to take a comprehensive look at the local provision of literacy, boundaries were set in consideration of the constraints of time and resources allotted for the research. It was decided that the period to be covered by the research would be the 'current' period, starting from the year in which the oldest adult literacy class, still in operation, had been launched. In view of the constraints mentioned above, it did not seem possible that all of the issues raised could be dealt with in this study so further limitations were set regarding the amount rather than the range of data to be collected. An examination of the questions showed that they had asked for information about eight factors: students, tutors, administrators, lessons, facilities, services, policies and practices. Those eight elements were examined and further categorised according to the factors they shared. Students stood alone in being provided for, so they were the providees; tutors and administrators did the providing, so they were providers; the lessons, services and facilities were inquired about as part of the programme being provided; the questions had asked about the elements of the programme as they were implemented in practice and the various influences on the above elements had been inquired about in the context of the policy believed to be underlying everything. Further reduction of those five intermediate categories resulted in the two categories of actors and activity, which were taken to be the essential components of the main concern, provision.

An examination of the categories revealed that the five intermediary elements of provision could be used as profiles, useful constructs in which data could be collected, analyzed and presented. The process of subdivision which generated the categories was then illustrated using a simplified form of the network notation used by Bliss, Monk and Ogborn (1983) as a form of data management in qualitative data analysis. The basic notation comprised placing main categories to the left of a vertical bar and the sub-categories to the right. That notation was chosen because it was a means of showing clearly the relationship between main and sub-categories as well as the way in which each sub-category can generate its own sub-categories repeatedly until no more distinctions were left to be made. Furthermore the notation was economical on space. Figure 5.1 illustrates the final set of categories and the five elements of provision: providees, providers, programme planning, policy making and practice.

**Figure 5.1 Connection Between Profiles and Elements of Provision**



Details for each profile were supplied by data from the expanded categories in checklist 5.1. One advantage of the profiles was that they facilitated adding elements unique to particular centres or omitting those found to be irrelevant. Another advantage of the profile format was that it facilitated the profiling of each instance of provision thus making it easy to make a composite picture of literacy provision for the island. Figure 5.1 above shows the connection between the major elements of provision and the profiles. Checklists 5.2 to 5.6 below provide the details for the profile boxes in figure 5.1. above.



### Checklist 5.2. Profile of providees

1. personal facts - age/gender/schooling/literacy level/ employment status/ address/ work
2. beliefs - adulthood/ adult and child learning / teacher-student roles/ blocks to reading and writing literacy and employment/ literacy and self esteem/ literacy and national development
3. preferences - tutor's age / tutor's gender / class size/ location of class/ language of instruction
4. skills shown - self teaching/ teaching others/ job/ hobbies
5. expectations - changes in life skills/ behaviour/ job/ relationships/ other
6. awareness of - educational opportunities/job requirements
7. assessment of - personal progress/ literacy needs/ the course/ tutors/ programme
8. attitude to - Bajan/ English
9. anxieties - functioning as blocks to completing the programme
11. motivation to - attend the programme
12. experience of - prior learning/ difference between prior and current learning situation/ who or what they blame for their level of literacy

### Checklist 5.3. Profile of providers

1. personal facts - age group/ gender/ teaching experience/ volunteer or paid/ full-time or part-time
2. beliefs about - what constitutes adulthood/ what factors contribute to illiteracy/ the learning process for children and adults/ literacy and national development/ the role of current education provision
3. preferences - relationships with adult students/ teaching methods/ selection of materials/ class size
4. awareness of - student profiles
5. reasons for - involvement in adult literacy provision
6. participation - management of programmes/ design of syllabus/ assessment/ policy
7. attitude to - student autonomy

#### **Checklist 5.4. Profile of the programme**

1. scope - how many centres are operating
2. funding - sources/ self help/ sponsors
3. facilities - buildings/ materials/ security/ utilities
4. training - tutors/ facilitators
5. services - advice/ help with personal literacy /job advice

#### **Checklist 5.5. Profile of practice**

1. materials - choice of materials/ design/ adaptation
2. methods - transfer/ innovation/
3. course content - literacy/ numeracy /communication
4. focus - student/ subject/ other

#### **Checklist 5.6. Profile of policy**

1. recruitment - students /tutors
2. priorities - accreditation or skills oriented
3. access - restrictions/ conditions
4. evaluation - programme, providers
5. information - publicity/ public relations

#### **5.2.5. Data Sources**

The range of questions which had been generated and the fact that information was needed about individuals, institutions and the government suggested that in addition to adult literacy tutors and adult literacy students, other sources of information had to be participants making inputs at all levels of adult literacy provision. It was assumed that such persons might include the Chief Education Officer and officials of the Ministry of Education; heads of government and private institutions which offered adult literacy classes; the chairperson and other key members of the Barbados National committee for International Literacy year; representatives of the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA) and the Barbados Association of Reading (BAR); the workers' unions; the teachers unions; personnel from the library service; individuals offering private tuition to adults and media personnel.

The type of data which the questions were designed to elicit demanded other sources of information. One of these was personal observations by the researcher, which were needed to gather information about the literacy classes in progress as well as to provide a validity check on direct statements and inferences made about provision in available documents or by students, tutors, providers during interviews, discussions and in their responses to the questionnaires. The documents considered necessary were from government and non-government sources. The former included press releases from the Ministries involved in adult literacy provision, speeches made by the ministry officials, papers prepared for conferences, the most recent National Development Plans and the party manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, the party which formed the current government. The latter type of documents included press releases, reports, research papers, speeches and conference papers generated from the activities of the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Educators (CARCAE), then based in Barbados; and similar documents produced by the BAEA. Newspaper articles and tapes of media programmes were also included.

#### **5.2.6. Data-collecting Procedures**

An initial objective of the fieldwork was to collect data from all literacy centres on the island irrespective of whether they were managed by the government, private institutions such as the church, or individuals. That decision was made on the basis that a comprehensive search for instances of adult literacy provision would accomplish four things: provide information about the number of centres offering adult basic literacy provision; get a description of what provision was being offered by each; provide access to a large enough pool of participants to draw from in case there were many who did not want to contribute to the research; provide conditions for comparison between sites and give access to enough data from which to obtain a picture of general adult basic education provision in Barbados. Since the total population of adults being offered literacy was unknown, it was necessary to locate as many literacy groups as possible to find out the range of variation in provision. However, since the research was concerned with the practice and policies of provision rather than with the scope of provision, the number of students or centres was not considered to be significant. The sampling procedure used for selecting students was opportunity sampling which meant relying on

respondents who were interested and available. Given the research's focus on provision, the aim was to work with the population of operating centres.

The decision to cover all literacy activity on the island was informed by the researcher's knowledge of the transport system and the information networks of the island. There being only 166 square miles of relatively flat land with a comprehensive road system, it was possible to reach most places with relative ease. There was a reliable public transport system servicing the entire island and that was supplemented by a thriving private minibus operation, which provided competitive service on most routes during peak hours. There seemed likely to be no difficulty in reaching all areas where literacy classes could be held.

Regarding the network for information, consideration was given to the fact that the island was divided geographically into eleven parishes, which were in turn divided into twenty four political constituencies and that within either division, depending on the size, there was a community centre for hosting educational, cultural and sporting activities. It was taken for granted that personnel at those centres would have information about literacy programmes being held in the community. Besides those community contacts, there was the Ministry of Community Development and Youth Affairs which was expected to have information about the activities in the various communities. It was known that additional information, both quantitative and qualitative, if available, could be obtained from the Government Information Service (GIS) which published and filed documents issued by various government departments and gave public access to that information.

The main data collecting instruments were structured questionnaires. They were used to elicit information from the adult literacy students and their tutors. The questionnaires were designed to be either self administered or to be used as interview schedules. For those students who could not read and write the researcher functioned as their scribe, writing down the exact responses that they gave. That procedure made it possible for the researcher to ask for clarification about responses that were made and to check that what was written corresponded to what the respondent had said. It also allowed the researcher

to monitor the time spent on questionnaires and made it possible for her to allow the respondents to digress at will. The information from such digressions provided additional data which supplemented the details in the profiles listed above.

Unstructured and informal interviews rather than questionnaires were used for respondents other than tutors and students but they were all asked questions 1-4 of checklist 5.1. since it was assumed that those were the general areas about which government officials and providers of adult education adult might know. The decision to interview those respondents rather than issue them with questionnaires was made in consideration of the fact that local officials were usually too busy to find time to talk and the assumption that they might therefore have had even less time to complete questionnaires. As the researcher did not know the extent to which any one of them was actually involved in adult literacy provision the interviews allowed her to find out that information, gauge the extent of their involvement in or concern about adult basic literacy provision and gather other information which the researcher had not considered.

Interviews which did not give any information about actual provision, provided information regarding people's attitudes to the issue of adult literacy provision in Barbados. That information was itself useful as input to the discussion of why the provision offered was of a particular type. Information from those interviews also led to other sources of information, both people and documents. Factual details in the documents provided information about what provision was being offered or had been promised (discussed in chapter 3 above) and close examination of them provided some insight into why that type of provision was being offered (discussed in chapter 6 below). The above approach of using the few official documents made available was adopted bearing in mind the caution given by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) that such documents should be used not only as resources (to be quoted from) but also as topics in themselves (to be examined in context) so that they would not be seen as mere biased sources of data but as useful social products. In the context of this research that approach was useful for extracting information about where the provision of adult basic literacy education fitted in the government's educational priorities, a position not made clear in official statements or action.

### **5.3.**

## **Questionnaire Design**

### **5.3.1. Sequencing Items**

Initially, four questionnaires were designed, one for tutors and trainers and three for students. The questionnaire for prison-based students was designed later. In all of them questions were not asked according to the order of items listed in any of the checklists or in accordance with the profiles of provision. Such a format was considered to be too obvious and it was assumed that it would have made it possible for respondents to shape their responses to some questions on the basis of the answers they had given to previous questions. The questions were presented in a semi-chronological order beginning with issues relating to how students found out about the classes and their prior awareness of provision and leading up to their thoughts, interests, experiences and regarding the provision. In addition, the questions were strategically distributed to make it less easy for respondents to connect related questions.

### **5.3.2. Embedding Items**

Since the aim of the research instruments was to obtain answers to questions about the practical aspects of provision and elicit information about issues and concepts which might have informed such practice, the questions were worded to get both factual and inferential information. Factual data was to produce a detailed description of practical elements of provision and inferential data was to inform the discussion of issues linked to adult literacy provision. Questions about issues were embedded in questions about facts so that questions did not seem to relate to the issue about which were to elicit information. The rationale for using that strategy was the assumption that some respondents might have been unable or reluctant to give full answers to direct questions about broad issues. One such issue pertained to the attitudes people held about illiteracy. Its importance lay in the assumption that if negative attitudes to illiteracy were widespread, they might prevent some adults from going to class; be a source of stress for some who might be pre-occupied with hiding their attendance at classes from family and friends; and function as potential blocks to effective adult literacy provision, by influencing the class room practice of tutors and the supply of support systems by providers.

Information about the tutors' attitudes was elicited by asking them to give the differences between their past and current "impressions" of (rather than attitudes to) illiterate adults. Additional questions relating to attitudes were embedded in questions which asked about teaching material chosen by the tutors, instructional methods used and the learning differences they had perceived or expected to see between illiterate and literate adults; and between illiterate adults and children. The rationale for using both direct and indirect questioning for that issue was the assumption that tutors' attitudes to adult literacy students could be reflected in the elements of their practice, which could contradict their actual statements. To provide a further check on the validity of conclusions made about tutor's attitudes, their responses to both sets of questions were examined in the light of information gathered from observing them in class.<sup>1</sup> Attention was paid to the possibility that beliefs could be altered while attitudes remained unchanged and that it was more advantageous to view factors such as attitudes from as many perspectives as possible (Oppenheim, 1970) even though attitudinal scores were not to be used.

A similar strategy of questioning was used to elicit information about attitudes from the adult students.<sup>2</sup> They were asked to say whether they had told any friends or family members about their attending literacy classes; and to give the reasons for their decision, the responses of those persons to that information and their own reaction to those people's responses. On the surface, the questions inquired about the support systems available to the students and the extent to which they matched students' expectations. At a deeper level, the questions sought information about the students' attitude to their own illiteracy and to other people's literacy; and information about general attitudes about illiteracy as indicated by the relatives and friends of those students. Since those people were not to be interviewed, it was decided that their attitudes would be inferred from the students' description of how those persons had treated them.

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<sup>1</sup>For direct questions eliciting information about the tutors' attitudes to their adult literacy students see the following items in tutor questionnaire, (TQ, appendix 7): Q9 and Q17-Q19. For indirect questions eliciting the same information, see items Q11-Q14 and Q21 in the same questionnaire.

<sup>2</sup> For questions used to elicit student's attitude to their illiteracy see items 7a-10b in the questionnaire for community-based students (CQ, in appendix 5).

### **5.3.3. Rationale for Instruments**

Three different questionnaires were prepared for students on two assumptions: firstly, that they might be better able to answer some questions in the middle or towards the end of the course than at the beginning and secondly that some ideas held by the students at the start of the course might change half way through or towards the end. The pilot questionnaires, labelled PQA, PQB and PQC, (appendices 2, 3 and 4 respectively) were therefore designed to elicit information at different stages of the students' class experience: pre-entry, entry level and on-course level respectively.

#### **Questionnaire A**

Pilot questionnaire A (PQA, appendix 2) was to be administered during the week of registration or the first weeks of the course. It sought personal information regarding the students' schooling, level of literacy, employment status, life goals and their awareness of their own learning strategies. It also asked about their biases towards tutors vis a vis age and gender. Considering connections made in regional and international literature about the relationships between levels of adult literacy and employment, self worth and social functioning, items in PQA elicited information about such relationships and others from a Barbadian perspective. Some of those relationships were length of formal education and literacy level; the difference between the students' current jobs and those to which they aspired; the degree of frustration or motivation likely to be generated by that difference and the potential for either response to act respectively as a block or boost to effective learning. Other possible relationships considered were those between the students' motivation to attend classes and such variables as the course fees, the location of the classes, the scheduled time for classes and their duration.

#### **Questionnaire B**

Pilot questionnaire B (PQB, appendix 3) was to be administered during the fourth week of the first term. That time was chosen on the assumption that by then the students might have become more comfortable about discussing their specific literacy situation. It inquired about how they had heard about the classes, their decisions to attend, their beliefs about literacy and illiteracy and their expectations of the course. It was assumed that such information might suggest whether the students' decision to attend class as a



result of public campaigning or as a result of their own awareness of their individual needs could be seen to have any connection with the type of goals they set. The questions about students' attitudes to literacy, the responses they received from family and peers and their beliefs about the sources of their inability to read and write seemed to have the potential to suggest possible blocks to their current learning.

### **Questionnaire C**

Pilot questionnaire C (PQC, appendix 4) was to be completed towards the end of the term or session, on the assumption that by that time participants would have begun to form relationships. It asked about the relationships between students and tutors with a view to seeing what part traditional roles played in the adult classroom and possibly, what impact they might appear to have on the literacy provision. The issue of language was introduced at that stage because it was felt that by that time in the course, tutors and students would have been aware of any conflicts between Bajan Dialect and English and any impact which either might have on provision. Students were also asked to compare what they believed they could do at that point in the course to what they could do at the beginning. That information was needed to compare with assessments made by the tutors.<sup>3</sup>

### **Tutor/ Trainer Questionnaire**

The questionnaire for tutors and trainers (TQ, appendix 7) was designed to complement those prepared for students so that information on some topics could be cross referenced to provide more than one perspective and satisfy the research criterion of validity. The main elements of information sought were on their experience; their attitudes to and ideas about some educational concepts and their opinions about some physical and academic elements of provision. Items were presented as options so that either tutors or trainers could respond accordingly. Since some trainers were also tutors, that format allowed such persons to indicate responses relating to both roles and provided a means of checking the consistency of their positions on some issues. For example, regarding

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<sup>3</sup>No access was granted to administrative information such as student assessments, progress reports of the course or student attendance, so those comparisons were not made.

the issue of student autonomy, it was important to find out whether the trainer encouraged it among tutors as well as among their literacy students. The reasoning was that if trainers did not encourage it in among their adult students of literacy (trainee tutors) or among their adult literacy students, and the trainee tutors did not think of asserting their own autonomy as adult students, there might be little chance of them encouraging such autonomy among their literacy students.

#### **5.4. THE PILOT STUDY**

##### **5.4.1. Choice of site and assistants**

The centre used for piloting the research instrument was the one place known to the researcher that was offering a structured adult literacy programme so it was an appropriate place from which to collect information on various aspects of provision. The researcher had worked in the general adult education programme offered by that centre so there was the element of familiarity with the personnel and administration which was expected to facilitate access. As a well-established centre of adult education connected to the Ministry of education and the University of the West Indies, the centre was an ideal one to study for an insight into the link made between institutional and national goals and the provision of adult basic literacy provision. Regarding the persons chosen to assist with the pilot study, the researcher preferred people who were not only interested in adult literacy education but were actually involved in literacy provision.

The persons selected were one part-time tutor and a tutor/trainer at the centre mentioned above. Both of them therefore had immediate access to the adult literacy classes. An additional advantage of having those persons administer the pilot was that they were familiar with the student respondents and were therefore in a good position to get feedback. Furthermore, their involvement in adult literacy provision was seen as a potential motivator for them to ensure that the questions were answered and to contribute some time in assisting students in completing them. It was also expedient to have them as respondents themselves, for it meant that they did not have to spend time and effort contacting any one outside of their centre to complete the tutor or trainer questionnaires.

Letters of introduction were sent to the director of the centre, the two staff members and a colleague who was to co-ordinate the delivery, collection and postage of questionnaires. The letter to the director explained the purpose of the research, stated why that institution had been chosen and asked permission to administer the pilot among the students and tutors attending the literacy classes there. One tutor was asked to administer some questionnaires among his students and complete the one for tutors; the other tutor, who was also a trainer, was asked to complete the questionnaire for trainers.

#### **5.4.2. Assistants' Brief**

Five samples of each questionnaire for students were sent to be piloted and an additional set of five samples of each set in case it were possible for more people to be involved. Information regarding how the questionnaires had been designed (given in section 5.2.2.) was summarised as 'rationale sheets' (appendices 2.2, 3.2, 4.2), and sent with each set of student questionnaires to be piloted. The sheets listed the questions and indicated what issues were being raised by individual questions or groups of questions. They were necessary, for whereas some issues, such as attitudes, were probed through as many as ten questions (Q5a-Q7b in Pilot Questionnaire A, appendix 1) others required only one question as in the issue of autonomy raised in item Q8 in the same questionnaire. As guides to the factual and inferential information in the questionnaires the rationale sheets were useful as synopses of the concepts and issues which informed the research. They were therefore viewed as useful aids to the persons administering the pilot instruments in that they provided those persons with explanations of the different issues embedded in some questions and could functioned as reliable references in case the tutors had to explain a question, reword it or prompt a respondent. In addition, tutors were asked to report on any questions which the students had found to be difficult either in wording or subject matter; how they selected the students; and any difficulties which they, themselves, had experienced in administering the questionnaires. In addition, the assistants were invited to criticise the design and content of the questionnaires and offer suggestions. The questionnaires and letters were sent by hand on 20th May 1991.

### **5.4.3. Complications**

The fifteen student questionnaires were completed and returned by post on 15th June but not the ones for tutors or trainers. No comments, explanations or criticisms were received then or later despite further requests. After the questionnaires were received the director of the centre responded to the letter of introduction with a denial of access to the literacy students for interviews and to the centre for administration of the pilot. His reason was that the course was being "restructured". However, he agreed to be interviewed. His denial of access suggested that the tutors and trainers had not consulted him and he did not know that the pilot had been received, completed and returned. The researcher decided to clarify the issue when she went to interview him during the field work stage.

The implications of that situation for the research were seen in the following light. Firstly, it was assumed that if the course was being restructured there might have been an assessment of the previous provision and a reformulation of guidelines for future provision and therefore documents for both processes might exist as recent sources of information for the research. Secondly, it was reasoned that if those documents existed and access to them was denied, and no other ABLE centres could be found which wanted to cooperate, the research would have to be altered. The alternative option was to focus on the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) in the prison.

### **5.4.4. Modifying Instruments**

In the absence of any critical or informative feedback from the tutors who had piloted the research instrument, the students' responses were analyzed on the basis of their responses and non-responses to questions. Close attention was paid to responses which suggested that questions might have been mis-interpreted and those which, although they were different, attracted the same answers. Responses to the piloted questionnaires indicated that the issues raised were pertinent and that the questions were revealing enough to generate useful data. Some questions were re-worded, structural changes were made to the research instrument and changes were identified for its administration. It was expected that further adjustments might have to be made during the fieldwork.

## Sorting Data

To facilitate an over view of the responses to the pilot questionnaires, respondents were given identification codes, questions were abbreviated, responses were summarised and those three elements were plotted on a chart (referred to as a response matrix). The questions in numerical order were placed in the cells on the horizontal axis and the responses to every question made by each respondent filled the cells in the vertical axis, a format used by Miles and Huberman (1984) to reduce data. A chart of questions 1 to 6 of the pilot questionnaire A and the responses made to those questions by the five respondents is the shown in chart 5.1. below.

### Chart 5.1

Sample of matrix used to chart students' responses to the first six questions of pilot questionnaire (PQA).

ID PQA	Q1 Schooling of adult literacy student (ALS)- years	Q2 Does ALS know the alphabet Q3 Can ALS write own name yes + / no -	Q4 ALS' employment status Q5a type of job ALS has Q5b job ALS really wants	Q6a how did ALS learnt job Q6b how easy/ hard was it
PA1	primary: 6yrs secondary: 6yrs	+ +	1. employed 2. machine operator 3. secretary	1. demonstrated 2. easy
PA2	primary: 5 yrs secondary: 2 yrs	+ +	1. employed 2. messenger	1. demonstrated 2. easy
PA3	primary: 6 yrs secondary: 4 yrs	+ +	1. employed 2. maid	1. demonstrated 2. easy
PA4	primary: 8 yrs secondary: 0 years	+ +	1. employed 2. packer	1. it was demonstrated 2. fairly easy
PA5	primary: 5 yrs secondary: 0 year	+ +	1. employed 2. maid	1. trial and error 2. easy

The complete charts made it possible to approach the data with a focus on particular questions, issues, participants or centres, extract information quickly and make statements about each. For example, it was easy at a glance to see which questions had not been answered or identify those that had elicited the same answer. It was also easy to isolate respondents and compose profiles on them based on the data they had given. In addition, the charts facilitated quick comparisons between respondents on the basis of such factors of gender, age or schooling. The charting of the data also made it easy to separate questions in terms of which issues they had been designed to raise or which issues they had actually raised. The complete charts for each pilot questionnaires are attached in appendices 2.2, 3.2. and 4.2.

### **Altering Text**

In reviewing the responses it was clear that the amount of writing which the respondents had been required to do could be lessened by changing the format of the questions. For example respondents had been instructed to circle YES or NO if they had done something and then give reasons why they had or had not done that thing. That type of instruction meant that the respondents had to write information for at least four parts of some questions. Such items were restructured to include more circling or ticking and less writing; and significant elements in the questions were highlighted to help respondents avoid mis-reading items as the example below shows.

- (i) If you **did not** do X, go on to the next question.
- (ii) If you **did** X, circle EASY or HARD to show how it was for you.
- (iii) Say why you found it to be so.

The above restructuring was done to save time for those students who did not need much help with completing their questionnaires as well as for those tutors who had to write in the answers for students unable to complete their own questionnaires. Some questions were omitted and others were re-worded, expanded or contracted, depending on whether respondents had left them unanswered, written vague responses or repeated answers already given to other questions.

## Reducing Questionnaires

The decision to have three questionnaires had seemed to be a good one. However, closer scrutiny of Questionnaire B and the responses to it revealed that many of the questions could have been answered at the beginning of the course in schedule A, rather than later as had originally been thought. Items in Questionnaire B which related to how students had heard of the classes, their attitudes and those of their friends and family to illiteracy and the connection between literacy and employment were transferred to schedule A. Items which had asked about students' awareness of literacy and national development; government policy regarding adult literacy education and the students' expected life changes were transferred to Questionnaire C. With the questions from schedule B incorporated into schedules A and C the research instruments were reduced to two schedules. The advantage was that although the same number of questions were to be asked the students would have had to take time from their classes on two occasions rather than three.

A study of the responses to the pilot questionnaires revealed that each set of questionnaires had been distributed to students from the intermediate or advanced stages of provision who had been attending for quite a long time. No beginners seemed to have been involved. Both observations were later confirmed by the tutors who had administered them. With the levels reduced to two, each questionnaires still had to be completed by the same students at different times of the course in order to gauge how they had progressed. That arrangement required the use of a code to identify and connect the two sets of questionnaires completed by each respondent but allow the respondents to remain anonymous to any one but the researcher.

To ensure both conditions, respondents were assigned a code comprising the following elements: (i) an upper case letter for the represented letter of their parish, following the code for licensing vehicles;<sup>4</sup> (ii) a personal number selected on the basis of how many

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<sup>4</sup>Letter-coding used to identify vehicles by parish of origin: St. George - G; Christ Church - X; St. Lucy - L; Thomas - T; St. Philip - P; St. Joseph - J; St. Andrew - A; St. Michael - M; St. Peter - E; St. James - S; St. John - O.

people responded from a particular parish; (iii) a lower case letter, indicating which questionnaire had been completed: a or c. Zeros were omitted to avoid confusion with the 'O' for the Parish of St. John (see foot note 4). A sample of two questionnaires completed by one of four respondents from the parish of St. Michael might therefore have been coded as M4a and M4c.

At that stage of the restructuring, consideration had to be given to the news that access had been denied to the centre where the questionnaire had been piloted, the one established site of literacy provision on the island. Considering that access could be denied to others or conditional access allowed, the research instrument was further reduced to one schedule. That instrument was expected to be easier to implement in a short time at any site which granted access. That decision was supported by the argument that whereas some providers might allow one intrusion into their classes, they might not tolerate two. Since one schedule was to be used the proposed changes for distributing questionnaires and coding responses were waived but the following factors were considered:

1. The merging of the two schedules into one had to be done without losing any crucial questions;
2. The re-designed instrument had to be one which could be administered to adult students at any level of entry into provision;
3. The single questionnaire had to retain the capacity of the original three to reduce the chance of respondents identifying connections between related questions and structuring their responses accordingly;
4. Whereas the original three-stage instrument had made it easy to scatter related questions across the space of three schedules up to three weeks apart, one schedule allowed only the space and time between questions.

The new instrument (CQ, appendix 5) was restructured to be used as both a guide for oral interviews and as an instrument which student respondents could complete with or without assistance. No changes were made to the questionnaire for tutors and trainers on the basis that necessary adjustments could be made in the field.



## 5.5. FIELDWORK

### 5.5.1. Contacting Sources

Field work was conducted over a period of six months between 8 October 1991 and 26 April 1992. It entailed visits to eight centres where the administrators were interviewed and telephone interviews only with directors of four other centres. Seven of the centres were religious-based, one was penal and the other four were community-based. Of those centres found, only two had been known to the various ministries and adult educators. Information from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Community Development and Youth Affairs and the Barbados Adult Education Association (BAEA) pointed to two established centres of adult basic literacy education. One was Glendairy Prison where provision was being offered by the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies (UWISOCS) in association with the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety. The other centre was a community-based centre connected to the University of the West Indies and the Ministry of Education and Culture. By telephoning all service clubs and churches and making informal contact with colleagues in the media and the schools, the researcher was able to locate the other ten centres.

Whereas the prison-based group and the community group had programmes which were in progress and were managed through a definite administrative structure, the other ten centres were in various stages of offering adult basic literacy provision. One of those centres was based in a private school where provision was being offered to the members of the public by a teacher of that school. At five of the religious-based centres the attempt at adult literacy provision had been initiated by the leader of the organisation; at one the initiative had been started because one student needed it and at another the programme was offered by a concerned member. Of the religious groups involved mentioned, six were Christian covering three denominations - Pentecostal, Anglican, Catholic - and the other was Baha'i. At the Catholic centre, literacy was incidental to the programme of education and skills training for employment. That centre had offered it once when a student needed it but it was not an advertised option on the agenda. Leaders of the other religious groups noted the need for literacy but it was being promoted by individuals who felt that members of their congregation needed to upgrade their literacy skills. Only one of those church groups had a programme in progress at

the time of the research. From the above centres, the researcher selected the four with established programmes. They were the private school centre, the prison, the most organised religious-based centre and the community-based centre.

Interviews were arranged by telephone and personal visits were made to the managers of each of the above programmes to discuss the aims of the research, the need for access to observe classes and permission to administer questionnaires to students and tutors. Access to the community-based centre was granted after two interviews with the director but the condition of his granting such access was that information given about the practice would not be directly linked to the centre, the tutors, or the students.

The private school centre had a regular attendance of between fifteen and twenty students. The church group catered to twelve students. The total number in the prison had not been established but a class was said to have between twelve and fifteen students. The community-based centre catered to 60 students spread over four classes. The known population of adults receiving basic literacy instruction seemed to be about just over one hundred. The twelve students attending the literacy classes offered at the private school had agreed to complete the questionnaires and their tutor had agreed to administer the questionnaires because she was already familiar with the students and the questionnaire itself could have been used as teaching aid. The questionnaires were delivered to the tutor in October 1991 two months before the end of the academic term. That literacy class was not continued during the following term and the questionnaires were completed. Since the researcher had not made personal contact with those students, it was not possible to set up meetings to assist them with completing the questionnaires. The tutor also never had enough time to complete her questionnaire.

The director of the church-based centre, after reading the students' questionnaires, decided that they were too personal and too difficult. Those questionnaire were not returned. However, the director and a senior tutor were interviewed, one of the literacy tutors completed the tutor's questionnaire and three observations were made of the class in progress on March 12, April 2 and April 23, 1992. Questionnaires were received from the prison-based centre and the community-based centre.

### **Prison-based Centre**

No questionnaires had been prepared for the students in prison-based provision so the students's questionnaire was adapted, sent to the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety to be approved and then administered. Nineteen prison students comprising six women and thirteen men completed questionnaires. The researcher was the scribe for three of the men, all of whom could not read the questionnaire or record their responses. The respondents were accepted on the basis that they were receiving basic literacy instruction in prison and they wanted to contribute to the research by responding to the questionnaire.

### **Community-based Centre**

Of the four classes offered at the community-based centre, one class was for those who could not read or write at all, one was for those who could read simple texts with assistance and the other two were for those adults who apparently could read but needed help with spelling, aspects of English grammar or who for various reasons needed to improve their communication skills. Daily attendance for the beginners' class was between eight and thirteen students. Of the sixteen students who decided to complete questionnaires at the community-based centre, twelve were from the beginner's class, three were from the intermediate class and one was a former student from the beginner's class who had to drop out because of his work situation. Eight students from the beginners' class did not participate.

Three of the questionnaires were completed at the centre before the start of the lesson. That option was taken by those students who were able to get to the centre early. Three questionnaires were completed in a park about half a mile from the literacy centre on the suggestion of students who preferred to meet on a day when there was no class and preferably on their way home from work. Five were completed by the students in their homes with the assistance of their relatives and one was completed at the home of a student who preferred the privacy of her home, where the researcher functioned as her scribe. The other four were conducted as telephone interviews. The researcher functioned as the scribe for eleven of the community-based questionnaires. Nine of the students had been unable to read the questions or write their responses. The others had been able to

read some of the questions and write some of the words but they were very slow and they asked the researcher to be the scribe for them.

The eight students who opted not to participate included three students who had attended regularly for the whole year, two who had attended very irregularly and three who joined the class two weeks before the researcher was due to leave the field. The first three students mentioned, all women, were unable to read the questionnaires. They expressed their interest in completing them but said that because of their jobs and other responsibilities, they could not find a convenient time to complete them with the researcher. None of them took up the offer of conducting the interview by telephone.

Of the two students who attended irregularly, the woman had attended primary school with the researcher and they had not met each other since leaving primary school. Aware of the sensitive nature of the situation, the researcher did not reveal their previous acquaintance to the class but acknowledged it with the student and took the opportunity to explain why the research was being done and why the questionnaires were important. The student promised to complete a questionnaire with assistance from her sister but she never returned it. The other student a man, attended only a few times and the researcher never made contact with him. The three new students, all Rastafarians, were unable to read the questionnaire. They were all sceptical about having anything they said written down despite the researcher's explanation about the reason for the research and the purpose of the questionnaire.

It should be noted here that with the exception of the Rastafarians, the other five students who did not participate in the research shared the following characteristics: they were the only students who did not willingly participate in class activities; were reluctant to respond to any direct address by the tutor; generally did not talk to anyone during the two-hour lesson; remained separate from the other students by sitting on the periphery of the class and leaving promptly after the class ended; and they were the ones whom the researcher did not get to know well. They were also the ones with whom the tutor interacted less. The reasons they gave for not participating in the research might have been true, but their non-participation was considered in view of the above factors.

### 5.5.2. Collecting Data

Class room observations were carried out as part of the field work to see how the tutors interacted with students, how students interacted with each other and to note the various methods and materials used in the provision of adult basic literacy provision by either choice or circumstance. Observations were made before, during and after the questionnaires had been given to students. As a means of testing the validity of data, observations were used to check what students and tutors did against what they had said during interviews or in their responses to questionnaires. In cases where some students and tutors did not respond to the questionnaires or did not have time to be interviewed, the observations served to provide a perspective of their participation which would otherwise have been left out of the discussion of adult basic literacy provision.

No observations were made of the prison literacy classes in progress because the visits to that centre were mainly for assisting students with completing their questionnaires, each of which took between forty-five minutes and an hour. However, some of the text books used for those classes were examined and the contents were discussed with both inmate tutors and warder tutors. Visits were made to the community-based centre twice weekly from 8 October 1991 until that session ended on 26 November 1991. Three additional visits were made towards the end of the second session, on 16, 19, 24 March 1992. The church-based classes were observed during the first term of 1992. Fewer visits were made to the church centre because those classes began in March and the researcher had to leave the field by the end of April.

The first two sessions observed at the community-based centre were in the 'intermediate' class and the other ten were in the class for 'beginners'. Having been introduced to both classes by the coordinator as someone who was 'studying about literacy' it was easy to sit at the back of the class and watch and listen to the proceedings. Very brief notes of the proceeding were taken in a diary during the lesson but the full account of the observation was done after the class. That procedure was chosen to preclude either the tutors or students thinking that they were being closely monitored. Since daily newspapers were supplied twice weekly to all the classes, it was easy to be occupied with the newspaper while being fully aware of what was being said and done in the

class. Although the class for beginners, the one being instructed in basic literacy skills, was the one more appropriate for the research, it had been hoped that respondents from the other classes would have been included. All four classes were visited during the first four weeks. That arrangement usually entailed missing the continuation of a lesson in one class on a consecutive day because of having to visit another class, or it meant that when the two classes were visited on the same day, the second half of the first lesson and the first half of the second lesson were missed. In order not to interrupt both classes and in consideration of the need for continuity regarding the lessons, the researcher remained with the class for beginners. That was also the group among whom the research instruments were later distributed.

At both centres the researcher participated as a volunteer facilitator only when the tutors and regular facilitators could not give assistance to every one who needed it at a particular time. On those occasions, assistance was given to the student or students seated closest to the researcher and the interaction with the student was spent solely on the assigned class work and not the researcher's work. When students sought help from the researcher, it was given only when a regular facilitator was not available. Generally the researcher's participation at both centres was minimal but enough to establish a cordial relationship with students and tutors. For example it was deemed appropriate to participate in the student-led prayers which started and ended each lesson at the church-based centre. However, although it was felt that the researchers' attendance at the church service held each night after the literacy class would have resulted in students becoming familiar and therefore being more willing to respond to the questionnaires, that action was not taken. The data from that centre was therefore limited to the observations, the interviews with the director and the response from one tutor who completed the tutor/trainers' questionnaire.

### **Coding for anonymity**

An issue which emerged during the field work was the need for anonymity for one provider and centre. A simple system of coding was chosen which was used for identifying respondents for the purpose of data analysis but which would render them anonymous to any one reading the research report. The identity of the prison as a centre

could not be hidden but there was no need to refer to the other two centres by name. The sites were subsequently referred to as prison-based, community-based and church-based centres and were given the corresponding identification codes; P-BC, C-BC and R-BC. The 'R' for religious was used for the church code to avoid having two 'C's'. Those terms were chosen more in accordance with the physical location of the centre than with the orientation of the practice offered.

Anonymity for the sixteen student respondents from the community-based centre was assured by using the following procedure: the eleven female students were assigned number 2 and an upper case letter from A to K, so they ranged from 2A to 2K; the five male students were assigned number 1 and an upper case letter from A to E, so they ranged from 1A to 1E. The prison students were identified as female or male prisoners (FP or MP). A number referred to as a sample number placed each respondent within their group. The six women were therefore coded FP1 to FP6 and the thirteen men were coded MP1 to MP13.

A distinction was made at the centre between tutors (paid) and facilitators (volunteers), that difference was reflected in prefixing their codes with (T) or (F) and ending it with the gender and sample numbers. For example, of the three facilitators who responded one was a woman so her code was F2.3. Of the two tutors who responded from the community-based group, one left the provision so he was given the code Tx1.2, the 'x' indicating his status as an ex-tutor. At the prison, tutors were inmates, warders and persons who were not on the prison staff so they were identified respectively as It, Wt and Et (the 'E' in the last code meaning external). As was done for the other codes, the next to elements in their codes were gender and sample numbers. The only external prison tutor who participated was a woman so her code was Et2.1. Only one tutor from the church based group responded so she was coded as Rt2.1 using the code for her centre followed by numbers indicating gender and sample number. Figure 5.1 below shows the number of persons who participated in both parts of the research study.

**Figure 5.2****Participants in the Research Study**

<b>Participants in Pilot Study</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Total Tutors.</b>	<b>Participating Tutors</b>	
C-BC	2	1	
	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Participating Students</b>	
	30	17	
<hr/>			
<b>Participants In Field Study</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Total Tutors</b>	<b>Participating Tutors</b>	
R-BC	Advanced	1	Advanced 0
	Basic	2	Basic 1
	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Participating Students</b>	
	Advanced	12	Advanced 0
	Basic	9	Basic 0
<hr/>			
C-BC	<b>Total Tutors</b>	<b>Participating tutors</b>	
	Tutors	3	Tutor 0
	Facilitators	3	Facilitators 3
	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Participating Students</b>	
	Advanced	12	0
	Intermediate	21	14
	Basic	15	2
<hr/>			
P-BC	<b>Total Tutors</b>	<b>Participating Tutors</b>	
	Warders (Unknown)		4
	Inmates (Unknown)		2
	Civilians	3	1
	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Participating Students</b>	
	Men	30	13
	Women	14	6



### **5.5.3. Sorting Data**

The above codes for centres and respondents were used in the design of three matrices and following the data-sorting procedure used for the pilot instruments (figure 5.1 above), all responses given by each students and tutor to every question in their respective questionnaire were charted on the matrices. Since there were only twelve tutors, their responses were charted on one matrix and the codes made it easy to identify and compare them during the analysis. Since the prison students had been given a slightly different instrument from the community-based students, their responses were summarised separately so the responses of students from the prison-based and community-based centres were charted on the other two matrices. The responses were examined and a summary was made of responses listed in the matrices. The full summaries of the responses given by respondents are attached as appendices 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1. respectively for community-based students, prison-based students and tutors and facilitators from those two centres as well as the one tutor from Church-based provision. The data was therefore accessible in the form of summaries and as individual responses. Those arrangements facilitated the easier management of the data for analysis and for obtaining a descriptive overview.

### **5.5.4. Analysing and Presenting Data**

The research data was finally presented and analyzed in terms of three factors: inputs, process and output which were selected on the following basis. Since the research study focused on goals and the expected purpose of goals in most programmes is to guide all activity, any element brought to the provision which could influence provision either in promoting or undermining those goals was considered input to the programme. The activities associated with teaching and learning were seen as constituting a process in that they were on-going and they were often affected by interactions among participants at various levels, whether psychological, social, affective or cognitive. Changes at any of those levels which participants observed and identified as being a result of the ABLE provision were considered outputs. The framework of profiles used to collect the data, the matrix format used for sorting the data and the input-process-output framework used to analyze the data facilitated effective data management, making it easy to view the data from different perspectives.

The three methods also complemented each other for they each provided a structure for highlighting data needed for each other. For example, the details which constituted the participants' profiles were essentially the inputs to provision and the profile of practice gave insight into the teaching-learning process. In addition each framework proved appropriate for different purposes for example, whereas the profile format was suitable for discussing the findings of the research study (chapter seven), the output-process-input format was more appropriate for analysing the empirical data, which is presented in chapter six below.

## CHAPTER 6

### CASE STUDY DATA: BARBADOS

#### 6.0. Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first three provide a description and an analysis of a different programme of adult literacy and basic skills provision in Barbados. The descriptive data for each section was taken from the responses which students and tutors made to questionnaires, interviews which the researcher conducted with providers and observations of classroom practice made by the researcher while on field work in Barbados. The fourth part of the chapter provides an overview of the three instances of provision and an evaluation of the provision offered in relation to the goals which have identified by individual students, tutors, heads of the institutions offering the provision and the Government.

The programme discussed in part one was offered to a group comprising members of the general public and was based at a secondary school. Its literacy provision was maintained with tuition fees paid by students, sponsors and contributions from non-governmental organisations. All students attended that programme voluntarily and the programme catered to adults with a range of literacy abilities from those who could not read at all to those who merely wanted to upgrade their English.

The programme presented in part two catered to prisoners and was based at the Glendairy prison. Maintained with public funds and some international aid, it was managed by prison personnel and coordinated by UWISOCS in association with the Ministry Of Education And Culture and the Ministry of Justice And Public Safety. Attendance at prison-based ABLE classes was voluntary for most of the prison students but some were directed to attend.

In part three one church-based programme is focused on but others are mentioned. That programme catered to members of a religious organisation but offered limited access to the public. The group was based at the headquarters of the organisation and its literacy

programme was maintained with contributions from the members of the organisation and was managed by its pastors. Attendance at that class was also voluntary, but there was the impression that the participants' decision to attend might have been influenced by the need for them to be able to read the Bible and participate more fully in the work of the church. Other private programmes are mentioned in part three but they are not dealt with in detail owing to the unavailability of data from programme providers.

The description of participants in this chapter includes personal data considered relevant to the participants' role in the provision, information about the inputs they brought to provision and their comments on the outcomes which they attributed to the provision. The inputs comprise beliefs, preferences, biases, impressions, needs and skills which seemed most likely to influence their experience of the provision. The specific contexts in which these inputs are discussed and analyzed are the students' adulthood; their limited literacy and ability to learn as adults; the nature of acquiring literacy skills as opposed to other skills; the exercise of student autonomy over their own learning; and the connection between literacy and ideas about tutor and student roles. The outputs include changes in attitude and behaviour and the acquisition or improvement of various skills. The rationale for presenting the data in terms of inputs and outputs was discussed in section 5.5.2. of chapter five above.

Descriptive data about participants and practices for each programme are presented in the same categories and sequence in each section. An outline of the data for each programme precedes each section of the chapter. The outlines not only function as guides to the data in each section but also facilitate the comparison and contrast of data within and between sections. The overt similarity of categories for each programme belies the variation that exists in the data both between participants and between programmes. For example, the same personal data was sought for all students but information about the location of home and workplace in relation to the literacy centre was not relevant with regard to the prison-based students. Similarly, owing to the different functions assigned to students and tutors in adult basic education the students' personal data gives information about the extent of their literacy skills but the data for the tutors includes information on their training and experience.

To permit the smooth reading of data for each programme, the discussion and analysis of specific items within a category have been added as a commentary at the end of each category rather than immediately after the item which has been commented on. Also to avoid needless repetition of comments made in part one about elements of provision which re-appear in part two or three, cross references are made to those comments. Data for this chapter was compiled from responses made by students at the prison centre (prison-based students) to the prisoners' questionnaire (PQ); responses made by students of one literacy centre in the community (community-based students) to the community students' questionnaire (CQ) and responses made by tutors at the prison centre, the school centre and the church centre to a tutors' questionnaire (TQ).<sup>1</sup> There were no responses from students at the church centre because, according to reports from the manager of that centre, they had agreed with him that the questionnaire was too difficult and personal for them.

Since responses from the above participants provide the data for each section, references to relevant questionnaires and specific question numbers have been inserted into comments which refer to those responses. The questionnaires, identified by the above abbreviations, have been included as appendices 6, 5 and 7 respectively. In the same way that the responses made by groups to specific questions can be quickly accessed by checking the question references cited above, so responses made by individuals or by subgroups (selected on the basis of gender or other criteria) may be checked by referring to the summary of the response charts in appendices 6.1, 5.1, and 7.1. The rationale for the coding system used to identify respondents and centres has already been explained in section 5.5.2 in chapter five above.

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'community centre' is deliberately not used here so that the reader would not confuse references to a literacy centre located in a community with the name given to the type of establishment which is set up to cater to a range of community activities. The label 'Community-based' provides a convenient term of contrast with 'prison-based' programmes and does not denote those programmes which are tailor-made for specific community groups. Similarly, the term 'church-based' is used for convenience to refer to the location of the literacy classes rather than to the particular orientation of the provision offered in those classes.

No percentages have been included in the three sections owing to the small size of both the population and the sample on which the research was based. Twelve tutors participated in the research. From the church-based centre, one of two tutors participated; from the community-based centre responses were received from one of the four tutors, three of the four facilitators and one of the three former tutors; from the prison-based centre, there was cooperation from one external prison tutor, two inmate tutors and three warder tutors. Of the 504 men and fourteen women who made up the prison population, it was estimated, unofficially, that eighty per cent of the men had some form of literacy problems. However, on any one day during the researcher's visits to the prison, only about twenty men were attending classes. Thirteen of those men and six of the women participated in the research. Of the sixty students registered in the community-based group, seventeen participated in the pilot study and sixteen participated in the actual study. To report therefore that participation was received from three percent of the male prison population, forty two percent of the female population and fifty five percent of the community-based population would have been misleading.

Since the research required descriptive data, observation alone might have been enough but it was accepted that the greater the number of participants, the wider the range of personal experiences there might be to draw from. The small number of participants, selected through opportunity sampling, explained in section 5.1.7. of chapter five above, proved to be effective enough to give confidence in the validity of the students' reports thus contributing to the reliability of the composite picture of adult literacy provision in Barbados.

All names have been left out of the presentation and analysis of data in the following sections in an attempt to maintain confidentiality of sources and grant the request of one provider for anonymity for the students and tutors from his centre. In some instances even gender and teaching status of tutors have been omitted when it was clear that they could easily be identified by those factors. While making every attempt to honour the request for anonymity, and the demands of confidentiality, the researcher has also been careful not to let those precautions compromise the research in any way. For consistency, anonymity has been extended to all respondents and all centres.

## PART ONE

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## PART ONE

### 6.1. PROFILE OF COMMUNITY-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION

#### 6.1.1. Profile of Community-Based Literacy Students

##### Personal Data:

The personal data of the students covers their age, gender, schooling, the extent of their literacy, their employment status and the location of their homes and work places. Eleven women and five men from the community-based group participated in the research. The ages given by four of the five men (CQ.17) were 21,31, 40 and 52. One man did not respond. The ages of the women were similar with the majority (six) being in their thirties. Two were in their forties, two in their fifties and one was in her twenties. In terms of schooling, seven of the women had between four and nine years of primary schooling and three of them had between one and four years of secondary education. Three women did not respond to question CQ.36. One man had no formal schooling at all and the other four had between five and seven years of formal primary education. None of the men went to secondary school but two attended special schools for remedial education after they left primary school. The school-leaving age for those who remained at primary school or attended senior schools but did not attend secondary school was in the 11-16 age range. For those who went to secondary school it was in the 12-15 age range. Only one student, a woman, did not have any formal schooling after the age of eleven. Table 6.1. below shows the type and length of schooling which the students had experienced.

Regarding the students' employment status at the time of their attendance at the course, one man and one woman had never worked (CQ.20). Five of the others were government employees, five were privately employed and one was self-employed. The government employees included a labourer at the sea port, an agricultural labourer, a gas pipe fitter, a maid and a cook. The private employees worked in the areas of pastry making, hotel house keeping and book binding. The self-employed student worked as a furniture upholsterer (CQ.21a). All of the students had kept their jobs for more than two years. Some of the government workers had kept their jobs for between twenty and

thirty two years and four of the private employees had worked with their company for between eighteen and twenty seven years (CQ.21b).

Students came to the community-based centre from six of the eleven parishes (CQ.18, 19). Eight students lived in the parish of St. Michael, where the literacy centre was located. The others lived and/or worked in a combination of the six parishes of St. James (S), St. Andrew (A), St. Michael (M) and Christ Church (X). In Tables 6.2 and 6.3 below, which present the students' biographical details, the parishes are indicated according to the letter system used for the licensing of vehicles in Barbados. The relevant ones are given above in parentheses.

Twelve of the sixteen students needed help with reading and completing their questionnaires. Three women and one man were able to read and understand most of the questionnaire but needed some help with completing it. Those four had experienced different types of schooling, but generally, each type of schooling represented among them had also been experienced by the others who were not able to read at all. Table 6.1. shows that two of these students, participants 2I and 2K had attended senior schools<sup>2</sup> and 2J had attended a Newer Secondary school.<sup>3</sup> It also shows that participant 1A had attended a remedial school after leaving primary school.

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<sup>2</sup>Senior schools, which will be phased out by the end of this decade, were catchment schools for those students who would have remained at Composite Schools but they differed from those schools in four ways. Firstly, even though Senior Schools were often located near to or bore the same name as an associated primary school, they were managed as autonomous institutions. Secondly, they were set up to cater to students not only from their associated primary schools but also from other primary schools. Thirdly, students were allocated to them after the publication of the Common Entrance Exam results, thus they took on a quasi secondary status, and created the impression that the students had "passed" for them. Fourthly, their quasi secondary status was somewhat boosted over the years by the gradual shift in the curriculum content from a focus on literacy, numeracy and craft skills to a wider offering of academic subjects and the opportunity for students to take not only the Barbados School Leaving (BSL) certificate but also the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) O' level certificate.

<sup>3</sup>These were formerly known as comprehensive schools. The students who attended them were those who had not done well enough in the Common Entrance examination to qualify for a place in the Older Secondary schools, previously known as Grammar schools.

### **Commentary 1.**

With the exception of one man, all of the school-based students had been exposed to at least six years of schooling. Considering the length of schooling and the curriculum which would normally have been covered in that time, it would be expected that students leaving primary school at the age of eleven, with no obvious mental, physical or psychological impediment would have acquired enough of the basics of reading, writing and calculating even if they did not do well enough in the Common Entrance Exam to qualify for a secondary school. In fact, it might even be expected that all children would be able to do well enough to pass the exam barring their experiencing a negative reaction to the exam itself or to some other external factor,

The information given by the students about their schooling show that they failed to gain basic literacy skills even after spending as many as three extra years at the primary level and leaving school at the age of fourteen. The last year of formal schooling indicated in Table 6.1. gives additional information about the schooling offered to those students who left primary provision at the age of thirteen or fourteen. That all of the adult students left school between 1951 and 1971 suggests that they had been offered one of two types of provision: all-age primary school provision and composite school provision (see footnote 2). The first, available in the decades leading up to the fifties, would have been in the traditional primary school which offered schooling up to class seven, thus providing nine years of schooling including the first two years in the infant classes. This type of schooling would have catered to the majority of the population who would have been too poor to afford the tuition fees for any of the secondary schools, none of which were free then. The second type of provision, would have been offered through composite schools which were due to be phased out in the nineties. That type of schooling was offered to students who did not do well in the Common Entrance Exam. They remained at their primary school and were educated either in a different section of the same building or in another building within the same compound.

One difference between the two types of students is that among the former would be found those who might have done well in the secondary school system but had no access. Such persons often returned to the same school as junior teachers and often

eventually gained promotion to headships or other positions in the education system. It was not unusual to hear of such developments for persons in the composite schools. However, even though both sets of students would have graduated from school at an age equivalent to a third former in a modern secondary school, it seems that many among them left with literacy problems.

Attending secondary school appears, however, to have been no guarantee for acquiring adequate literacy skills judging from the data for respondents 2F, 2H and 2J of table 6.1 and the more detailed information in Tables 6.2 and 6.3. According to the data, two students attended Newer Secondary Schools. Despite the change in name from Comprehensive, those schools were still assigned students who would have gone to composite schools so many students attending them would have begun with six years of primary schooling and with some literacy problems. The data in Table 6.1 shows that the two students who attended that type of school, gaining access to two years of secondary education, had not improved their literacy skills to their satisfaction, judging from their presence in the literacy class.

The second type of secondary school represented was the private school. According to the data ( Table 6.1), one participant attended for four years and left at the age of fifteen but still had literacy problems. That was possible because students could be sure of a place in some private secondary schools as long as their fees were paid. Table 6.1 also shows that other students spent as long as seven years at Special Schools, a form of educational provision made available in the eighties with limited access, owing to the scarcity of professional personnel and facilities. The presence of these adults in the literacy class suggests that their literacy problems had still not been satisfactorily addressed. The only school type not represented in the literacy class was the traditional Grammar schools which offered schooling to those students who had done very well in the Common Entrance Examination. It is obvious that literate people would have graduated from all of the schools mentioned above but the form of selection used to channel students into the secondary level would have ensured that no illiterate people graduated from the Grammar schools.

The above data suggests that the length of primary schooling and the type of primary school had no one to one correlation with the extent of literacy acquired by a primary school child. It however suggests that the extent of the adult students' literacy might be connected more to the type of primary school education they experienced than to the secondary or post primary education to which they had access later. This seems to be a valid observation considering that the secondary provision to which students had access was determined by the outcomes of their primary schooling. The impression general impression created by the data is that the adult students' extent of literacy is dependent on the quality of teaching and learning that took place during their primary years. It is therefore reasonable to demand that providers of adult literacy make sure that they are not offering a recycled version of the education that failed these adults when they were children.

The information about the students' employment status highlights the issue of the relationship between literacy and employment. The issue is whether the students needed to improve their literacy to obtain work or to qualify for a particular type of job. Tables 6.2. and 6.3. show that five female students with many very limited literacy as well as the three whose literacy was not as limited were employed. Among the men, the person who had never worked, was the student who had been able to complete his questionnaire unaided. It must be noted however, that he was the youngest of the men and might therefore have become eligible for work at a time when there was much more competition for so-called unskilled labour. Another possible factor might be his attitude to taking one of those jobs, for according to him, his preferred area of work was in electronics and he was attending the literacy classes as a preliminary step to studying for O'level Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) certificates. The general indications are that the students' decision to improve their literacy skills might not have been primarily for gaining initial employment but for other reasons. This issue is looked at in Commentary 4. which discusses reasons given by students for attending literacy classes.

The data on the students' home and work places suggest that most of them chose the literacy centre because it was convenient to reach after work. For those students who

were unemployed and lived in the rural areas, the centre would have been quite a distance away requiring them to take at least two buses in both directions or walk for close to a mile to the centre from any one of the five bus terminals in the city. The widespread distribution of the students suggests that it might be worth exploring whether the community centres in each parish could be used as centres of literacy and basic skills provision. This suggestion is offered with awareness of the fact that many people, for various reasons, might prefer to endure the possible inconvenience and cost of the journey to Bridgetown rather than attend a literacy class in their community.

**Table 6.1.**

**Schooling Experience of Community-Based Students**

STUDENT CODES	PRIMARY			REMEDIAL		SECONDARY			last year of formal school
	Years at school Q36	last class Q44	school leaving age Q45	years at school Q36	school leaving age Q45	years at school Q36	last form Q44	school leaving age Q45	
2a	9	6	14						1968
2b	9	6	14						1972
2c	nr	nr	nr			nr	nr	nr	-
2d	nr	nr	nr			nr	nr	nr	-
2e		nr	nr						-
2f	4	4	11			2	2	12	1972
2g	7	4	11						1970
2h	7	4	11			4		15	1978
2i	7	6	14						1971
2j	6	4	11			1	1	12	1956
2k	9	4	14						1951
1a	7	4	11	7	18				1990
1b	6	4	11	4	15				-
1c	6	4	13						1964
1d	5	4	16						1984
1e	0	-	-						-



**Table 6.2.**

Personal Data of Adult Literacy Students from the school centre: Women

Type of school	PRIMARY		SECONDARY			GIS SCHOOL	REMEDIAL	OTHER
	Junior	Senior	Older	Newer	Private			
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	1	4	0	2	1	0	0	0
LAST FORM/CLASSES	4	6, 6, 6, 4		2, 1	nr			
SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE	11	14,14,14, 14		12, 12	15			
LITERATE : + NOT LITERATE : -	+	++ - nr		++	+			
EMPLOYED : + UNEMPLOYED : -	+	- ++ nr		- +	-			
ADULTS' AGE	32	37,33,34, nr		31,46	28			
PARISH : HOME	M	A, S, M		G, S	M			
PARISH : WORK	M	nr, A, M		nr, X	nr			
STUDENT'S CODE	2g	2a,2b, 2i, 2k		2f, 2j	2h			

**Table 6.3.**

Personal Data on Adult Literacy Students from school centre: Men

TYPE OF SCHOOL	PRIMARY		SECONDARY			G.I. SCHOOL	REMEDIAL	OTHER
	Junior	Senior	Older	Newer	Private			
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	3	1	0	0	0		2	1
LAST FORM/CLASS	class 4, 4, 4						-	-
SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE	11,11,13						18, 15	-
LITERATE :+ NOT LITERATE :-	- + +						- +	-
EMPLOYED :+ UNEMPLOYED :-	- + +						- +	+
ADULT'S AGE	21, nr, 40						21, nr	52
PARISH : HOME	A, M, A						A M	M
PARISH : WORK	- M, A						- M	M
STUDENT'S CODE	1a, 1b, 1c						1a, 1b	1e

#### **6.1.1.1. Community-based Students' Input to Provision :**

Inputs for which data was collected related to the adult literacy students' prior experience of schooling, their preferences for particular aspects of provision, their beliefs, needs, expectations, learning styles and coping strategies. Information about the students' prior learning experience was gathered from students' responses about the way their teachers presented lessons, the prevailing teacher-student relationship, the texts and materials used in class, the relationship among the students and the general layout and organisation of the class.

#### **Experience of Previous Schooling:**

With regard to previous school experience (CQ.37), one student said that she could not remember details about her previous school experience because it seemed as though she had "blocked out a lot of things." One man had nothing to say because he had not been allowed to go to school. Another student recalled that her teachers at school "used to help who they liked" and that generally, they "were not interested in the children at the back of the class." None of the students gave any information about the teaching materials with which they interacted as children but some of them recalled that in terms of student interaction they were not encouraged by their teachers to help each other in class. One student noted their parents usually endorsed the teachers' position because they did not want their children to "mix" with other children and many referred to the beatings they were given.

#### **Students' Preferences Regarding Aspects Of Provision:**

The adult literacy students did not express preferences for any major alternatives to the provision they were being offered. The tutor's age did not matter to six of the students (CQ.13). What mattered, according to them, was whether the tutor was "good at the job." One person preferred a tutor closer to her own age and one person did not answer the question. The other eight students opted for tutors who were older than they were. They reasoned that older tutors would be responsible persons with more experience, better able to understand adult students, be more tolerant of them, and better able to inspire confidence in them.

Regarding the tutors' gender (CQ.14), eight students said that gender did not matter. One person did not make a choice and the other seven preferred female tutors. Four of them explained that they had made that choice because they were accustomed to having female teachers. One student said she believed that women would be "more open" than men and another said that he found it easier to communicate with women than with men.

Classes with ten or fewer students were favoured by four students who reasoned that such a ratio would allow each of them to get more attention within the two-hour session (CQ.12a,b). One of them said that an additional reason was that he became "confused" in big groups. Nine others preferred classes of more than ten but fewer than twenty students. The reasons they gave were that having more students in a class meant that each person had more people to ask for help and learn from. One student did not respond and one other said that the number of students in the class did not matter as long as individuals received help when they needed it.

With reference to choice of location for the adult literacy class (CQ.15a,b), thirteen students preferred the class room. For most of them it was "the place to help children with problems." They also thought that the class room would be "more comfortable" because they had already associated it with studying and they felt there would be fewer distractions in a classroom than elsewhere. One student who preferred the classroom was also open to the option of being taught in her home because it would save her bus fare and the time she spent in travelling to and from class. Only one student said that the location of the class did not matter.

### **Commentary 2.**

One point which the above data highlights is that the experience of primary school might have been traumatic enough for students as to affect their attitude to learning and probably be a contributing factor to their acquiring only limited literacy. The chance of there being only one such person in an adult literacy group, should still justify the inclusion of discussions about students' previous experiences of schooling either in initial personal interviews or in group sessions at the beginning of the adult literacy programme. It seems reasonable to assume that information about negative practices of

previous teachers or ideas held by the students about themselves, learning or schooling which could have been formed as a result of the early school experience might surface and the literacy tutors might be able to use that information to enhance the current provision for those students. The possibility that outcomes of prior schooling might have negative influences on current learning also has implications for the training of adult literacy tutors for it suggests the need for them to be introduced to such areas as creative listening, and techniques of personal and interpersonal expression and strategies for helping the students to identify and shift blocks to their learning. In addition, the above issue suggests that there might be a need for adult literacy centres to have access to the services of trained educational psychologists or psychosynthesis counsellors as part of the support services for ABLE provision.

In fact, the above data indicates three elements which could be perpetuated in the adult class room and serve as potential blocks to the adult student's progress or contribute to the students' decision to drop out of provision. Actually, the researcher observed all three of them operating in the community-based group. One was that the tutor overlooked certain students for an entire evening but was in constant rapport with others, albeit about the content of the evening's lesson; another was that a few students who constituted a sub group within the literacy class helped each other but those students who had not yet made friends in the group, struggled alone with aspects of the lesson, seemingly reluctant to approach the tutor directly and apparently not wanting to share the problem with other students. On one occasion, a student initially refused the researcher's assistance because she thought the researcher was "one o' we (one of us adult literacy students)" and therefore not able to help her. The third element, which relates to the second, is general prejudice towards strangers which tends to prevent adult learners from approaching each other and therefore getting the opportunity to "mix" to their mutual benefit. The implication for practice here seems to be that adult literacy tutors might have to be as much concerned about and capable of managing social relations within the adult literacy class room as they might be about facilitating the acquisition of literacy skills.

Although the students' preferences were not very different from the actual elements of provision, their choices seemed to be significant and if considered, may have implications for future adult literacy provision as well as general education. For example, with regard to the student's preference for tutor's age, it is significant that those who preferred older tutors based their choice on the assumption that age was associated with experience, and more developed personal/social skills. The implication for provision is that if the campaign for widespread literacy is to be effective, younger tutors might have to be co-opted but with an age bias against them, there could be the possibility that both young and older adult students might be reluctant to attend literacy classes where they are taught by young teachers. This suggests that young tutors would have to be made more visible as responsible facilitators of learning in order to counter the bias towards age held by both young and old adult students.

The attraction of younger tutors to literacy provision might help to reverse the increasingly negative attitude held by Barbadians about the youth. It would lend substance to the rhetoric that the youth are the builders of tomorrow and it would give other young people needed role models. This type of work could be added to the current work experience schemes being conducted in schools and could also be included as an extension of the work done by the youth service. Furthermore, adult literacy education could be incorporated into the UWI summer classes where in addition to secondary school students going to be taught, the university students themselves could be teaching adults from the community. It is expected that these prospective tutors would themselves have attended orientation workshops and benefited from initial training. In this way the university would be connected to the two ends of the community, the old and the young.

The students' preference for female tutors may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it could be an expression of their acceptance of the gender stereotype of the woman as nurturer, having the attendant qualities of patience, openness and the ability to communicate. On the other hand, the students' responses could have been to the actual distribution of labour in Barbados characterised by women being employed in all areas of national life but with the majority working as teachers at school and at church,

nurses, servants, managers of single parent households as well as caterers and carers in nearly all of the service industries. Given that the second situation might have developed because of the existence of the stereotype, and in the absence of any research, it is not possible to say which situation influenced the students' responses.

This gender stereotype seems not to be in keeping with the aims of national development for in order for all citizens to respond to the challenges of the future (West India Commission, 1992) and be ready to adapt to change they would need to debunk many such stereotypes. Since parents are expected to help children to prepare for that change, it follows that they themselves would need to be willing to do the same. As such, all forms of adult education would have to be offered with an awareness of this need. With specific reference to adult literacy provision, the bias towards women by students, the majority of whom are women, might have implications for men deciding to attend literacy classes. There is the possibility that such educational provision might be seen by men as a "woman's thing," both from the point of view of who controls it and who appear to be benefiting from it. Women constitute nearly a three to one ratio to men in Barbados but the fact that they perform better academically in the schools and still make up the majority of adult teachers and students in both continuing and adult literacy education seems to suggest that the men are opting out of education. Consideration of the above issue by literacy providers might be necessary to ensure that men are targeted as more active participants in adult literacy provision, both as students and as tutors.

In expressing their preferences for class size the students gave the same rationale for having small classes as they gave for having large classes: the expectation of receiving more help. However, those who wanted small classes expected the help from the tutor; those who wanted large classes expected to be helped by their peers. As was anticipated from the students' attitude to peer assistance discussed above not many (only four) students favoured having between ten and twenty students so that they would have more colleagues from whom they could learn.

The tendency to respect the knowledge of authorities over that of one's peers, though sometimes wise might be seen in some circumstances as a sign of insecurity and

inferiority. In the context of adult literacy education, highlighted in the above example, this tendency might justify educators looking at adult education as education for adults by adults. Such a consideration would entail giving the adult students access to the same orientation which is offered to or recommended for teachers to help them deal with adult students. It is assumed here that such knowledge would help the adult students to relate with each other, the teacher and the teaching/learning situation. One would expect such an orientation to include dealing with the need to validate knowledge based on its own value and not solely on its source; the need to validate authority not only in sources well established but in all persons including self. There might also be the need to promote the development of insight and courage necessary to challenge assertively all sources of information, no matter the authority, until one is satisfied, but without aggression or violence or the necessity of totally dismissing that authority as it pertains to other areas of knowledge. Another area of interpersonal relating would of necessity include learning to separate the issue from the person or personality. An education programme that incorporates these aspects as method as well as message might be considered adult in the sense of being education in how to behave in a mature and independent manner rather than in an egocentric, sociocentric or classcentric ways (Piaget, 1973), all of which suggest a tendency to unthinkingly follow a particular path set by others.

Adult education may therefore be seen as involving two processes: educating a people as adults, i.e. as they are by age or other given criteria and educating them to be more adult that is, as they can be in terms of coping effectively with all aspects of their environment, including other people. The adult education process would therefore be concerned with moving from the first position to the second and the adult tutors and facilitators would need to be involved from beginning to end, ever conscious that they too are going through that process of becoming. The reasoning behind the above suggestion is this: if education is a developmental process, it should not be possible for participants to leave an adult education programme untouched or unchanged in any aspect of their being that could help them to contribute positively to their community. If literacy is seen as being more than just reading and writing and has been extended to incorporate the application of these skills, then it seems that the factors associated with



adult education in the literature ought to be essential to the provision of adult literacy education.

The adult students' perception of the class room as the ideal place to learn, given the lack of facilities, poor lighting, and generally cramped conditions of the rooms in which they meet might suggest that like their other choices, this one was made on the basis of what was familiar to them. The above situation suggests the need for some innovation of provision by the tutors but given the restricted times and scale of provision as well as the fact that most tutors have full time teaching jobs or are retired, there is also a need for experimentation with types of provision by the providers.

### **Problems With Language:**

Expressing their opinions about the classroom medium twelve of the students said that English was better than Bajan as a medium of communication both inside and outside of the classroom. Two thought that both ways of speaking were equal as languages and two did not give their opinion. The reasons given by four students for choosing English over Bajan were that people needed English in order to get a job; English was better than any other language including French and Spanish; more people would be able to understand them if they spoke English than if they spoke Bajan. It was also explained that since English was a priority for jobs and other activities, people should learn it and "catch up" on Bajan after. Despite expressing a preference for English as the preferred language for speaking, one student noted that "You need to talk in Bajan sometimes" and another said that the choice to speak Bajan should "depend on the subject and the situation."

Regarding their ability to understand the English used by their tutors (CQ.49a), eight students said they always understood their tutors' English and seven said that they understood the tutors' English sometimes. However, in response to the question about the problems they had with their tutor's language (CQ.49b), nine students, including those who had said that they always understood their tutors' English, said that they had problems understanding the meaning of words used by their tutors as well as the way the tutors pronounced their words. One of these also said that he did not usually

understand the way the tutor "put words together."<sup>4</sup> Three students did not say whether or not they had any problems understanding the English spoken by their tutors. Ten students identified the language used by their tutors in the classroom as English and Bajan (CQ.48) and three said that their tutors spoke only English.

### Commentary 3

The generally negative attitudes expressed by the students about their own Bajan language and their apparent problems with speaking and understanding Standard English raise one important question which seems not to have been considered in the provision of the local literacy programme. The question is what language the students are expected to be literate in? This question might seem absurd in the context of Barbados, where the local language bears a close enough resemblance to the official language to be seen by most people as the same language. Another question which might have to remain unanswered for the time being concerns the extent to which students' current literacy problems might be associated with the relationship between the two languages. The third question relates to how realistic the expectation of success might be if the issue of language is ignored and tutors are not equipped or prepared to build attitudinal and linguistic bridges between the adult literacy students' current way of speaking and the way they are expected to speak and write.

The general impression is that the tutors and providers seemed not to have made a distinction between teaching literacy and teaching English. This observation raises the question of whether in the context of Barbados, teachers perceive the two aims as being essentially different, for given the low social status which has traditionally be assigned to Bajan as a form of communication, literacy and its potential benefits have been attached to English. Methods devised for dealing with the language in the adult literacy classroom could have implications for language teaching both at the pre-primary and

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<sup>4</sup>This student's comment is somewhat ambiguous for it was not clear whether he was referring to the tutor's personal choice of syntax in her way of speaking or to her way of using English for teaching literacy. It was observed that she used three different ways of helping students to spell: sounding out individual letters, sounding out syllables which were based on the morphological structure of words and sounding out groups of letters which were based on the pronunciation of words. She did not, however, explain any of those methods to the students.

primary school levels since they are at the base of all educational provision offered on the island. Related to the issue of language is the issue of cultural heritage, which is cited as an important part education for national development in the DLP manifesto and in the Education Act and the National Development Plans. The language situation has implications for classroom practice as well as for the cultural integrity of the class participants. It prompts one to question social policy of a school system which discourages the use of the language spoken by the majority of people from being considered an aid to instruction but upholds the concept of pride in a cultural heritage of which that language is one of the main supports. There are no specific local guidelines by which to answer this question for language was not presented as an issue in any of the national development plans nor in any official statements regarding education. This omission might lead one to suggest that in the context of Barbados culture does not include Bajan language for whenever language is mentioned as a general topic it is clear that English is being spoken about. However, based on similar situations involving languages that are obviously different and situations where attempts have been made to deal with the situation, one may suggest that if literacy is being taught to illiterate adults in Barbados, it should be taught as a second language and it should be made clear to them that they are being taught to be literate in that specific language for specific reasons.

#### **Feelings And Beliefs About Self And Literacy:**

The students' beliefs which were relevant as inputs to literacy provision related to the following areas: their sense of worth, the causes of their illiteracy, the nature of learning to read and write, the ability of adults to learn basic literacy skills, the meaning of being adult, the control of their learning and the relationship between literacy and work. Regarding their feelings about themselves in relation to their limited literacy skills, two men and two women, reported that their illiteracy made them feel "bad" about themselves (CQ.62). One woman said that she was constantly refusing offers of promotion in her job because she feared that she did not have the literacy skills needed to be a stock keeping clerk. She elaborated on her "bad" feeling in this way:

You think of age and how much you have to put up with. I would never put myself in a position to embarrass myself. The way my supervisor does talk about people who are not educated make me think that he would talk about me the same way.

Another respondent described her own "bad" feeling as a struggle between being aware of her inadequacy and her "wanting to do more." One man said he felt "bad" especially when he saw people doing things which he wanted to do, such as reading the newspaper. This awareness of one's inadequacy in reading and writing, especially when one is confronted by others who seem to read and write so easily, was described by one woman as a feeling of "horror". The one man who did not think less of himself for being illiterate said that he felt that way because it was not he but his parents who were responsible for his situation.

Five other respondents spoke about their feelings in the context of specific situations in which they were made conscious of their illiteracy. Three students said that they felt embarrassed especially when they had to depend on others to help them in every-day reading and writing tasks. One said that he usually felt self conscious and often wondered what other people thought about his situation. The other spoke of feeling "small" each time she made an excuse to escape reading or writing. Five women and one men did not respond this question.

In spite of their feelings, the majority of the literacy students, five women and four men, said that they did not believe that their limited literacy skills actually made them inferior to people who could read and write (CQ.63). To underscore her position on this issue, one of those women said she believed that "when you have knowledge of something, it is just as good as being literate." Another woman, who had not acquired adequate literacy skills to her own satisfaction, said that she once believed that illiterate people were inferior to literate people but she had since changed her mind on the basis that "everyone is not made to read and write, so it is no sense bothering about it." One man, who had recently learnt to write, said that he never thought of himself as being inferior to literate people yet he made this admission about how he used to feel, prior to attending the literacy class:

I used to wonder why some people could read and write and not me. I thought it was something special.

Another admitted that he used to feel inferior but had changed his outlook with his progress in the class. He said he no longer thought about being inferior to those persons because as far as literacy was concerned, he was "halfway there."

The remaining five respondents said that they felt inferior to people who were literate. One of them, however, qualified her statement by noting that she felt inferior to literate people in relation to tasks that required literacy skills but not in relation to her work as a pastry maker and private caterer. "At my work, I am the best," she said. Another student demonstrated her struggle with a sense of inferiority in the following statement:

Sometimes I say so [that they are superior] and sometimes I say 'to hell with that, they can't be better than me.'

The others considered literate people to be superior because, according to them, in most situations, such persons "can hold their own", they generally have more knowledge than illiterate people and they can do many things which illiterate people cannot do.

In reporting on what they believed were the main contributing factors to their limited literacy (CQ.35), most students cited events and situations in the home and school and a few blamed either their personal behaviour, cognitive deficiencies or medical problems. Three students, all women, did not give any reasons. Attributing their limited literacy to home factors, two students said that their parents had kept them away from school. The woman recalled that her mother always said that "as long as you can write your name that is all you need. " She also noted that her mother operated on the principle that "when the school uniform done, schooling done," so she was home for a whole term at a time. The man related the following incident which resulted in his not going to school:

My mother-in law (step mother) had her children and my father put me to mind the children but it never stop me from pushing me. They soak down all my clothes in water and I put on the wet clothes and went to school. When I get

home, they beat me with a dog hunter (horse whip) and throw salt on me. I was like a prodigal son...I was the outcast (illegitimate) but they (the other children) were lawful.

Another female student said that she went to school with neither books nor shoes and recalled how impossible it was for her aunt to convince her mother to give her either. She therefore attributed her illiteracy to her missing school a lot and copying from other children because she had no help at home.

Those students who attributed their limited literacy to school factors referred to the treatment they received from their teachers. They reported that teachers often favoured children with lighter complexions or gave less attention to slow learners, often sending the "dull ones" to mix milk for the school break. Some said that the teachers beat them severely for not understanding class work and that encouraged them to stay away from school thus missing out on their education.

Citing personal factors as the main reasons for her not acquiring adequate literacy skills, one student said that she was always afraid of people and ran away when ever any one approached her. She explained that as a result of that fear, she hated going to school and never asked questions in class or responded to her teacher. Another student said that she never tried hard enough. Two persons mentioned medical problems as the major contributing factors to their illiteracy. One of them said that her asthma caused her to miss a lot of time from school; the other said that he was dyslexic and hypertensive and was therefore ignored in class so he eventually dropped out of school. Three of the students referred to their cognitive ability as the main factor which prevented them from becoming literate: one man described himself as a slow learner, and the other two said that their brain or head was "hard".

Comparing the learning of literacy skills to the learning of other skills (CQ.59), four of the students, said that learning to read and write was more difficult than learning any other skill. One student explained the apparent difficulty by noting that in learning literacy skills, "you need to get things in their right place" and things were not as

flexible for the learner as, for instance, learning to cook. Another attributed the difficulty to the extra effort that one needed to exert in learning to read and write and a third noted that practical skills were easy by nature and for that reason, it was easier to learn those skills than it was to learn literacy skills. Two students expressed the belief that learning to read and write were no more difficult than learning other skills, for according to one of them, those skills, like the ones needed to do such skills as needle work, involved the need for "the same type of finding out." Ten students did not respond to this question.

Most of the students who expressed beliefs about the ability of adults to learn literacy skills said they believed that it would be easier for them to learn to read and write as adults than it was when they were children (CQ.47a). The reasons they gave were that as adults they would be able to "understand better"; they wanted to get on in life and were therefore more positive about learning; they had learnt the value of reading, writing and defending oneself in public; they had wider knowledge and they were better able to "go for goals." The one student who believed that he would have a more difficult time acquiring literacy skills as an adult than he had done as a child attributed that belief to the fact that he did not know how to make the experience easier. Five students did not respond.

Responding to the question of who was responsible for deciding what was taught in the adult literacy class (CQ.11a), eight students said they believed the tutor and the student should make that decision. Three of them noted, however, that the tutor was "the one to know what the student should be doing." The six students who said they believed the teacher should be fully in charge gave as their reason the fact that it is the job of the teacher to teach and therefore they expected the tutor to know what to do. Two students said they believed that since the Ministry of Education provided the literacy programme, the Ministry should have the final say in deciding what was taught to the adult learner.

The students' beliefs about what constituted their adulthood (CQ.50) were based on a variety of criteria. Some cited the fact that they had a job and others referred to the accumulation of experiences, responsibilities or possessions such as house, land or

money. One student, using the last mentioned above, said "I know I am an adult because I have what it takes, cash." Three other factors on which some students based their beliefs about the nature of their adulthood were the fact that they knew right from wrong, they were able to cope with life and they had more knowledge than they had when they were younger. Recalling the point at which they first became convinced that they had reached adulthood, some students cited their twenty first birthday; others noted special events such as going to work at the age of fifteen, giving birth to a first child and voting for the first time.

Expressing their beliefs about the relationship between a person's literacy status and their scope for choice in the job market (CQ.25), one student said that literate people always got the jobs they wanted; another said she believed that they never took jobs they did not like. Four other students said they believed that literate people never had problems finding any job. All the others said they believed that the above situations obtained sometimes. Looking at the same situations as they pertained to illiterate people, six people said they believed that illiterate people never got the jobs they wanted; five believed that such persons always had to take jobs that they did not like and seven expressed the belief that people who could not read or write always had problems getting any type of job. Three students said they believed those situations were so sometimes.

Identifying the circumstances under which either literate or illiterate persons would obtain the jobs they wanted (CQ.26), four students said they believed that illiterate people would have to be able to explain themselves well to the prospective boss and be given the chance to show that they were able to manage the tasks associated with the job. Seven students said they believed that illiterate people would get the jobs of their choice only if they improved themselves by getting an education to qualify for it. Two persons expressed the belief that such persons could get their desired jobs if they got help with their application forms and managed to do well at the interview. Regarding people who could read and write, the students said that they believed that for them to get the jobs they wanted (CQ.25), they would need to have the required skills, be able to apply themselves to a task and be willing to develop the right attitudes. One student



said he believed that literate people might have to be willing to be used or abused in order to get the job of their choice. His belief seemed to relate more to the extent of competition for jobs rather than to the nature of a person's literacy.

#### **Commentary 4.**

The general feeling conveyed by the students' account of their perception of the relationship between literacy and self worth was one of ambivalence. On their jobs and in their private lives the participants seemed to be quite sure about themselves as individuals equal to other individuals but regarding their limited literacy skills they seemed to oscillate between thinking less of themselves in relation to literate adults and holding the more positive concept of themselves which they usually have in their day to day existence.

The students' apparent confusion about the connection between one's level of literacy and one's self esteem raises three issues for consideration. The first issue is whether there is anything intrinsic about literacy that makes an adult with limited literacy skills feel an inferior person or whether it is society's attitude to those adults with limited literacy that conveys that impression to them. The second issue is whether adults with limited literacy skills instinctively consider themselves inferior to literate persons or whether it is only those adults who accept society's value of their literacy status. The third issue relates to how possible it can be for literacy tutors and providers to promote the values and benefits of literacy as required by their society and still convey to the students that the values of that society could be questioned as they relate to the jobs, language and literacy status of students, tutors and providers.

Given the number of adults who have become literate without apparently having to question their society's value system as it relates to them, it is obviously possible for tutors to offer successful literacy programmes by accepting them. However, it seems worthwhile, even if it is in the interest of only a few adults, to consider the possibility that there are some adults with limited literacy skills who might not develop those skills because the option of questioning the values that label them never featured in their educational provision and so those students continued to accept them.

A possible conclusion regarding the above situation can be drawn from an examination of the students' beliefs about why they did not develop their literacy skills. Most of them seemed to have thought that their illiteracy had been "caused" by those various factors and that their situation was therefore final. The issue for the providers and tutors seem to be the need to convey to the adults literacy students the following message: adults do not become illiterate; they are persons, who for various reasons, either did not lose their illiteracy the way others did or did not become literate enough according to the criteria of the society in which they live.

The scenarios recounted by the participants in citing the contributing factors to their limited literacy seem to support the idea discussed earlier that some the experiences which some adult learners had of schooling could have been traumatic enough to have contributed to their not having acquired more developed literacy skills. Given the substance of some participants' stories, it seems reasonable to assume that some of the adults might still have problems with adjusting to formal learning which might be related to their earlier experience of schooling. Both of these possibilities support the suggestion made earlier in relation to the students' recollection of their school experiences, that tutors and students should explore those experiences together with the aim of helping to dislodge any blocks to the students' learning and possibly make the new learning experience enjoyable and beneficial in the process.

It also seems worthwhile for the tutors and the students to explore what the students think might be the causes of their illiteracy or limited literacy. Given the fact that three of the participants believed that they were too "hardheaded" to learn, and one believed that he was dyslexic, it might be worth the tutor's while to explore the basis of those labels. Such action could prove beneficial to both tutor and student regardless of the outcome. On the one hand, if there really was a medical reason for the student's learning, it could inform the way the tutor and students approach the latter's learning. On the other hand, if there proved to be no valid basis for the labels, that finding might provide much relief for the student and might mark the beginning of a new attitude to and motivation for learning.

Since by their very presence as adult literacy students, the participants indicate that learning to read and write was a problem for them, it was surprising that at least two of them considered the acquisition of literacy skills to be the same as the acquisition of any of the other skills they had learnt. That there were as many as ten non responses to this question suggests that the participants, like many other people might not have been accustomed to thinking about how they learn. Given that some of the adults attending literacy classes might have even questioned their ability to learn, it might be an important part of adult literacy provision for tutors to encourage their adult students to examine and explore the nature of their own learning.

The value of including such introspection in literacy provision is somewhat validated by the participant's responses to the question of whether their being adult made it easier or more difficult for them to develop their literacy skills. Of the eleven students who responded all but one thought that it would be easier and their criteria related to the nature of their learning: they seemed to be suggesting that their learning depended not on what they had to learn but why it had to be learnt. The nature of the adult's learning was also implied in the reason given by one student for expecting his adult learning experience to be more difficult than his childhood experience of learning: he did not know how to make his own learning easier.

None of the adult literacy students said that they alone were the ones to determine what they learnt in literacy class. They opted either to share that responsibility with the tutors or pass it entirely to the tutor or the providers. Yet they all confirmed their belief in their status as autonomous adults. It appears therefore that the adult literacy students, probably like other adults and students, regarded education as an area about which the teacher knows best and should therefore be in control. The literacy tutors seemed to have unquestioningly accepted this control judging from their responses described below about the roles they expected to play in the adult class room and the roles which they thought their adult students wanted them to play. The exercise of student autonomy in the adult class room seemed not to have been an issue in local adult literacy provision. This assumption is confirmed below by the tutors in their admission that the students play no part in the literacy provision besides being students and giving content-based

feedback. The apparent non consideration of student autonomy must have some implications for the outcome of local adult literacy provision in view of the range of literacy-related needs and expectations (discussed below) which the students bring to the classes and the possibility that the students might not have an avenue for pursuing them outside of the structure set by the tutor.

Even though the students said that literacy gave people greater choices of employment and that those with adequate literacy skills stood a better chance of getting the jobs they wanted, they still observed that literacy was not the main criterion for getting the desired jobs. The students seemed to be speaking on the basis of their own situations as employed persons with limited literacy skills and as such, their comments related more to literacy and job status than to literacy and employment. This perspective appears to support the observation made earlier that the adult literacy students attended literacy classes not as a requirement for become employed but as an investment towards changing their current job.

#### **Need For Improved Literacy:**

The students expressed a range of needs in their responses to questions about what they expected to learn from the classes (CQ.24), what skills they thought they needed to do the job each really wanted (CQ.23) and the changes they expected literacy to make in their lives (CQ.29). From the students' responses, five categories of needs were identified as possible inputs to the provision: basic education needs, job-related, interpersonal, social and personal needs. These categories are used later as a structured way of speaking about the students' needs in relation to the outcomes of the provision. The range of needs cited above indicate that the assumption made earlier was well founded: the students did not primarily attend literacy classes to qualify for employment but for many other reasons. It is therefore significant that the students did not refer to these needs when they assessed the provision in terms of outcomes and unfulfilled goals.

Ten students cited their main need as wanting to learn to read and write; one person wanted to boost her self esteem and three cited the need to speak and write "proper English". One literacy student said that she needed to get a certificate in English and

one mentioned the need to learn to add. Job related needs were not listed but the jobs which the literacy students wanted gave an indication of the various skills which would be needed by these students (CQ.23). The jobs listed were secretary, sales person, receptionist, nurse, electronics engineer, office machine repairer, policeman, hotel housekeeping supervisor, and farmer. The specific needs mentioned in relation to those jobs were the acquisition of skills in the areas of typing, communication, telephone operation, office practice and supervision. The man who wanted to be a farmer said that he needed land and the two students who wanted to be maids listed the ability to wash, cook, clean and serve tea. Six persons did not give respond to the question.

The students' interpersonal needs and those related to life skills were mentioned by students in their statements about what changes they expected their newly acquired literacy to create in their relationships with family friends and workmates (CQ.29). These needs included finding out socially acceptable ways of approaching people, forming better telephone conversations, learning to be more responsible for one's own life and learning to be independent of one's partner. One student also expressed the need to win her family's approval when she said that the change she expected in her family was that they would think better of her if she were able to "stick it out" with the literacy class.

More specific social needs referred to by the students were in response to the question of how they expected their literacy to affect such social activities as shopping, participating in church, getting news, travelling, finding entertainment, making decisions and contributing to discussions (CQ.30). The needs they cited related to the specific functions of reading and writing and understanding various forms of public communication. Those functions were reading labels in shops, filling out forms, recognising bus routes, reading the newspaper and understanding the news on radio and television, understanding songs and putting "the right word in the right place" during speech.

Some of the students' personal needs were revealed in their response to the general question about what other changes they expected their literacy to effect (CQ.31). The

students mentioned the acquisition of specific reading skills, and the need to develop self confidence, self worth and self control. Regarding the reading skills, students referred specifically to the ability to extract information from texts in order to "confirm ideas" and help their children with homework. The specific areas to which two students related the need for confidence was in setting up a business and for getting married. The need for self control was expressed by one man who wanted to be able to understand those who teased him about his limited literacy skills so that he would be less prone to hit back with hurtful remarks. Eight students did not say what personal changes they expected.

### **Commentary 5.**

One issue which the above data raises pertains to whether the jobs held by persons with limited literacy skills are really low skilled or are held in low esteem. A look at the actual jobs listed by the participants would reveal that many of them require their own intrinsic type of expertise and may therefore challenge persons with literacy problems to develop concepts of measurement, time keeping and other skills to supplement their limited literacy. The jobs that readily fit this criterion are pastry making, book binding, gas pipe fitting upholstery and hotel housekeeping.

Two popular assumptions are challenged by the above data on the adult literacy students' employment. One assumption is that persons with limited literacy skills must become literate in order to make a significant contribution to either their own personal development or that of their country. The other assumption which was referred to above, is that adults attend literacy classes in order to qualify for employment. The above data has already shown that many adults with limited literacy skills are already employed when they decide to attend the literacy classes. In fact, given the students in this study had to pay fees every term, it might have been difficult for them to attend those classes if they did not have jobs. This raises the unresearched question of how many unemployed people need basic literacy education as a step toward gaining employment.

To consider the significance of the participants' contribution, one needs only to look at

the nature of the jobs mentioned above to see that they constitute essential services in various sectors of the Barbados economy, ranging from tourism and manufacture to food catering and the provision of utilities. Therein lies one aspect of these employees' contribution. Another aspect lies in the fact that many of the participants working in these jobs seem to remain in them for many years. Two explanations may be forwarded to explain this characteristic: one might be that such persons would be more apt to take any job that did not require them to read, write or calculate; the second might be that given the limited supply of such jobs, those persons would try very hard not to lose those jobs. A response to the first explanation which was cited earlier as an observation is that the jobs do require their own level of expertise. A response to the second explanation is that since those jobs usually required a long time for a person to become proficient, persons who reach the required level of proficiency might be considered valuable resources to the particular work place and would therefore be encouraged to stay, albeit as part of a major cost cutting strategy.

In view of the above data, one may argue that since jobs are usually not valued for their intrinsic social and economic worth but for their social status; that since remuneration is often based on that status; that since developed literacy skills, even when they are not often or fully utilised, are aligned to jobs of high social status, it is to be expected that persons engaged in essential but socially low-status occupations would want to give them up for jobs of a higher status and the associated higher pay. The question raised by this argument is whether it would therefore be in the best interest of any country to successfully promote literacy as a right for all citizens and still maintain the same value scale for assessing the various types of jobs available to those citizens.

#### **Prior Experiences Of Learning:**

Three elements of the students' prior experience of learning were considered useful inputs to provision. They were the students' involvement in teaching other adults, which could have given them some insight into the tutor's perspective; their experience of learning the skills of their current jobs and various hobbies either from others or by themselves and their development of coping strategies to obtain assistance while hiding the extent of their literacy.

Commenting on the experience of teaching others (CQ.57), students said that some of the people to whom they had taught skills had found the exercise easy because of the student had been knowledgeable about the subject or had been able to explain well. Others cited the learners' desire to learn and capacity to understand. One student cited illiteracy as a handicap to the person whom she was teaching to bake. Four students said that they had never taught any one to do any thing and two did not respond to the question.

The six students who taught themselves their jobs said that they relied on trial and error and persistence (CQ.58). The seven who said that they had assistance in learning the tasks required by their jobs said that they learnt by watching carefully, asking many questions and practising a lot. The same learning strategies were cited again in relation to the skills of basketry, baking and dressmaking which some students taught themselves as hobbies.

Identifying their coping strategies (CQ.28), eight students said that they relied on relatives, friends and persons in authority to help them with literacy and numeracy tasks. Two men said that they had developed reserved ways of behaving so as to avoid drawing attention to themselves. One said that he relied on commonsense and the other said he depended on his ability to copy well in any situation. Two of the women who said that they usually depended on others for help noted that they had developed ways of asking questions which often made the situation more manageable. One said that she had adopted an extremely polite manner to ensure that she received assistance; the other said that she had adopted a bold and direct approach when she asked for help for people then gave her immediate attention.

#### **Commentary 6.**

The above data indicated that the students did not need literacy instruction as a vehicle to developing self confidence or as a means of coping. They had already developed those personal factors. Furthermore, the coping strategies cited above revealed aspects of their personalities and learning styles. This observation suggests that such knowledge could be potentially useful for tutors as an aid in helping them to discover the strengths



and weaknesses of their learning styles and therefore help to inform the appropriate methods and strategies which both tutors and students can develop together. That type of activity would ensure that the classroom instruction is targeted towards the students' learning needs and it would be a means by which students could participate in planning the provision and be in control of their own learning.

#### **Anticipated Blocks to ABLE Provision:**

Responding to the question about the anticipated blocks to their continued use of the literacy provision, most students cited financial problems as the main possible hindrance (CQ.24). They specifically cited the possibility of not being able to afford the fees or pay the bus fare. One student mentioned the possibility of her sponsor stopping the payments of her fees and three persons cited illness as a possible hindrance and referred to the potential problem of their work hours encroaching on their class time. Three students said that nothing could stop them from attending and two did not comment.

#### **Commentary 7.**

Given the lack of deliberate strategies used to attract students and keep them on the course, the students' commitment to attending suggests that they were highly motivated. Just as the tutors did not use the coping skills of the students in the provision, they also did not use the students' motivation to the best advantage. They seemed to have taken for granted that as long as the students had paid for the course or had been sponsored they would be obliged to attend. Given that the above conditions did not prevent some students from dropping out, the tutors still seemed to make no effort to find out what motivated the students to attend classes and use the information, in collaboration with the students, to set both short and long term goals .

### **6.1.1.2. Students' Assessment of Literacy Provision**

The students' assessment of the literacy provision was not made directly as part of a structured assessment report but in their responses to various questions asked about aspects of provision. The responses included the students' comparison of their experience of the literacy provision with their experience of formal school provision, their identification of outcomes from the provision in terms of acquired skills and enhanced personal qualities, comments about problems which they had with aspects of the programme and the listing of the skills they had not acquired. Their suggestions about how the literacy programme could be improved were also included.

#### **Programme Experience:**

Assessment of the class room practices of the provision was made in statements about the type of student interaction that was encouraged, the tutor-student relationship that prevailed and the course materials and teaching methods to which they were introduced. Most of the students' comments were given in the comparison they made between their experience of ABLE provision and their prior experience of formal schooling (CQ.37). Commenting on the tutors' way of teaching, three students thought that the literacy tutors' way of teaching was better than the one used by their school teachers. They based their assessment on the tutors' use of "more detail", their ability to simplify information and their use of "more repetition." Five students did not comment on their tutor's presentation of lessons and six saw no difference between the way they were being taught by their literacy tutors and the way they had been taught by their teachers at school.

Regarding their relationships with their tutors, five students said that they had not observed any difference between the tutor-student relationship they had experienced with their tutors and the one they shared with their former school teachers. One student, referring to his current learning experience did not make a comparison but noted that between him and his current tutor, there was "no relationship, just teaching." Another complained that the current tutor had favourites. Three others, all women, said

that their current relationship with the tutor was better than the one they had with their school teachers. One student noted that the literacy tutor was kinder than teachers she had known and that she made her feel happy. Four students did not respond.

According to eight of the students, the texts and materials used in the literacy class were the same as the ones they had used at school. The only difference they noted was that whereas the government had provided their school books, they had to purchase their own texts for the literacy class. One student, who finished primary school in 1951, said that the literacy materials were more advanced than the ones she had used at school. There were no responses from five persons to this question.

For six of the students, the way that they had related to former class mates was the same way they were relating to their fellow literacy learners. Of those students who had noticed a difference, one said that her school mates used to help each other, thus implying that her fellow learners in the ABLE class did not. The researcher observed that generally students worked alone. Only those who were close friends asked questions of each other. However, rather than it being a case of students not wanting to assist each other, it could have been more a case of them thinking that they were not able to do so.

Two others, however, noted that as adult learners, they helped each other in the literacy class but they had not been allowed to cooperate on that level at school.

The layout and organisation of the adult literacy class room resembled the traditional school room for eight of the students. The remaining six did not make any comparison. From observations of the classroom organisation of the community-based group and her experience of the traditional school classroom, the researcher can confirm that there was little difference between the classroom organisation and that which she was familiar with in the traditional primary or lower secondary classroom. The students sat in rows before the tutors, who usually sat at their desks for most of a two-hour session. Since the classes were conducted in a school, the class rooms used by the adult literacy students were not changed from the way they had been left by the school children at the end of a school day. What differed between the two types of provision was the fact that some

literacy students had access to one or two facilitators and a tutor from whom they could seek help rather than from one teacher as is the case in the formal school systems.

### **Outcomes of Provision:**

Assessing the literacy provision in terms of outcomes, nine students said that they had improved their reading and writing (CQ.64). One student said that he had learnt "nothing really." The specific outcomes cited were the ability to recognise new words on sight and read some sections of the newspaper. One woman referred specifically to her ability to understand some of what was written in "Dear Christine", a popular advice column in one of the local newspapers, as well as some items that appeared on television. Another said she was able to break up unfamiliar words into syllables and then sound them out to see if the sound she produced related to any word which she already knew.

The writing attainments cited by students related to their being able to join letters, form words and put words together into sentences. One student said that he was able to write well enough to fill out a cheque and another said he felt confident about completing supervisory reports, which required him to maintain a written inventory of tools that have been used on the work site by specific persons. That student described the following incident to support his claim for being able to read:

I went back to work one day and I find 'the school boy went to class today' mark on my tool box. I left it 'till it fade off. I was able to read it so it didn't worry me.

There were no questions which sought information on any changes in the students' personal behaviour but one student noted, in response to the question of his acquiring literacy skills (CQ.64) that since attending literacy classes, he was less prompted to retaliate when his friends "dropped remarks" about his limited literacy skills. He said that he used to be abusive but since he noticed improvement in his reading and writing he felt better and could control himself more. Tables 6.4. and 6.5 below show the outcomes which students attributed to the adult provision.

Table 6.4.

Community-Based Students' Assessment of Provision: Men

STUDENT CODE	CURRENT JOB Q21	PREFERRED JOB Q23a	NEW SKILLS NEEDED Q23 * have already # expect from class	EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM THE PROVISION Q24, 30, 31	OUTCOMES OF PROVISION: LITERACY SKILLS Q64
1A		work with electronics	CXC certificates	improve reading	nothing really
1B		repairing office machines	-	read; marry	puts words together; recognizes more words than before reads parts of the news paper
1C		policeman	-	read and write; understand others better; control tendency to be verbally aggressive	writing has improved
ID		motor mechanic	auto-mechanic certificate	read and write	join letters better
1E		small farmer	land	read and write	fill out cheque; read parts of the newspaper

**Table 6.5**

**Community-Based students' Assessment Of Provision: Women**

STUDENT CODE	CURRENT JOB Q21	PREFERRED JOB Q23a	NEW SKILLS NEEDED Q23 * have already # expect	EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PROVISION Q24, 30, 31	OUTCOMES OF PROVISION: LITERACY SKILLS Q64
2A	no response	maid in the public service	ability to clean, make and serve tea (*)	read and write; have more self worth;	new words; reads parts of the newspaper; recognize words on t.v
2B	agricultural labourer	maid in the public service	no response	read and write letters; have a wide vocabulary; help children with homework	recognize some words; break words into syllables to sound them out
2C	cook	no response	no response	no response	no response
2D	maid	no response	no response	no response	no response
2E	maid	office person	typing	read, write, build self esteem	read and write a little
2F	no response	maid	cook, wash, clean (*)	no response	no response
2G	binder at a printery;	sales person	English (#) communication skills (*)	spell, read, help children with homework	no response
2H	no response	work with computers	no response	confirm things from the Bible and other books	no response
2I	caterer and pastry chef	receptionist	English (#) telephone skills and office practice	speak and write proper English; get certificate; change job; start business	no response
2J	hotel house keeper	hotel housekeeper	experience as a maid(*) supervisory skills (*)	no response	no response

2K	hotel housekeeper	nurse	nursing certificate	speak better English	can compose sentences
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With regard to the problems they had with the course content, six students said that they did not have any problems with their lessons (CQ.53) and two did not respond to the question. The other eight cited spelling. They found it difficult to figure out what sounds made up particular words, especially words that they did not know. They said that what made that task more difficult were those words in which two or more sounds were blended, such as the [b] and [l] in "black". One student said that her problem was being able to "join up words", by which she meant link the writing exercise of linking letters. Another said that she found it difficult to put words into syllables and a third found it hard to "put ideas together." Two others complained about the "big words" they had to cope with. The two persons gave reasons who gave reasons for their inability to handle their cited lack of concentration and the need for more practice.

Regarding the skills not yet acquired (CQ.65), one student said that she still could not read or write fluently or understand many words and attributed this to the fact that she had no one to go to for help outside of the class. Another cited her inability to form letters and noted that handwriting was not taught. Referring to her inability to fill out forms or bank slips, a female student said that such things were not taught in the class, adding the comment that "when you are slow, the teacher don't not go after you. They have to be interested in you." The inability to understand nouns and verbs was cited by another student, who said that she probably could not understand them because it was all new to her. Lack of concentration was the reason given by another for her inability to spell. "I cannot write very well because I am not sure about the words," said one student who attributed this to his having learnt to write only recently. Another man was concerned that he took too long to write and produced too many drafts before getting what he wanted. He reasoned that he could improve with more practice.

### **Students' Recommendations:**

A few changes were recommended by the literacy students (CQ.65b). One student cited the need for a speech programme which could help students with reading and speaking Standard English. Students said that there was a need to teach handwriting and maths and they also suggested that there be a library with, according to one student, " books for adults like me."

### **Commentary 8.**

Judging from the students' account of their experience of the provision, it appears that they were being provided with another chance at primary schooling, for in every aspect of provision on which the students commented, the current literacy provision was shown to be the same as the primary school provision they had known. The adult literacy students' perception of current literacy provision in terms of repeated primary schooling seems consistent with their wanting to leave decisions about their learning up to tutors, as was noted earlier in the discussion about student autonomy. It also appears to be consistent with the preferences the students had made about provision, which were really preferences for what they had known in primary school and were again experiencing in adult literacy classes.

As far as the researcher was able to observe, the behaviour of the tutor and the students in the community-based class room was also consistent with the perception of adult literacy provision as an extension of primary school provision. The students took their completed work to the tutor, who never left her desk. Even the students tended not to move from their seats for an entire evening. Only the facilitators moved around the class stopping at those students who requested assistance. The management of the class room business also seemed to fit in with the idea of a primary school setting, albeit a traditional one. For example, the adult students were generally taught as a class rather than as individuals. There were some students who had to be given separate assignments to complete in class and at home but they were requested to stop their work and recite words, read aloud with the class or work together on workbook exercises, as part of an evening's scheduled plan. The following observations made by the researcher provide additional examples of the type of interaction that occurred among the



participants in the community-based programme.

One evening the tutor on arrival greeted the class of students, some of them in her age group (over forty), with a cheerful "Good evening kids!" The class returned the greeting referring to her by her full title " Good evening Mrs. X." She then apologised for being late (observed by the researcher to be the first time in ten sessions) and her reason was that she was "too tired." That same tutor, towards the middle of the lesson was very brusque with a student who arrived late. The student on arrival took her homework from the previous lesson to the tutor. The tutor's loud response was:

Where you going with that book? You come in here when you like and now bringing that? Do what is on the board!"

The tutor's response was followed by some muttering among other students (sitting next to the researcher) about that students' tendency to be late. That student, who was slightly disabled physically, was one of three students who hardly talked during class, but copied everything from the board, and mouthed what the rest of the class was saying without apparently understanding much. In fact, despite attending the class for a year she could not make connections between the named letters and their appropriate sounds or symbols. On no occasion that the researcher was in the class did the tutor encourage any one to assist her or the other three who were like her and none of the other students volunteered.

Prior to the arrival of three male Rastafarian students to the class, none of the students, who included one man, had ever eaten anything in class except mints even though they came directly to the class from work and there was no break during the two-hour session. One of the new students attempted to have a snack during a lesson and was told by the tutor in an aside, in a firm tone of voice but with a half smile:

Do'un eat nut'n in hey (don't eat anything in here)

The student complied at first and the lesson continued but he was still eating when the tutor directed a question to him later. Her response to him on the second occasion was more direct, and was delivered with a stern voice and serious face:

Stop eating please!

You are going like a bunny rabbit and is not answering.

The episode was taken in amusement by the class and the student apparently unoffended, put away his snack, and the lesson continued with no further interruptions. Both examples illustrate the nature of the teacher-student relationship which prevailed, one in which the tutor seemed to adopt the role of an adult authority and the student when relating to her became a big child. They also highlight the fact that the ABLE facilitator can influence the attitudes of the adult students in the class and determine, to some extent how they relate to each other.

Regarding actual aspects of the learning process, no individual writing was encouraged in the class room or at home. Rather, the writing assignment for an evening was usually worked through by the class together and then each student copied it from the chalk board to be taken home and altered to suit them. For instance, the researcher recorded one lesson which dealt with letter writing, the specific letter being an invitation of a friend to a party. The format of presentation was first set out on the chalk board by the tutor. The content was then discussed by the class with the various words which students needed being listed and spelt and then incorporated into the model letter. The students then copied the text in order to add their individual names and addresses and make other changes such as the dates.

It might be useful to note here that even the assignment of writing a letter of invitation might be seen as one typical of a primary school curriculum rather than one considered useful for adults in an adult literacy class. This observation is made in view of the fact that such letters are hardly ever written by the average person in Barbados given the general access to and widespread use of the telephone as well as the increased use of commercially designed invitation cards.

Referring to outcomes cited by the students, it is interesting to note that with the exception of one man who was able to write his supervisory report, none of the adult learners related the outcomes of the literacy provision to their current jobs. Similarly, with the exception of one other man who was finally able to fill out a cheque unaided, no one referred to their ability to apply what they had learnt in the literacy classes to other aspects of their lives. The researcher noted in her observations that both men mentioned above did a lot of work on their own. The first spent much time getting familiar with the form of words, apparently memorising them even though he was not sure how to pronounce them. For example, on one occasion, he asked the researcher whether the word "copy" was pronounced "cope eye" or "cope pee". He had been sounding it out and it did not remind him of any word which he already knew. At the time of his interview, the second man mentioned above had dropped out of the provision because of the demands of his job. He told the researcher that he still reviewed the work he had done in class and he supplemented it with some assistance from his daughter and from personnel in places where he needed to sign his name or fill out forms.

The other eleven students in this class who participated in the research (three students from this class did not participate in the research) sometimes managed to do only part of the homework assignments and generally depended on the tutor to guide them from lesson to lesson. From their reports and the researcher's observations, the majority of students had made some progress in their familiarity with the printed word since they started attending classes. Some had reached a level of word literacy, which varied for each individual, some were able to read and understand more of what they read in the newspapers and some still experienced problems with the mechanics of forming and joining letters. Of the three persons who did not participate in the research two were unable to read or write anything; the other was not present often enough for the researcher to make contact. After attending the classes for three terms, the two students mentioned above still could not recognise the letters of the alphabet in print or match them orally to specific sounds. No separate tuition was available for them besides the repeated lists of the alphabet and an accompanying list of simple guide words to help them recognise what the letters might be. The researcher observed these students and

others mouthing words or echoing the readings of others in the class during the open class sessions. They also copied the lessons from the chalk board and took home the same homework assignments.

The above discussion about outcomes and students' input raises the issues of individual responsibility and student /tutor accountability. These issues are dealt with in detail at the end of the next chapter which examines the literacy provision in terms of the personal goals of individual students, the national development goals of the country and the roles of adult literacy tutors and providers

The students' assessment of the provision, though not detailed, gave some insight into the methods used by teachers in the advance classes. One revealing comment was made by a student from an advanced class (three students from an advance class participated in this research) who said that the problem for her was the concepts of nouns and verbs. In her observations, the researcher noted that one other advance class was also teaching formal English grammar. In the beginners' class, however, grammatical categories were usually mentioned in passing but were not dealt with in detail. The students were often told that the terms would be dealt with later. In the beginners' classes, grammatical categories were mentioned only in passing when the tutor had to explain why some words could not go together in sequence. Then the tutor tended to isolate words ending with -ed or -ing for students to use in various sentence patterns. These accounts of some of the techniques used by the tutors to teach literacy suggest that the tutors were actually teaching English as well as literacy and were not making a distinction. As such they were delivering the lessons as though the language being taught was the students' first language and the students had only to be taught how to categorise the words they already knew and represent them in writing. This was essentially how English was taught at the primary schools, as the students' first language.

The students' recommendations show that the students recognised gaps in the provision being offered to them. However, as far as the researcher knows, with the exception of a query about maths lessons, the students' suggestions were not made to tutors or the

providers. The reasons for the students not sharing their ideas with the tutors were not expressed but the fact that they did not do it might have some implications for the effectiveness of the literacy provision. This is a matter that will be discussed later when the issues of student autonomy, adult responsibility and tutor/student accountability are raised in the next chapter.

The main question raised by the students' assessment of the literacy provision and the above discussion is whether the way it is being delivered is one appropriate for adults and one expected to yield the desired literacy outcomes. This question needs to be examined in light of the fact that this manner of educational delivery seemed not to have worked for the adult literacy students before when they were children and in light of the assumption that as adults, they might be better able to deal with that type of delivery in the literacy class than they were able to do as children in primary school. This matter is raised again in the next section which looks at the tutors' perspective and their contribution to the provision.

The community-based students, by their admission, expected to acquire a range of benefits from the acquisition of literacy. Among these were development of self worth, improved social status and financial improvement but they seemed not to have considered that those factors might be also lacking among literate people. Some of those adult students, although they expressed pride in their personal achievements, still seemed to accept the view that they needed literacy to validate their intelligence as individuals, their status as adults and their worth as citizens.

Although the literacy students listed the qualities they wanted to develop and the skills they wanted to acquire, they did not include them among their reasons for attending the classes, in the outcomes of provision or among their unattained skills or needs. It appears therefore that the students' needs or expectations might not have been expressed as specific objectives by them as individuals or incorporated into the provision as essential components of the curriculum. This was confirmed by the researcher's observations of the class room practice and from interviews with the students. The general impression was that as long as the students and tutors saw a change in the

student's literacy, whether it entailed being able to recognise letters or read sentences, form letters or write an address, they interpreted that change as constituting progress, deemed it reason enough for continuing to attend the class and thereby accepted it as validation of the literacy provision.

## **6.1.2. PROFILE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LITERACY TUTORS**

### **Personal Data:**

Five tutors, one woman and four men, who were involved in public adult literacy provision took part in the research. Two of them were in the 60-69 age group and the other three were in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups (TQ.33). Three of the tutors were teachers by profession, two of them having retired, one from primary and one from secondary. The third was still a practising teacher. None of them had worked in any other field. The other two respondents, both volunteers, were employees in private. The two tutors whose classes were observed were both women. One had retired and the other was still teaching at a primary school.

### **6.1.2.1. Community-based Tutors' Input to ABLE Provision**

The tutors' inputs to the provision include their motivation, training, experience and beliefs, their choice of materials and methods and their ideas about what constitutes good practice in the adult literacy class room.

#### **Motivation:**

Their motivation was inferred from the way they became involved in literacy provision by different factors (TQ.2). One tutor said that he was asked to help by an administrator owing to the scarcity of volunteers. Another heard about the programme on television and volunteered. The third had been curious about the whole issue of illiteracy and after meeting someone who was unable to read and write, he encouraged that friend to attend the class and he went along "to help out". The other two welcomed the challenge of working with adults and contributing to what they saw as a national need.

**Experience And Training:**

The tutor who had been a primary school teacher had twenty seven years experience of teaching children and thirteen years training teachers. The secondary school teachers, one woman and one man, had thirty eight and ten years' teaching experience respectively (TQ.5). At the time of the research one of the tutors had been involved in adult literacy provision for two years and the others for between nine and fifteen months. Regarding training, two of the tutors said they had attended an orientation workshop for adult tutors during International Literacy Year (ILY) but had no access to any systematic or on-going training as adult literacy tutors.

**Beliefs About Literacy, Illiterate Adults, Learning:**

The tutors' beliefs which were explored include how people learn generally, the characteristics and abilities of illiterate adults in relation to other adults and children, the causes of adult illiteracy and the possible blocks to adults acquiring literacy skills. The tutors differed in the beliefs they held about how people learn (TQ.32). According to one tutor, "people learn better when you build on their strengths as opposed to stressing their weaknesses." The belief expressed by one other was that as adults get older, they remember things which they understand and relate to themselves. For another, "people learn what they are interested in." One other noted that "people learn when they are more relaxed, when they are able to touch, see, and practice concepts." He also noted that "people learn much from being exposed to life's experiences which relate to the area of education they are studying." One tutor did not express any beliefs about this issue.

Expressing his belief about the differences between children who cannot read or write and illiterate adults (TQ.9) one tutor said that illiterate adults had "a level of shame which the tutor has to work around without adding to it." Others said they believed that the essential differences between them were level of motivation, attitude and the element of experience. According to another tutor, unlike children, "adults decide to learn to read and write" and for them "learning is a priority." He supported this belief by pointing to the fact that children had to go to school because they were sent.

Three tutors said they believed that there would be little difference between a literate and an illiterate person in their performance on a practical task (TQ.17). One of these, however suggested that the literate person might have the advantage since his comprehension skills might be better. The other two said they believed the illiterate person would need "simple instructions", "detailed information" or a step-by-step guide.

Two tutors revealed the assumptions which they had held about illiterate adults prior to interacting with them in class (TQ.18). One said he believed that they had only certain options in choosing jobs and that "they should be taught to read and write immediately." The other said he believed that "they were unfortunate and there was little place for them in society." Two other tutors said that they did not have any prior impressions or beliefs about adults who had never learnt to read and write.

The beliefs expressed by tutors about the blocks that could prevent adults from learning to read and write well (TQ.11) focused on three areas, the nature of the task, the nature of the learner and the nature of the learning environment. Regarding the first, the belief was expressed that letter recognition and the task of matching the letters to specific sounds would make both reading and writing difficult for adults. Related to this, was the task of forming the letters which, it was believed, would be a problem for adult learners. Those focusing on the characteristics of the learner expressed the belief that the adults' fear of making mistakes in front of others and their tendency to panic in those situations would act as stumbling blocks in the way of their learning to read and write. The belief associated with the learning environment was that if adults were not in situations to hear others read and had no access to help and no "imaginative material" to work with, they would have difficulty learning to read and write.

The tutors' beliefs about the causes of adult illiteracy (TQ.7), like those forwarded by the students, fell into four areas: home, school, society and the individual. Those beliefs which entailed home factors were that adult illiteracy was a result of children being kept at home to mind siblings or to work to help support their families. Tutors also expressed the belief that adult illiteracy was result of a negative "home climate". Two school factors which the tutors believed contributed to students not developing their



literacy skills were the lack of remedial provision in primary and secondary school and the scarcity of trained teachers to offer such remediation. The tutors said that both situations resulted in the neglect of slow learners. One tutor also expressed the belief that by neglecting to teach comprehension and handwriting skills teachers contributed to children not developing adequate literacy skills. Another tutor said she believed that one possible cause of adult illiteracy was the focus placed by teachers on preparation for the Common Entrance Examination which often resulted in some children being neglected and therefore not getting the chance to acquire adequate literacy. Other tutors voiced the belief that the practice of having large classes at the primary level was a contributing factor to adult illiteracy. It was also believed that one contributor to adult illiteracy was the teachers' lack of awareness of their students' problems.

Citing social factors, one tutor expressed the belief that the lack of jobs for literate persons was a possible disincentive for the development of literacy skills. The only personal factor cited by the literacy tutors in expressing their beliefs about adult illiteracy was the possibility that some children might have been affected by childhood illnesses or malnutrition which eventually prevented them from learning.

In expressing their ideas about what constituted adulthood (TQ.8), four of the five tutors, cited age as one criterion of being adult. In two instances, age was considered in a political context: "voting age" and "that given in the constitution". Other criteria of adulthood which were linked with age were physical maturity, capacity for ethical awareness and eligibility for work. One tutor said that in addition to being fully grown, an adult had to be responsible for actions towards self and others and be an independent thinker.

#### **Influence On Students' Experience Of Provision:**

Other inputs brought to the provision by tutors which proved to be as varied as their beliefs were the ideas they held about student autonomy in the adult class room, the role of the adult literacy tutor, the use of the students' language as a classroom medium, their ideas about the adequacy and purpose of education and their choice of course materials and teaching methods.

The issue of student autonomy was raised in terms of the opportunity for literacy students to make an input into aspects of their own learning such as the time or duration of lessons, their content and presentation (TQ.22,23). Three of the tutors said that their students were not asked to exercise such autonomy. The other two said that their students made an input to content at the beginning of the term when they indicated what their needs were. One of these added that this input was updated through discussions with the students during the course of the programme. The other noted that his students' level of literacy determined how the lessons were presented to them.

Regarding the matter of the tutor's role in the adult class room (TQ.20), most tutors said that they preferred to be primarily teachers but they perceived that the students wanted them to be much more. One tutor said that he went to the adult class room with no expectations about the role that he wanted to play; however, the others wanted to play the roles which they thought the adult literacy students wanted them to play. These included the role of friend, counsellor, adviser and guide. An example of the latter role was provided by one tutor who said that she expected to "direct and expand their [the adult students] ability and introduce them to new material."

Commenting on how they knew that the literacy students wanted them to adopt such roles (TQ.21), the tutors cited various indicators. One pointed to the way students waited for instructions at the beginning of the lesson; another based his conclusion on information which he had received from a training seminar and a third referred to the fact that the students seemed to place a lot of trust in him. The tutors also based their assumptions about their expected roles on information which students gave to them during discussions and from the students' actions, such as their practise of calling tutors at all times outside of class hours to ask for help with various problems.

In response to the question of whether Bajan could be used as a teaching medium for adult literacy, four of the tutors said that it could be so used and one said it should not be used as such (TQ.26b). The reasons given by those who agreed were that "it relates to part of the students' everyday experience," and that "since every one knows the dialect, it can be used as the stepping stone for talking and writing." The one who

objected did so on the basis that the use of Bajan in the class room would "confuse the students with the [English] grammar."

All of tutors said they believed that the difference between Bajan language and English was a potential problem for adult literacy students but they did not think the problem was very great (TQ.26a). According to one tutor, the students' use of Bajan was not much of a problem "since it can be corrected." Another believed that such correction would be easy, given that most of the students were aware of the spoken Standard English." The main problem that the tutors expected the students to have was incorrect spelling for as one tutor noted, "the difference in pronunciation [between Bajan and English] leads to confusion in spelling." An area of concern for another tutor, however, was the fact that "some students thought that when you teach them using Standard English, you were talking down to them."

In response to the question about what choices were made about materials and methods (TQ.13-16), one facilitator said that volunteers did not initiate any activities regarding either of these two elements of adult literacy provision because the tutor was in charge. The chalk board was the main aid used for the others but other materials cited were newspapers, flash cards, pictures for composition writing, printed exercises, work books and film strips. The teaching methods referred to were pattern writing, the use of pictures to stimulate writing and the sight word method of teaching spelling. As a general comment on the choice of both material and methods, one tutor said, "I trust my imagination at the moment."

#### **Ideas About Education:**

According to one tutor, the purpose of education seemed to be "to enable the populace to develop the ability to carry out operations necessary for the country to survive in a modern world (TQ.29)." That statement was echoed by others who were more specific about the abilities being in academic or practical subjects. Another said that the purpose seemed to be to lead students to "obtain certificates and one other noted that it was probably to " maintain a high standard of literacy thereby improving the general national development." With reference to the purpose of education two tutors said that the aim

of the country's education system ought to be the training of children for the job market (TQ.30). One tutor suggested that the aim of the education being offered was raise the level of literacy since the more literate a people were, the greater was the possibility of improving their education. The other three tutors did not say what they thought the purpose of education ought to be.

The ideas of good practice cited by the tutors related to the treatment of the adult student, the presentation of lessons and the nature of their content (TQ.10). Commenting on the treatment of adult literacy students, one tutor noted that "the psyche of an adult is different from that of a child," and so the adult should be treated differently. Echoing this sentiment, another tutor added that "adults usually have many accomplishments so they should not be talked to as if they were children. The position taken by another was that "adults must not be treated as children; they must be encouraged but not in a patronising way." In terms of lesson presentation and teaching approach, one tutor suggested that lessons for adult students should be "individual based" and another recommended that the students be taught individually. According to one other, the material should "relate to their [the students] experience and knowledge, as for children who assimilate what they are taught if it is taught in a way that they can understand."

The physical appearance of the class room (TQ.36) and the services of the news media (TQ.35) were additional factors which tutors cited as being complimentary to good practice in adult literacy provision. Other suggestions were the need for comfortable seating, preferably comprising moveable furniture which would allow students to be taught in groups or as individuals, and clean, pleasant surroundings including bright walls and good lighting. One tutor mentioned the need to have a relaxed setting and suggested the use of a living room arrangement rather than the traditional class room layout. He also favoured the use of round tables rather than the usual oblong school desks or tables. Another suggestion was to move students away from the class room altogether and make more use of outdoor settings.

### **6.1.2.2. Community-based Tutors' Assessment of ABLE Provision**

The only outcome which emerged from the data given by the tutors of public provision related to the change in some tutors' impressions about the adult literacy students. One tutor said that there had been no change in his impressions about the adult literacy student yet he noted that dealing with them in class, he found them to be "very intelligent." Another said that he had become aware that people who were not familiar with words and concepts relating to their jobs must experience difficulty in carrying out duties and this could lead to the fear of losing their jobs." The 'discovery' made by another tutor was "that adults unable to read and write have a lot to offer for many are highly skilled in other areas."

#### **Commentary 9.**

Given that the adult literacy tutors were all experienced teachers, some of them still in practice, and they had not been offered any training in teaching adult literacy, it seems that the tutors and the providers who hired them assumed that a school teacher could automatically be an adult literacy tutor. The providers of the community-based literacy group, by offering only one orientation workshop for volunteers, seemed to have also assumed that any literate adult could easily be an adult literacy tutor.

The one issue on which both tutors and students were asked to respond, the question of what factors contributed to the students' limited literacy, received similar answers. However, it does not appear that any of the tutors who participated in the research had considered the possibility that the type of school provision which the students had received could have been a contributing factor. They also did not seem to consider it as a possibility in their lists of the things which could block adult literacy students from acquiring adequate literacy skills. These assumptions plus the tutors' apparent unawareness of what motivated the adult students to attend literacy classes were reflected in the tutors' reproduction of primary school provision in the adult literacy class room.

In their identification of the attributes of an adult and their in their suggestions of what should constitute good teaching practice in the adult class room, the adult literacy tutors

appeared to have accepted that their adult students were capable of being partners in the delivery of their own literacy provision. However, the tutors appeared not to have transferred that acceptance of the literacy students as responsible adults to their practice. Rather, judging from their willingness to determine the content of the adult literacy students' learning and the roles they assumed in relation to the adult literacy students, they seemed to have fully complemented the students' apparent willingness not to exercise autonomy over their own learning.

The disparity between the tutors' statements and their practice seems to lie in what ever preconceived ideas the tutors' might have held about adults with limited literacy skills. Looking at how the tutors' impressions about their adult literacy students changed after they had worked together, it is clear that at least one tutor had doubted the basic intelligence of these adults and another had thought that they might not have had much of value to offer. One may therefore argue that if tutors held those assumptions about illiterate adults, they might not have been too eager to treat them as adult equals or incorporate the students' experiences and interests into the content of the lessons, as the data showed, even though they could reason that it would be professional to do so. The issue here is that the inconsistency between the tutors' statements and their practice could have implications for the relevance of the content of the literacy, the motivation of the students and the outcomes of the programme.

### **6.1.3. Overview of Community-based Provision**

From the tutors' responses it seemed that literacy was taught to adults as a subject like any other school subject, that is, mostly divorced from its social context, with the exception of a few examples to highlight or explain an aspect of content. The tutors who were aware of different levels of literacy in their classes said that they allowed individuals to work at their own pace but there was no specific attempt to structure individual programmes. The tutors also gave no indication that they were aware of students' capabilities, interests or needs outside of the literacy class and if they were the skills were not made use of in the lesson content. If they were, the researcher did not observe them making any attempt to incorporate such information into their lesson content. It therefore appears that the tutors did not know what specific goals the students

had set for themselves with regard to the ABLE provision. The tutors themselves seemed also not to have had any specific goals beyond the aim of providing tuition aimed at achieving literacy.

Generally, there seemed to have been no specific goals set for individuals in the community-based class besides the main goal of learning to read and write. Regarding individual lessons, the objectives appeared to be class room bound, having little relation to the students' lives, either in the content taught or the materials and methods chosen. As such, the content of the lessons was subject-centred rather than student-centred and the provision itself seemed to be generally controlled by the teacher. As was indicated earlier the general picture of the community-based provision seemed to be consistent with a perception of adult literacy provision as an extension or repeat of failed primary school provision.

## PART TWO

### PROFILE OF PRISON-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION

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## PART TWO

### 6.2. PROFILE OF PRISON-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION

There has been educational provision at the Glendairy Prison in Barbados since the early 1950's but according to prison officers that provision was not a structured programme. That programme comprised a curriculum of general subjects but the emphasis seemed to have been the vocational skills training programme which was offered with the long-term goal of providing the prisoners with a skill, often a trade like tailoring or joinery, which they could use to earn a livelihood on their return to the community. Towards the end of the 1980's prison students in the general education programme were taking the Caribbean Examination Council Ordinary level certificate in a range of subjects and gaining quite high grades. The adult basic literacy programme introduced into the prison in 1990 was intended to be a structured programme and one to be seen as complementary to the programmes in vocational skills training programme and general education still in operation. That programme, which provided data for this research study was offered as an educational initiative by the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies (UWISOCS) in association with the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety and the Ministry of Education. The curriculum of that programme comprised basic reading and basic arithmetic.

Classes under the prison-based ABLE programme were offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Attendance was generally voluntary for literate inmates who wanted to improve their English language skills or skills but according to the data, compulsory for those who were found to have inadequate reading and writing skills. Those students were discovered, however, not through any formal assessment process aimed at recruiting students for the ABLE class but incidentally during the course of some interaction with senior staff.

At the time this research there were 510 men and 14 women. There had been no official survey of the rate of illiteracy among the prisoners but the unofficial figure given was 80 per cent. The researcher talked to fifteen men who had been identified as being in the ABLE programme but she did observe classes in either the male or female sections

of the prison. She received no response to her repeated requests for more reliable figures. From among the prisoners, thirteen men and six women agreed to contribute to the research by responding to the prison questionnaire (PQ, appendix 6). Staff contributions came from six tutors comprising two prisoner (inmate-tutors), three warders and one retired teacher from the community. The following profile of prison-based ABLE provision follows the format used in part one in the description of ABLE presentation in the community-based programme.

### **6.2.1. Profile of Prison-Based Literacy Students**

#### **Personal Data:**

None of the inmate students had less than five years of formal schooling and they comprised graduates from all types of schools available in Barbados (PQ.3). These included at the secondary level, private, comprehensive and grammar schools; the Government Industrial School for boys - one of the two correctional institutions for juveniles; and government primary schools. The only school not mentioned was the private primary school but that could have been represented among those inmate-students who had attended any of the secondary schools. One inmate had been schooled in England and another in The United States of America.

Among the women, four had gone to secondary school, one had gone to college and one had continued at primary school up to the last form, class seven. Ten of the men had gone to secondary school and three had remained at primary school, one leaving at the age of eleven and the other two at age thirteen, having reached class seven. The school-leaving age of the inmate students ranged from 15 to 18 for the women and from 10 to 19 for the men (PQ.5). The actual age of the students at the time of the interviews in January 1992, ranged from 25 to 35 for the women and from 19 to 35 for the men.

The extent of the inmate-students' literacy was gauged by using, as a criterion of measurement, their ability to read and complete the research questionnaire unaided (PQ.1). Using that criterion, it was determined that all six of the women and ten of the men had acquired some basic literacy skills. Commenting on why they had left school at an early age, the female inmate-students said either that they had no guidance, they

followed "bad company" or they had not done well in their exams. The reasons given by the men included having to work to help support their mothers, their inability to cope with the school subjects, the need to have their own money and the pressure from friends to use drugs and play truant.

Three of the women and seven of the men had been employed at the time of their incarceration. Of the other nine persons, three women and four men were unemployed and two did not respond to the question (PQ.15). The jobs held by the inmate students were nurse assistant, electronics technician, electronics assembler, supermarket attendant, beach vendor, tiler, trader, labourer and car washer. The inmate-students' biographical data is summarised below in Tables 6.6 and 6.7.

In the tables a plus sign under the categories "employed" and "literate" indicates that the respondent being checked was employed and was able to read the questionnaires. Minus signs indicate the opposite condition in both cases. Terms in the second row of the table such as "junior" and "senior" refer to the types of schools a respondent would have attended. The differences have already been explained in part one of this chapter. The plus and minus signs in each column identifying a particular type of school indicate that the student either attended or did not attend that type of school. The students' codes in the last row of the table are placed under each number or sign to indicate that the information conveyed relates to that respondent. The code used in the study for male and female prisoners are MP and FP respectively, but to owing to the lack of space in the table they have been shortened to M and F respectively. In the table persons sharing common particulars are grouped together to facilitate easy reference. Information can be obtained about respondents in either table, by locating the person's code on the last row and reading vertically to match information in the vertical column with the categories in the column on the far left of the table. For example beginning with respondent M3 one can see that he was 19 years old when he attended the ABLE programme; he was employed and was one of those who were able to read the questionnaire. He left school at the age of sixteen in form five and that school was a senior primary school. No data was gathered on the prisoners' former work places.

**Table 6.6.**

**Biographical Data of Prison-based Literacy Students: Men**

TYPE OF SCHOOL	PRIMARY		SECONDARY			G.I. SCHOOL	REMEDIAL	OTHER
	Junior	Senior	Older	Newer	Private			
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	1	4	2	3	1	1	0	1
LAST FORM/CLASS	4	5,3,3,3	5, 5	4,4,5	4	2		nr
SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE	10	16,13,14,13	18,16	15,16,16	16	14		nr
LITERATE : + NOT LITERATE : -	-	+ - - +	+ +	+ + +	+	+		+
EMPLOYED : + UNEMPLOYED : -	nr	+ + - +	+ -	+ - -	nr	nr		+
ADULT'S AGE	nr	19,30,20,35	26, 25	28, nr, nr	33	nr		25
PARISH : WORK								
PARISH : HOME	nr	X, M, P, X	M, X	S, nr, nr	M	nr		
STUDENT'S CODE	M12	M3,M9,M10,M6	M1,M11	M4,M5, M8	M2	M13		M7

**Table 6.7**

**Biographical Data Of Prison-based Literacy Students: Women**

TYPE OF SCHOOL	PRIMARY		SECONDARY			G.I. SCHOOL	REMEDIAL	OTHER
	Junior	Senior	Older	Newer	Private			
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	1
LAST FORM/CLASS	CLASS 7			4, 5	4, 5,			COLLEGE (USA)
SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE	15			15, 17	15, 16			18
LITERATE : + NOT LITERATE :-	+			++	++			+
EMPLOYED : + NOT EMPLOYED :-	+			--	-+			+
ADULT'S AGE	35			32, 28	29, 28			25
PARISH: WORK								
PARISH: HOME	X			M, M	M, M			USA
STUDENT'S CODE	F2			F1, F5	F6, F4			F3

### **Commentary 10.**

The biographical data of the inmate-students show that they, like the community-based literacy students, all had access to the full range of formal school provision. The main difference was that more of the inmate students had access to secondary schools, including the secondary grammar school, and that two had even experienced educational provision in two foreign countries. Although this suggested that the group of inmate students attending the literacy class would probably have represented a wider range of educational experiences than the group of community-based students, the inmate-students' comparison of the formal educational provision they had known with the current literacy provision they were receiving did not differ from the comparisons made by the community-based students. Not many students offered a comparison but those who did, like their community-based counterparts, saw no difference in the two types of educational provision.

The jobs which the inmate students held prior to incarceration and the ones they were learning in the prison were as diverse as those held by the community-based students even though more of the inmate students were considered to be less limited in their literacy skills than the community-based students. As was the case of the community-based students, most of the inmate students had been employed prior to going to prison. This situation tends to lend weight to the idea forwarded in Part One that the adults with limited literacy who attended classes might be going not to qualify for employment but for different jobs. The students' reasons for attending the classes (see section 6.2.1. below) further support this idea, especially since most of the inmate-students attending the classes had already acquired some literacy skills (see Table 6.8 below).

The age range of the inmate-students, 19-35, was narrower than that of the community-based students but it was also the age range of nine of the sixteen community-based students. This observation raises two questions. The first is whether more persons under thirty-five tended to have literacy problems than other age groups. The second is whether those persons were not really in the majority in terms of the population, but were more visible because they made up the majority of people on the job market and because they tended to be more socially active and therefore most likely to be in

situations which required the demonstration of literacy skills. These questions cannot be answered by the data collected for this research but they might be worth pursuing as part of further research to see whether or not they are valid observations and if they are, to find out what might be the contributing factors. The above research data, though small, shows that persons under thirty-five who were the beneficiaries of free formal education at both primary and secondary levels made up the larger portion of students attending literacy classes in prison and in the community.



### **6.2.1.1. Prison-based Students' Input To Provision**

The inputs of experience, beliefs and needs were as varied for the inmate-students as they were for the literacy students in community provision. In commenting on the general feeling about previous schooling, one student said that he hated everything about school (PQ.7). Those who hated anything about school referred specifically to being whipped and being neglected by some teachers. Others mentioned personal problems, such as lack of money or food and having to struggle with difficult subjects or subjects they did not like. The majority of those responding to what they liked about school (PQ.8) cited the social life of school and listed specific subjects.

#### **Experience Of Previous Schooling:**

According to the students, the things that came to their minds when they thought of school (PQ.9a,b) were specific subjects, or tasks such as reading, spelling and writing. There were, however, other associations which students had made and which they would have brought to the current learning situation as inputs. For example, one male student remembered school with a sense of loss for according to him, when he thought of school he was always aware that he finished school when he was "becoming open to learning". School for another was carefree for he remembered it in terms of "having fun days with friends" and sharing a "mutual understanding" with them. One other male student associated school with girls and having "many sexual experiences at school." One female student said she remembered school with a feeling of regret for she reasoned that had she continued, she might not have gone to prison. Other students cited the main association with school as the absence of responsibility, or attachment to a specific thing or person such as a typewriter or the headmistress. For one female student, the most memorable aspect of school was the way teachers encouraged her not to give up and to do her best.

Regarding their experience of specific materials, teaching methods and class room interaction or layout, the students did not have much to say except that those aspects of school provision were not different from what they were being offered in the current prison provision (PQ.11). One student was specific about the lesson presentation and noted that he liked his work to be given "on the black board as it was done at school."

Recalling the interaction among class mates, some students said that there was not much cooperation between students with regards to school work. Commenting on the teacher-student relationship, most inmate-students said that the relationship they had with their teachers was "good" or "fine" but only one student explained the basis of her assessment: she said that the teacher had given her much attention.

#### **Feelings And Beliefs About Self And Literacy:**

The beliefs considered relevant as inputs to the inmate-students' current involvement in prison education provision were their beliefs about what contributed to their limited literacy, whether being adult would make it easier or harder for them to acquire or improve their basic literacy skills and whether their participation in prison educational provision could make a difference in their lives back in the community, given the negative social impact of a prison record. Of the twelve students responding to the question about what contributed to their current level of literacy (PQ.24), four blamed both themselves and external factors; five blamed only themselves and three cited only external agents. The external factors related to either the home, the school or the community in which the inmate-students had lived as children.

The school factor which inmate-students cited as having contributed to their level of literacy was the teacher, who they said neglected them or did not spend enough time explaining things to them properly. Home factors were problems between parents and general "home problems" or they stemmed from one parent. Another home factor was the poverty of the family, which was used by parents as a reason for sending children to work and help support the family. Poverty was also given as the reason why some children did not have school supplies and clothes and were therefore kept at home. One student attributed blame to elements in his "bad neighbourhood", which he said influenced him to drop out of school. The five inmate-students who cited personal factors as the cause of their current literacy level mentioned either following bad company or playing truant. Two said that they were too "own-way" (non cooperative), one said that he was "hardheaded" (unable to easily understand school work) and another described himself as a slow learner. Two also noted that they did not pay attention because they were not aware then of the value of education.

Fifteen students responded to the question about their ability to learn as adults (PQ.25).

Eight students believed that as adults they were in a better position to learn than when they were at school; the other seven thought that being older, they would have a more difficult time learning than when they were children.

Considering the likelihood of their getting employment after release from prison (PQ.23) six inmate students expressed the belief that there would be nothing for them. One felt sure of getting work through intervention from helpful contacts; another was confident of getting back his job with a friend; a third said that her only solution was to become self-employed and one other believed that she might have a chance if she were judged on her actual behaviour and not on her prison record. Only one student, an American, did not believe that her imprisonment would make a big difference. She said, "prison has not stopped me from doing what I want to do or being what I want to be; I am still the same person." With regard to the possible blocks to their acquiring additional skills on return to the community (PQ.22), two students said that they believed their prison record would be a hindrance and eleven cited the lack of money or the lack of interest. Six students did not respond to this question.

#### **Need For Improved Literacy:**

The needs identified in the students' reasons for attending the classes were very general, but valuable as inputs nevertheless. They included finding the means of creating a "better living", satisfying the curiosity to know, furthering education in general, improving literacy skills, and mathematical ability and acquiring knowledge about managing a small business. Other needs emerged from the students' responses to the question about what skills they thought they required in order to obtain the jobs of their choice (PQ.19). These were the acquisition of literacy skills, specifically counting, reading and writing, competence in English, French, Spanish, German, maths and woodwork. One female student expressed the need to keep out of trouble and another wanted to use her time wisely so that, according to her, "time can serve me rather than me serve time." Table 6.8. shows the reasons which the inmate student gave for attending the literacy classes.

**Table 6.8.**

Reasons given by prison-based students for attending literacy classes

reasons why inmates attended basic education classes	male	female	total
1. to satisfy a general interest in learning	1		1
2. to keep out of trouble and use time wisely		1	1
3. to improve maths	1	1	2
4. to improve education	5	3	8
5. to improve reading and writing	3		3
6. to get knowledge about setting up a small business	1		1
7. to gain a better living		1	1

**Commentary 11.**

Whereas the community-based literacy students recounted their experience of school mostly in terms of gaining access to school, receiving help with school work, or acquiring necessary school supplies, the inmate-students spoke mostly of their relationships with peers and teachers. However for the inmates, as for the community-based students, corporal punishment and teacher neglect seemed to have been the most difficult aspects of schooling to deal with. The actual school subjects which students were taught featured most among the things the inmate-students hated or liked about school. In either case the inmate students seemed to have approached them not as experiences to cope with or as different packages of information to become familiar with and then use but as impositions which they found either easy or difficult to understand.

The data suggest that generally for the inmate students, it was the socialising among peers that made formal schooling tolerable and their main regrets after leaving school were that they had not been made aware of the purpose of the schooling. The implication which this observation might have for the current literacy provision in prison is that although literacy and basic skills education are generally conceived as being

"good" for their own sake, the students should still have an opportunity to assess the value of these subjects for themselves as individuals.

In identifying the factors which they believed contributed to their limited literacy, the inmate-students cited similar factors to those chosen by their community counterparts. Those elements differed in one aspect: four of the nineteen prison-based students blamed themselves for their level of illiteracy but none of the community-based students accepted personal blame. This observation suggests that the element of self blame might be an issue which could be raised for discussion in the adult literacy class room in the context of exploring the students' past experience of schooling, an idea which was mentioned earlier in commenting on community-based provision.

Although the above reasons do not express specific needs which can be easily matched to particular outcomes, they still give some insight into the different perspectives adopted by inmate students in relation to the classes offered in prison. For example, the reasons given above in table 6.8. suggest that the needs of inmate-students relate to either their current life situation in prison, such as the need to "use time wisely" (number 2), or their future life situation in the community, such as the need to "gain a better life" (number 7). A quick comparison of the reasons given by the students shows that the latter perspective dominated and was expressed mostly in terms of gaining knowledge. Despite their apparent vagueness, the needs identified by the students give some information about what the inmate-students thought about prison education in particular and education in general. For example, the needs that were cited may be discussed in terms of their generality or specificity, giving some idea about how clearly the students have thought about the utility of prison educational provision. In the context of the available data, a general need is one which can be divided into more specific needs. For example, the need to improve one's education is general; the need to improve one's literacy, a component of education, is specific and the need to improve one's reading ability, one aspect of literacy, is more specific.

The categories of needs identified above are illustrated below in Table 6.9. These distinctions are made in an attempt to find a structured way of speaking about the needs

in relation to any goals, outputs or outcomes which the inmate-students or the providers associate with the prison education programme. It is therefore understood that outside the context of the empirical data, the categories may be analyzed into finer distinctions.

**Table 6.9.**

**Needs Identified From Prison-based Literacy Students' Responses To PQ.19**

range	type	category				
		skills			academic subject	personal qualities
P r e s e n t		hand work	literacy numeracy	life		
	general			avoid trouble		
	specific			manage time		improve cooperativeness improve self sufficiency improve self esteem reduce aggression
	more specific			use time wisely		
F u t u r e	general	learn a craft		catch up on a missed opportunity improve education	learn another language study O'level subjects	
	specific			find out how to cope with new information	maths	
	more specific		reading writing spelling counting		algebra fractions division	

Even if the needs expressed by the students seemed vague and the reasons for attending were not very explicit, the students appeared to have been highly motivated to attend the classes. Although the majority of them had basic literacy skills, most of them volunteered to attend the basic literacy classes (PQ.2a). Out of the nineteen, only three did not volunteer to go to classes and two of those had basic literacy skills. Table 6.10. below shows the distribution of inmate students who were willing to attend classes according to gender and literacy.

**Table 6.10.**

Distribution of Prison-based Students According to Gender, Literacy of literacy and Willingness to Attend Literacy Classes.

Inmate-student	Literacy Level	Students who asked to attend classes	Students who were sent to classes	Total
	literate	8	2	10
	non-literate	2	1	3
female	literate	6	0	6
	non-literate	0	0	0

A general observation is that whereas the community-based tutors appeared to be transferring their teaching practices from the primary school to the adult literacy class room, the prison tutors, not being teachers by profession, seemed to be reproducing the teaching they had received in the formal school system to their literacy and basic skills classes in ABLE provision in the prison. Both sets of tutors, with little or no access to training or avenues to explore and deal with their own prejudices seemed to have taken them to the teaching situation even though, judging from their statements, they were aware of opposing but more progressive attitudes, views and corresponding practices.

### 6.2.1.2. Prison-based Students' Assessment of Provision

The students' assessment of prison provision entailed comments on elements of classroom provision (PQ.11, 12); outcomes of provision, such as their acquisition of skills, new knowledge and personal insights; their improved behaviour and personal qualities (PQ.29, 30); and the potential usefulness of the provision to them on their release. In their criteria of usefulness, some students referred to the acquisition of literacy skills and improved life skills, already cited as outcomes, but included two additional factors: enhanced prospects of employment and the motivation to further their studies. A summary of the students' assessment of ABLE provision in terms of outcomes is given below in Tables 6.11. and 6.12.

The skills mentioned by the students fit into three categories: literacy and numeracy skills, craft skills and life skills. The literacy skills cited were reading, writing and spelling and the numeracy skills cited were counting, fractions and division. Two students who were unable to read and write initially associated the usefulness of the classes to their improved literacy skills. One of these students, however, added that the usefulness of those skills might also be realised in his ability to "con" people out of their money when he was released. The other said that whereas he saw the benefit of being able to read and write he did not like the process of learning. A third student who said he went to the classes to learn to read and write did not respond to this question. Female students reported having learnt manual skills such as pastry making and dress making, and one man said he learnt woodwork. Regarding life skills, one student said that he was able to "put over" himself better and another said that she was better able to speak Standard English.

The areas of new knowledge cited were history, geography and mathematics, particularly algebra. One student also noted that he had acquired "an understanding of new ways to deal with different subjects." The help that one student received with his maths was the basis on which he determined the usefulness of the class to him. He had cited proficiency in maths as the skill he needed in order to be a joiner. Related to knowledge were the insights which students said that they gained. These included the realization that it is possible to learn at such a "late date"; the awareness that older



people can actually learn more; the recognition that teachers can really be looked up to and the conviction that there were people who sincerely wanted to help them.

The outcomes concerning behaviour and personal qualities which were cited by the students included reduction of aggressiveness, the increase in self control, enhancement of self esteem and the development of self sufficiency and cooperativeness. One student said that she would consider the class to be useful to her if she were able to learn how "to go after whatever she was good at." Another one thought the usefulness of the class lay in its potential to make him "more intellectual".

The students' comments on the classroom aspects of provision were made as part of their comparison between their experience of ABLE provision and their previous experience of schooling. They cited very little difference between the two forms of educational provision beyond the obvious element of confinement experienced in prison and the limited range of subjects offered to them there. The majority of those responding said that the classroom arrangement, relationships with fellow students, the materials used and the presentation of lessons (PQ.11) were the same for both types of provision. On the issue of teacher and student relationships, the case was made that teachers in prison paid more attention to the individual student (PQ.12) but it was also noted that prison tutors dealt with students "with no great feeling." Another factor cited by some students was that unlike the teachers they had known as children, prison tutors, including inmate tutors, were people who seemed genuinely willing to help them and so had earned their respect. Two other factors which students appreciated about the prison provision was the free movement they were allowed in the prison class room and the cooperation that existed among them as students. The students noted that neither of those practices had been encouraged in the school provision to which they had been exposed.

Of the six students who used improved prospects of employment as their criterion for assessing the potential usefulness of the provision, three said the classes made it possible to get the jobs they really wanted (PQ.17). The other three said that the class would be helpful if it could help them to get a job or become self-employed. They, however, did

not refer specifically to the jobs they had said they wanted or the ones they previously held. Likewise, the students who associated the usefulness of prison provision to its potential to lead them into further studies did not give specific areas of study.

Associating the usefulness of the prison provision with the possibility for further study, one student said that as a result of attending the classes she could possibly take more subjects in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) 'O'level exam. She had earlier expressed the desire to change from being a psychiatric nurse to an accountant and had cited proficiency in maths as one of the skills she thought she needed to get this type of job. In responding to this question she did not say whether maths was one of the exam subjects she wanted to study. Another student linked the usefulness of the class to the fact that as a result of attending, he was inspired to consider going into higher education. However, like the previous student, he was not specific and apart from his expressed need to learn two foreign languages, this issue of higher education did not connect to anything he had said before. He did not make it clear whether by higher education he meant improving on his four years of secondary schooling, or pursuing his studies beyond that level.

**Table 6.11.**

**Prison-based Students' Assessment Of ABLE Provision In Terms of Outcomes  
(Women)**

STUDENT CODES	Q29 HOW THE CLASSES HAVE HELPED STUDENTS				Q30 THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT FROM THE CLASSES			
	practical skills	literacy skills	life skills (personal qualities)	insights	practical skills	literacy skills	life skills (personal qualities)	insights
FP1	no response	no response	no response	no response	no response	no response	no response	no response
FP2	dress making	maths to help children with homework  speak English better			pastry making			
FP3				avoid trouble  use time wisely			become self sufficient	
FP4							improved self esteem	
FP5			continue education					can learn despite age
FP6			be a better person	improve educatio n				still have a chance to learn at this late date

**Table 6.12.**

**Prison-based Students' Assessment Of ABL Provision In Term Of Outcomes  
(Men)**

STUDENT CODES	Q29 HOW THE CLASSES HAVE HELPED STUDENTS				Q30 THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT STUDENTS HAVE LEARNT FROM THE CLASSES			
	practical skills	literacy skills	life skills (personal qualities)	insights	practical skills	literacy skills	life skills (personal qualities)	insights
MP1		maths						
MP2			self discipline how to cooperate	new ways to learn subjects				
MP3		maths/ English				division, fractions		
MP4		algebra writing	avoid trouble				become less aggressive	teachers care
MP5	-	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
MP6				can still learn at this age		English, History, Geography maths for CXC exam		
MP7	reading improved	nr						people care
MP8	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
MP9	read, write, spell, count				Lord's Prayer			
MP10	count, write read							
MP11	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	keep out of jail
MP12	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
MP13	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr

Not every one considered the classes to be useful. One student saw the prison education provision as mere revision of her school work and another said the class would be more useful to him if he were allowed to participate more in class.

#### **Prison-based Students' Recommendations:**

In their recommendations for improvement to the prison educational provision, students said that Christian values should be taught and that more subjects should be made available to them. They also suggested that all imprisoned youths should be taught a trade and for those attending literacy classes there should be individual help for slow learners. Some students recommended that they be given a choice between concentrating on a craft and on literacy and others specifically noted that the literacy classes should not be compulsory. The latter students, it seemed comprised those who though not being able to read and write well did not want to go through the process of schooling again. The inmate-students also required the establishment of a library to cater to the needs of adults and the provision of adequate supplies of stationery for students.

#### **Commentary 12.**

From the assessment of ABLE provision made by the prison-based students, it seems that they had considered having a prison record a greater inconvenience than having limited literacy skills. Being aware of the stigma attached that record and the associated problem of finding a job, the students, seemed to have conceded that literacy could be a possible path to acquiring knowledge which they could use to enhance their chances of finding work, probably through self employment, on their release. To them literacy did not seem to be important for its own sake as it appeared to have been for some students in the community-based group. Regarding the outcomes which students associated with ABLE provision, whereas they linked the vocational skills they learnt to possible self employment on their release, they did not comment on the utility value of any of the other outcomes. Furthermore many of their comments did not relate to the needs or expectations they had expressed when they explained why they had decided to attend classes (PQ.2a) or when they speculated about the benefits they expected to get from the ABLE programme (PQ.13, 14).

The prison-based ABLE provision was less like primary school in that there were some tutors (inmate tutors) willing to make their teaching relevant to the students' prison environment, such as using cigarettes as counters, knowing their value to many inmates. However, given the penal element of the prison and the emphasis on security, the provision was very much like primary schooling in terms of the focus on rules and discipline which governed interaction among prisoners and between prisoners and staff. For example during the researcher's visit to the prison, she lent one of the literacy students a pen to complete his questionnaire. One of the questions had related to the availability of materials and in response to that he said that he did not have a pen of his own. She gave the pen to him. He was then immediately reprimanded, not for having the pen but because it was assumed that he had "begged" for it and he was told to return it. The issue was not one of security, given that the prisoner had been permitted to have pens and pencils in his cell; it was a matter of the prisoner having behaved "badly". The researcher also observed instances of students being told to "shut up", and being spoken to in a rather rude manner, akin to the brusque way in which the community-based tutor had behave to one of her students cited in commentary 8 of chapter six.

Interactions such as those cited above suggest that if the prison-based students were not allowed to express themselves, explain themselves or question staff in casual conversation, then it does not seem likely that such interaction would be allowed as an integral part of the learning-teaching situation. They also suggest that the activities encouraging self assertiveness, innovation, and the willingness to initiate positive change might not be a part of that provision, even though they have cited among national educational. The above data suggest that the prison environment thrived on the opposite elements of coercion, unquestioning obedience and conformity.

## **6.2.2. PROFILE OF PRISON-BASED LITERACY TUTORS**

### **Personal data:**

Six tutors contributed to the research: one female external tutor, two male inmate-tutors and three male officer-tutors. Two of the officer-tutors and one inmate-tutor were in the age range of 20 - 29; the external tutor was in the age range of 60 - 69 and the other two tutors were in the 30 - 39 age range (TQ.33). Two of the tutors had been teachers in the public schools and one of those had also been a bank clerk. One of the others had been a policeman and the others did not hold any other jobs prior to being prison officers (TQ.5).

### **6.2.2.1. Prison-based Tutors' Input to ABLE Provision**

The inputs brought to the teaching-learning process by tutors included their motivation to become involved in adult basic education in the prison, their experience and training, the teaching methods and materials they used, the supplementary services they provided and beliefs pertinent to adult literacy provision which they held.

The external tutor said that she was asked to teach following her retirement from the teaching service. Given her experience of teaching English in the secondary schools, she agreed to become a tutor of adult literacy in the prison. All of the other tutors said that they became involved in adult literacy in the prison because they either had the desire to help the less fortunate or they anticipated the pleasure they could obtain from sharing their skills with others (TQ.2). One inmate-tutor said that prior to his incarceration, he had doubted his own intelligence and ability but having seen the lack of basic literacy skills among his fellow inmates, he became confident enough about his ability to volunteer his help.

With regard to their experience and training, two of the inmate-tutors and one of the officer-tutors had been teaching in the prison for two years (TQ.1). The other officer-tutor had been teaching in the prison for four months. The external tutor, with thirty five years experience as a secondary school teacher, and one inmate-tutor, with four years experience as a primary school teacher, had each been teaching in the prison for one year. They were the only ones with previous teaching experience.

The beliefs identified as being relevant as tutors' input to provision related to the nature of the learning to be experienced, characteristics and capabilities of the learners, the factors which influenced their having acquired limited literacy, and the purpose of the educational system in which the learners had been and still were being educated.

Expressing his beliefs about how people learn (TQ.32), one inmate-tutor said that "people are like babies, they see and they imitate, they hear and they repeat." He also noted that for a person with good memory learning was "no problem". An officer-tutor said he believed that "people learn faster if the subject holds their interest." The belief was also expressed that "people in ghettos don't usually succeed" but it was also acknowledged that success in learning depended on where a person's ideals lay. Other beliefs cited were that some people learnt by sight, some relied on their photographic memories, the uses of rhyme or other props and others applied reasoning to figure out the meaning behind things.

The tutors held various beliefs about what distinguished illiterate adults from children who could not read or write (TQ.9). One tutor said that illiterate adults were handicapped by feelings of failure and inadequacy and tended to be distracted by life's problems whereas children's natural curiosity made them ready to learn. An inmate-tutor said that the element of experience made adults prone to want to compare new information with old knowledge but children, owing to their lack of experience, tended to accept the teacher's word at face value. This belief was echoed by an officer-tutor who said that children were easier to lead. He, however, acknowledged that there were some adults whom it was easier to teach than children. One inmate-tutor noted that besides finding it difficult to change their standards or set ideas, illiterate adults were more easily discouraged than children, had less confidence in their ability and tended to be more negligent.

Regarding their beliefs about whether illiterate and literate people could be equal in their performance of a task requiring no literacy skills (TQ.17) three tutors said that they believed illiterate adults would be slower to grasp the nature of the task because they



might have a less "receptive mentality". One tutor said that illiterate people asked many questions and "left no stone unturned" until they found out what they needed to know. There was also the belief that although illiterate people might have problems understanding how to do a task, they would become better at it than their literate counterparts, owing to their need to make up for their lack of "theoretical" knowledge. Some tutors believed that there would be no difference in performance on a practical task between an illiterate and a literate person because one's performance often depended on one's adeptness and creativity. He added, however, that illiterate people might be more oriented to performing such tasks than literate people might be.

Only two tutors gave their impressions of what they believed illiterate people were like (TQ.18). One, an inmate-tutor said that he believed adults who could not read or write were aggressive people who thought that the only way to get across a point was through violence. He also noted that functionally illiterate people always tried to use complicated words to create the impression that they were educated. The other respondent, an officer-tutor, said that before he began teaching the adults who could not read or write, he believed that "they were ignorant to the world."

Two tutors responded to the question of what they thought were the main blocks to a person learning to read and write (TQ.11). One tutor noted that the shame which adults often felt about being illiterate would act as a block to their learning either skill. Another tutor said that other blocks to adults becoming literate were dyslexia, poor memory and the belief that if they did not learn something the first time they were introduced to it that they would not learn it at all. It was also noted that blocks to becoming literate might begin with the person's inability to distinguish the sounds of words from the letters used to represent those sounds.

Regarding the actual causes of illiteracy (TQ.7) some tutors said they believed the source of the problem was the school system and its focus on the passing of the Common Entrance Examination. One tutor also noted that the practice of keeping children in their age groups in primary school could be a contributing factor. An inmate-tutor said he believed it was the focus on academic subjects and the absence of special provision

for slow learners that made it possible for some people to leave school without being able to read and write. For another tutor, a contributing factor to adult illiteracy was the primary school teacher who neglected students. He also expressed the belief that other factors were the students' own inability to cope with the work and fact that as children, some adult students had parents who were either illiterate themselves or indifferent to their children's progress. The other three tutors cited the lack of discipline in schools, lack of values at home, poverty and the disintegration of the family as factors which contributed to adult illiteracy.

The main roles which tutors believed their students wanted them to play (TQ.20) were those of confidante, role model and counsellor. They based their beliefs on the fact that the inmate-students seemed to take advantage of every opportunity to "relate the tales of their private lives" to them and seek their advice on what often appeared to be "simple everyday decisions." Two inmate-tutors and one officer-tutor said that they preferred to be just tutors, letting their contribution "begin and end in the class room." The other three tutors said that they enjoyed playing the roles which they believed the students wanted them to play.

Regarding the use of Bajan as a tool in the adult class room (TQ.26), one inmate tutor said that he believed Bajan would be "an embarrassing restriction when removed from the local context" of community speech. Another tutor said that he accepted students speaking Bajan because he believed they would be able to shift to fluent English when speaking to a prominent person. One other tutor said that he believed the Bajan language crept into the students' writing because it had "become a part of their character." An officer-tutor noted that the students wrote the way they spoke and it was difficult to "break them out of that habit" but he believed if it Bajan were used as a "form of expression" in the class room, it could help the adults to break out of the timidity associated with "people of that calibre". Bajan Language was rejected as a teaching tool by one tutor who said he believed that since it was not a universal language, it would confuse and complicate the learning process for illiterate adults. He further noted that if students were having so many problems spelling "proper English", it would not be fair "to subject them to the dialect."

Choice of material, teaching method and the tutors' position with regard to the use of Bajan language as teaching tool were the inputs to provision which were more obviously related to the class room. Commenting on the type of materials available for teaching in the prison (TQ.14 - 16), one tutor said that "owing to the limitation of prison, the same materials were used as would be used in any other setting." Being a bit more specific, one tutor said that she relied on "chalk and talk", reading books and workbooks. Another said that he arrived at his materials by "trial and error, based on the student's choice of teaching method expressed at the beginning of the course. The materials shown to this researcher were work books and reading books written for primary school children. Three tutors did not respond to this question.

In response to the question about teaching methods (TQ.13) two of the tutors did not respond and none of the others mentioned teaching strategies. Instead, they focused on their class room approach. One tutor said that he tried to avoid bias, did not refer to the various abilities among the students and tried to treat each student as a "capable individual". In addition, he avoided using the terms literate and illiterate. The other said that his approach differed according to the students' level of literacy but noted that when dealing with the fully illiterate, he lets them know "that what is done is important to them" and he tried to convey to them how important they were as people.

The purposes of education (TQ.29), according to some tutors, are to produce literate adults, prepare people for the future, create leaders of our own and cope with the outside world. Others said they believed that education was meant to "foster a sense of patriotism and national development" and "give knowledge to both rich and poor so that both can have the same opportunities." One officer-tutor also expressed the belief that the aim of education was to guide people to "obtain a white-collar job, a large pay cheque and live in luxury."

Only two the tutors believed that the current education was adequate. The others said they believed that there was still a need for "literate and skilled adults to provide adequate labour to aid the economy." One tutor expressed the belief that if "mental and moral instruction" were better provided, the country would greater economic and

political stability. Another thought that if the government "advertised" education as both necessary and compulsory it would make a difference.

Tutors were more responsive when they outlined their ideas of what constituted the best approaches and methods to use with adult literacy students (TQ.10). They spoke of the need to relate the content of the lesson to the adults' interest and the importance of finding out what the adult wanted to learn. One inmate-tutor suggested using the language that the students understood and using aspects of their experience as points of reference. He cited the example of using cigarettes as a counting aid for inmate-students because they were a valuable commodity. According to another inmate, adults should not be made to feel inferior and their inability to read and write should be kept secret to avoid their becoming embarrassed. Another tutor advocated the use of an approach that gave and demanded respect and he stressed the need for tutors to convey the idea that they could teach the students and still learn from them. One student noted that good practice in the adult literacy class room could be aided by having more audio-visual work and more group interaction. Another summed up his idea of good practice with the comment that the best way to deal with adult literacy students was to "accept them for what they; gain their trust gradually; put things in a likeable way."

#### **6.2.2.2. Prison-based Tutor's Assessment of ABLE Provision**

From the tutors' responses (TQ.19), two outcomes seemed evident: the change in the impressions which tutors had held about illiterate students and the changes which they had observed in their students behaviour after they had been attending the classes for some time. Regarding the tutors' changed impressions, one tutor said that after teaching illiterate students, he realised that some of them had more common sense than some literate people. He said that he also became aware that they were eager to acquire beneficial skills and were "good people to work with."

A change which one tutor said he had observed in the students after some teaching was their tendency to be less aggressive. He said that they became more controllable and they took an entirely different outlook to the one they had prior to attending the classes. As one tutor noted, "they become so happy after they are taught to write letters

that they write the world."

### **Commentary 13.**

Generally, the prison tutors expressed rather negative beliefs about persons with limited literacy. They questioned their intelligence, their ability to behave as responsible individuals, and their capacity to sustain the effort or meet the demands of the teaching-learning situation. These beliefs help to create the impression that the prison tutors saw the inmate students as big children. This impression is reinforced by the nurturing roles which the tutors believed the students wanted them to play and which in most cases corresponded to the roles which most of them preferred to play.

Consistent with the idea of the prison tutors' apparent perception of the inmate students as children was the tutors' use of children's textbooks as the basis of their teaching materials. That perception was also supported by the fact that the tutors' chose teaching methods employing rhymes and much repetition to aid the students in memorising their lessons. Generally there seemed to have been no assessment, at any stage, of the tutors of the provision. One may assume that having no goals to guide the provision, the tutors had no base against which they could view possible outcomes.

### **6.2.3. OVERVIEW OF PRISON-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION**

As was the case with the community-based tutors, the prison tutors' suggestions of good practice seemed much more progressive and positive than the actual class room practices cited by them and their students. They seemed to have approached the teaching of literacy in the way they, themselves, had been taught other subjects at school. It does not appear that they became involved in any goal-setting activity with their students or that the main goals of preparing prisoners to adapt to the society on their release, develop skills and attitudes which would motivate them to stay away from prison informed the provision in any way, apart from being the general expectation of the providers. In fact it does not seem that the tutors had worked out their own goals with regard to the provision they were offering beyond the general hope that the prisoners would learn to read and write. Despite being organised in terms of being operative, the ABLE programme at the prison seemed not to have any specific focus and appeared not

to have been informed by any awareness of the goals of providers, tutors or students.

The provision offered did however conform to the following goal of the Prison's Education Development Project under which ABLE provision was offered:

To provide an opportunity for prisoners to attain basic literacy and numeracy skills and trade skills necessary for employment at the conclusion of a term of imprisonment, thus reducing the existing high rate of recidivism (Ministry of Justice and Public Safety 1991:2).

With reference to that goal, the ABLE provision was an "opportunity" for those outcomes to be possibly achieved. The tutors were engaged in providing that opportunity and some students welcomed it, therefore from that point of view, the main goal of the Government matched that of all participants. However, in view of the ABLE literature cited in chapters two and three above which stressed the need to link educational instruction to the students' needs, goals and interest, one would expect that the very broad goal cited would have been translated into the particular goals of students and tutors and used to inform the various elements of the learning-teaching process. The data suggests that such planning did not take place. One could therefore conclude that the prison-based ABLE provision constituted only part of the opportunity it was meant to be, since the vague goal which justified its existence did not inform its practice.

## **PART THREE**

### **PROFILE OF CHURCH-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION**

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## **PART THREE**

### **6.3. PROFILE OF CHURCH-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION**

#### **6.3.1. PROFILE OF CHURCH-BASED LITERACY STUDENTS**

At the church-based centre, there was one basic literacy class and one advance literacy class which met for one hour on Thursdays before the church service. The basic literacy class catered for between ten and twelve students. During the period of observation, only two of those attending were not members of the church. One of them was a secondary school student whose mother brought him for additional help. He attended only two classes. The other non-member was a physically disabled young woman who also had a severe speech impediment. There were two other women on the course. No data was available on the age, schooling or employment status of the students. Based on the tutor's response to the questionnaire (TQ), the students were in the two age ranges of 15-19 and 30 - 39.

The only gauge available to determine the extent of the literacy level of the students attending the church provision was the lesson content and the way the literacy students coped with it. It was observed that the lessons comprised mostly of letter-sound practice and spelling drills using minimal pairs of words such as 'bat' and 'cat'. During the period of observation, the words in the vocabulary lists which the tutors taught did not go beyond five letters.

#### **6.3.2. PROFILE OF CHURCH-BASED LITERACY TUTOR**

##### **Personal Data:**

Two tutors were attached to the class. They alternated each week between being tutor and facilitator. (As for the community-based group, the term 'facilitator' meant assistant and tutor meant teacher in charge. Only one tutor, a retired teacher, responded to the questionnaire. The inputs she brought to the provision did not seem to vary much from those discussed above for tutors and community-based literacy provision.

Like the prison tutors and community-based tutors, the church-based tutor did not have any special training in adult literacy teaching but she had experience as a teacher of



English Language and art. Her recruitment seemed to have been in keeping with the director's policy that tutors at the centre should be trained either as general teachers or as teachers of adults. She did not indicate whether she had worked in any other area besides teaching. The church tutor had been recruited in a way similar the tutors at the other two centres. She had been become involved in adult literacy provision by the pastor of her church, the centre for the literacy classed. He was also the administrator of the literacy provision. However, unlike the other tutors she expressed her involvement in not only personal terms but also in national terms, noting that she personally felt the need to respond to the growth of adult illiteracy in the country.

### **6.3.2.1. CHURCH-BASED TUTORS' INPUT TO PROVISION**

#### **Beliefs About Literacy, Adults and Learning**

This tutors' beliefs about the nature of adult learning and the nature of the illiterate differed in many instances from those expressed by the other tutors. However, the difference was more a case of supplementing ideas which had not been forwarded than offering opposing views. In most cases, even though she shared their beliefs and opinions she presented them from a Christian perspective. Her main belief regarding the way people learnt was that "people learn through experiences: visual, practical and theoretical." Regarding the difference between illiterate adults and children who cannot read or write (TQ.9), she noted that "children tend to learn anything under any environment." She also expressed the belief that the mind was "more open" than that of an adult, children were more creative than adults and their memories could be developed more easily. Adults, according to her, tended to be fearful and embarrassed and had "inactive minds". She believe, however, that "adults can learn with good programmes and proper monitoring."

The tutor did not believe that there would be much difference between an illiterate person and a literate person in their performance of a practical task (TQ.17). However, like the majority of the other tutors, she acknowledged that literacy might prove to be an advantage, adding that "illiterate people can do much with their hands but were slower."

"I had no impressions of them; I did not want to have any," said the tutor in response to the question of whether she had any impressions about illiterate adults prior to interacting with them in the class room (TQ.18). She added that she went to the classes "with an open heart to give help and guidance."

Commenting on the factors which could block adults from acquiring reading and writing skills, the church tutor voiced the same beliefs as the prison and community tutors. She said she believed that difficulty in coming to grips with sounds and the related letter symbols would prevent the adults from learning to read. She also expressed the belief that the students' writing problems would also be caused by lack of practice and attributed the general lack of writing skills to the fact that people relied so much on the telephone for their communications.

Adult illiteracy was attributed to the "lack of opportunities to further primary and secondary education," and the fact that children were kept at home to baby-sit. This tutor said that children who were kept at home to work became lazy and indifferent to studies and life in general because they became accustomed to having money. Another belief she held about factors contributing to adult illiteracy was that parents who worked had no time to monitor their children's school work.

For this tutor, adults were persons over eighteen years of age who had "some spiritual influence" in their life (TQ.8). She also believed that adults had to demonstrate that they could apply themselves to some task and be independent of others for their livelihood. This responsibility did not seem, however, to extend to her views on the student's autonomy in the class room and their control over their own learning.

#### **Tutor's Influence On Students' Experience of Provision:**

Regarding the issue of the students' autonomy over their own learning, the tutor said that "questioning students about these factors can put facilitators on the spot." She said that at her centre there was a curriculum already set but noted that ideally, the curriculum should be based on the students' likes and dislikes so that individual students would have separate programmes made according to their needs. At her centre, as for the

others, the literacy student had no say in decisions about the length of the course since that was determined by the provider on the basis that adults tended to get weary quickly and therefore were better served by short courses. This tutor reasoned that in view of the adult literacy student's limited attention span the typical length of a course for adult literacy students should be about fourteen weeks.

The church tutor favoured the same roles as some of the other tutors, those of counsellor and confidante (TQ.20). She assumed that those were the role which the students wanted her to have in relation with them and they also coincided with the ones she wanted to play. She explained that she loved the combined roles of the teacher and counsellor because they produced satisfying results. Commenting on how she discovered the roles which her students preferred her to adopt, she said that "hurts block progress" and were always reflected in people's body language and facial expressions. As such, according to her, she was able to pick up signs from the students' body language and respond accordingly.

This tutor was the only tutor who conceived Bajan language as a positive medium in the adult class room. She did not see the difference between Bajan and Standard English as a potential problem (TQ.26a) in adult literacy since she believed that being a Bajan speaker would help her to cope. She believed that Bajan could be used in teaching adults (TQ.26b) especially as a means of providing humour. She reasoned that Bajan was the best medium to use since the students came from all environments. She added that left to her own will, she would use it exclusively.

The main materials used in this tutor's class were the chalk board, because it "can easily be erased." She said that she also relied on charts and work sheets when necessary. No particular teaching methods were identified but she explained that both methodology and materials were selected on the basis of the students' "attainment level" (TQ.13-16). According to this tutor, the students' level of literacy was arrived at through "grading and grouping."

### **Ideas About Education**

Expressing her ideas about what should be the purpose of education (TQ.29), the church tutor said that education should be provided to "enable the populace to develop the ability to carry out all operations necessary for the country to survive in a modern world." She did not comment on the adequacy of current provision of general education.

Commenting on what she saw as the main elements of good practice (TQ.10) in the adult literacy class, the tutor remarked that "the removal of fear and inadequacy solves the problem. She also spoke of encouragement as a "priority remedy" and recommended that there be a lot of practice in remedial work, constant reviews of work done, a methodical step-by-step way of presenting lessons and an emphasis on much repetition.

Among the physical elements which she thought would enhance the implementation of good practice were a library well stocked with readings, materials and charts designed specifically for adults and adequate space to display the students' work (TQ.36). She also favoured more involvement from and cooperation with media houses. For instance, she cited the need for them to give coverage to success stories from the literacy classes and to engage in promotions to supply free texts and stationary to students.

### **6.3.3. OVERVIEW OF CHURCH-BASED (ABLE) PROVISION**

The motivation for offering that provision, according to the pastor was a reaction to the tendency for Barbadians to "leave things until they explode and then try to put the pieces back together." He said that he had noticed that in his church some people could not spell so he decided to do something about it by providing adult basic literacy education (ABLE) classes. The responsibility for provision lay with the administrator and his assistant who designed the syllabus, decided on the ways of presentation and generally managed the centre. The tutors functioned as interpreters of the centre's policy and the students seemed to trust both tutors and administrators to be in charge of their learning. The provision offered by the church appeared to be similar to that offered by the traditional primary schools. The focus was on the acquisition of the alphabet first, followed by the learning of minimal pairs of two and three letter words, and gradually increasing to five letter words but still maintaining the focus on pairing and/ or rhyming.

The data suggested that the providers' cooperation with each other and the students' apparent confidence in both might have been encouraged and reinforced by the fact that they all belonged to a specific community, the church. This conclusion was supported by the observation that the roles played by those participants of literacy provision in the class room reflected those which they assumed in the church setting. For example, the literacy administrator was the Pastor or chief leader, the literacy teachers were among the Elders or assistant leaders and the students were the ones being guided in both settings. It was observed that the level of participation which the students experienced during religious activities was not repeated in the literacy classes. For example, the prayers said at the beginning and end of the literacy class were led by either students or tutors, but the students took charge only when they had been invited to do so by the tutors. On none of the researcher's visits to the centre did she notice the students initiate the prayer session. Similarly, during the literacy classes, the students' participation was limited to responding to the tutors questions regarding the lesson content or following instructions to read, copy or spell language items written on chalk board by the tutors. The language items used, whether words or phrases were always those supplied by the tutor. The students were never observed making suggestions, forwarding their own questions about the lesson content or sharing any connections which they might have made between the lessons and aspects of their experience. In view of the above observations, the adult students' position was one of being led and that suggests that the structure of church participation provided the framework for the Church's ABLE provision.

The religious orientation of the church centre seemed to have influenced the policy which guided the provision, for the students' literacy needs were seen as an extension of their spiritual needs. For example, their going to church put them in the position to benefit from the classes and the benefits of literacy, according to the pastor and programme planner, were expected to help the students to participate more in the activities of the church, especially Bible study, witnessing and general ministering. The literacy classes were also a potential incentive for upward mobility in the church for as the pastor explained to the researcher, they were the first stage in a series of courses which led to theological qualifications for members who wanted to advance in the

church ministry. The policy of this church was to promote and encourage such self development through study within the church. The benefits of literacy outside of the church, according to the pastor, was that the students would be able to avoid being "ripped off" by unscrupulous people.

The church-based literacy students seemed to have accepted their pastor's assessment that the research questionnaire was too personal and too difficult for them and none of them participated in the research. Their acquiescence, suggesting a trust and obedience usually afforded to religious leaders by their congregation, is comparable to the deferral of personal autonomy which was displayed by the community-based students and the absence of such autonomy in the prison provision. The organisational structure of the community-based group, the prison-based group and the church-based groups and the management of the programmes was basically authoritarian. That observation was not surprising considering that the formal school, from which the community-based students received their orientation, the prison and the church are three institutions in Barbados which are concerned with guidance, correction and control effected through the operation of rules and discipline. The organisational structure of each institution is hierarchical, and each maintains a culture which focuses on the positions held by the people within them and the social status attached to those positions. That type of structure is maintained by an internal culture which is intolerant of deviations from traditional practices as well as the introduction of new practices both of which are associated with change.

## **PART 4.**

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## **PART 4.**

### **6.4. COMPOSITE PROFILE OF LOCAL (ABLE) PROVISION**

The description of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) provision in Barbados, discussed in chapter four and parts one, two and three of this chapter, appears to be somewhat of a paradox. On the one hand, the instances of ABLE provision were constituents of national provision in that they were the only organised programmes of adult basic literacy education offered to the people comprising the nation of Barbados. On the other hand, ABLE provision did not constitute national provision, for according to the data gathered from official documents and empirical research, the ABLE programmes offered were not informed by a defined policy or guided by goals formulated by any coordinating body, governmental or non-governmental which had been vested with responsibility for addressing the literacy needs of adults. Below is a composite picture of local ABLE provision comprising elements of the three programmes detailed above. Following the presentation of that picture is an evaluation of the overall provision. That evaluation is not made in terms of the collective outcomes of the programmes vis a vis their collective objectives but in terms of the inputs to those programmes vis a vis the goals associated with the programmes by students, tutors, administrators of the institutions offering the provision and the government.

In the composite profile of ABLE provision, cross referencing between the two forms of provision with regard to every variable listed in the outline above has not been possible because of data collecting factors explained in chapter five. Briefly, the two main limiting factors were that there was no student response from the church-based centre and that time restrictions governing the researcher's visits to the prison-based centre made it necessary to reduce the students' questionnaire (CQ in appendix 5) to create the prison questionnaire (PQ in appendix 6). That process included removing some of the items. The ones removed were those for which it was possible to obtain information from observation or from the responses of prison tutors.



#### **6.4.1 COMPOSITE PROFILE OF LITERACY STUDENTS**

##### **Personal Data: Age**

The students in each ABLE programme represented a wide age range. The age range of those in prison provision was from 19 to 50; that of the church group was 15 to 39; and the age range in the community-based group was 15 to 50. In the church-based and community-based groups the majority of adults were in their thirties as was the majority of women in the prison-based group. Most of the men in the prison group were in their twenties. Given the small size of the samples in each group no statistical analysis has been made. What is worth noticing is that the need for literacy skills was expressed by people across all age groups.

##### **Extent Of Literacy**

The extent of the adult students' literacy was determined by whether or not they could read the questionnaires and/ or write their own responses. None of the six women in the prison-based provision needed assistance but three of the thirteen men could neither read nor write anything on the questionnaire. In the community-based group twelve of the sixteen students needed much help with their reading so the researcher functioned as their scribe. Having observed and assisted the eight from the latter group who did not participate in the research, the researcher was aware that two of them would have been able to read some words but all would have needed help to complete the questionnaire.

##### **Employment Status**

The majority of students were employed prior to or at the time the interviews. For example six of the thirteen men in prison-based provision and three of the six women had been employed prior to their incarceration. Of the sixteen respondents in the community-based group two had never worked and at the time of the interviews, eight were employed. All of the students had been employed for over two years and at least four had worked for the same company for over twenty years. Three of them had recently been offered promotions, one to supervisor of a crew fitting natural gas pipes, another to stocktaking clerk in a restaurant, and a third to supervisor of porters in the harbour.

### **Location Of Home/ Work Place**

Information about the location of the students' home and place work in relation to the literacy classes was irrelevant in the case of the prison-based students because classes, their home and their workplace were in the same compound and there was no chance of them hiding the fact of their attendance. The data revealed that the community-based students came to the classes, held in St. Michael (see the Map on page 11) from all other parishes whether or not they were working. Apart from the convenience of being able to attend classes after work, the attendance at the classes by students from all parts of the country was also explained by the fact that some of them did not want their friends or family to know that they were attending literacy classes.

#### **6.4.1.1. STUDENTS' INPUT TO PROVISION**

Observations of classroom practice in two of the ABLE programmes and data collected from students and tutors in all three programmes indicated that none of the student inputs outlined below had been considered in any aspect of the programme planning or the actual delivery. Yet tutors in all three programmes admitted that it was essential to take account of what the student brought to the class, thus agreeing with findings of current research in adult education (Lindeman, 1926; Rogers, 1986 and Knowles 1990) that the adult students' life experiences impacted greatly on their learning and should be taken into consideration in any programme of educational provision for adults.

#### **Experience of Previous Schooling**

Students in both the prison-based and community-based centres said that they had disliked school. The positive instances of school were, for both students, associated with being able to cope with specific subjects. The main negative aspect was their frustration at finding the work too hard and anger at being beaten when they could not cope. Another positive aspect for both sets of students was the socialising that school provided. In comparing their former school provision to current ABLE provision the students considered them to be very similar. Regarding the relationship they shared with their literacy tutors the main difference was that the tutors were more friendly than the schoolteachers had been. As far as their relationship with other students was concerned, the adult literacy students from both groups noted that there was generally more

cooperation among them as adult literacy students than there had been among them as children. In the prison, the welcomed difference between the two forms of class management was the ability to move around the ABLE classroom, a type of freedom which the students said had never been allowed at school.

### **Preferences Regarding Provision**

Items regarding the prison students' preferences about their tutors' age and gender, class size and location were omitted in view of the researcher's awareness of the security factors which controlled the distribution of prisoners to officers, restricted access to areas within the compound and the practice of having female and male prisoners taught by tutors of the same gender. The community-based students, both men and women, generally preferred female tutors who were older than they were and they preferred to be taught in a class room. The data showed that their choices were made on what they had experienced in previous schooling as well as the beliefs that female tutors were more sensitive, older people were more responsible and efficient, and the class room was the ideal place for teaching since it offered no distractions.

### **Problems With Language**

In the community-based provision students spoke Bajan but revealed that they did not see it as a language like English. Some of those who said that the English used by their tutors was not a problem for them still admitted that some of the learning problems which they experienced in the literacy classes related to their tutors' choice of words, their pronunciation of some words and the general way in which they "put their words together." Regarding their attitude to the two languages, the students were ambivalent. Their confusion seemed to be aided by the fact that although some tutors berated Bajan and stressed the need to be literate in English and be able to speak it, the students were aware that other tutors switched between Bajan and English during the literacy lesson. Tutors and students in the prison-based ABLE provision used Bajan as their medium of communication.

### **Feelings and Beliefs About Self and Literacy**

The prison students were not asked directly about the connection between their literacy and self worth and none of them related the two issues. The community-based admitted to feeling inferior to literate people. Those who had other skills said that they experienced a sense of well-being from the successes in using those skills and that helped to counteract the negative feelings they usually experienced in relation to their limited literacy skills.

### **Causes of Students' Limited Literacy**

Both the prison-based students and the community-based students attributed their inadequate literacy skills to factors originating in the home, the school, and within themselves. The main difference between the groups was that when the community based students blamed themselves for their illiteracy they focused on cognitive factors such as their inability to understand things easily. The prison-based students, on the other hand, focused on their behaviour such as staying away from school or not being conscientious about their school work..

### **Acquiring Literacy Skills Versus Other Skills**

This issue was not included in the prison questionnaire. The few community-based students who responded to this issue were divided in their ideas about the acquisition of literacy skills versus other skills. Whereas some saw all skills as requiring practice and following certain guidelines, others saw literacy as being particularly difficult.

### **Ownership Of One's Learning**

The majority of the community-based students accepted the teacher as the authority who ought to know what they needed to learn. Some noted that the decision should be shared between them and the tutor. None of them accepted that they could be fully responsible for what they wanted to know or about how they went about knowing it. This issue was not included in the prison questionnaire.

### **The Concept Of Adulthood**

The students in both groups identified their adult status by the same attributes of age, responsibility, owning their own property or means of livelihood and knowing right from wrong. The data showed that despite those acknowledgements, the adult literacy students did not seek to be more responsible for any aspect of the learning provision or take the initiative to ask about or suggest anything concerning their literacy education.

### **Literacy And Employment**

The community-based students generally accepted that literate people not only qualified for most jobs but that they also usually procured the jobs they wanted and did not have to take jobs which they did not like. They said that the situation operated on the alternative basis for people with inadequate literacy skills. That question was omitted from the prison questionnaire.

### **Needs For improved Literacy**

The needs of both the prison-based and community-based students could be categorised as basic education needs, expressed as the general need to read and write; job-related needs, cited as those which could enhance employment; inter-personal needs relating to interacting with people with more understanding; social needs associated with factors of etiquette such as knowing how to answer the telephone; and personal needs which related to issues of self assertion.

### **Prior Experience Of Learning**

Some of the community-based students had been involved in teaching various skills to other adults. From their experience, they were able to make judgements about what they thought affected learning. Commenting on that issue, students focused on their input as the teacher, the other adult's input as learner either in terms of motivation or intelligence, and on the task itself. This issues was omitted from the prisoner's questionnaire.

## **Learning Styles**

Regarding their awareness of their learning styles, some students identified their tendency to repeat tasks, thus learning by trial and error. Most of them said that they followed instructions given by others and some noted that they watched demonstrations then followed the procedure. Students from both groups said that they used more than one of the above strategies in their attempt to learn a task. To cope with texts which they interacted with frequently, such as bus signs and labels, the students said that they relied on memory.

## **Anticipated Blocks To Continued Provision**

The two main factors which students at both centres cited as possible blocks to their attendance were illness and the lack of money. Students at the community-based centre said that boredom in lessons might influence them to drop out of the provision. The prison-based students noted their prison record, which they said might be a stigma to them in any literacy class which they might attend in the community on their release.

### **6.4.1.2. STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF PROVISION**

#### **Outcomes Of Provision**

The few outcomes noted by adult students in both groups were similar. The community-based students cited achievements associated with writing tasks such as forming or linking letters; and with reading such as being able to identify words on sight or to sound out words. Attainments cited by the prison students which were not mentioned by the community-based students were the introduction to new knowledge, gaining new insights into people and the awareness of possibilities for self education.

#### **Recommendations**

The community-based students suggested the introduction of classes in handwriting and oral English. Both groups wanted the class time to be extended. The community-based students cited the need for continuity so that they could advance to further stages and some suggested that there be more activities involving reading aloud and spelling. With regard to the management of the provision they preferred being grouped according to their level of literacy in order to prevent slower learners from delaying their progress.

## **6.4.2. COMPOSITE PROFILE OF LITERACY TUTORS**

### **Personal Data**

Of the thirteen tutors who responded to the questionnaire ten were men, five of whom worked in prison provision. One other man who had worked in community-based provision was no longer involved. Four other tutors, all women, contributed to the research by giving the researcher access to their classes for observation. The tutors in prison provision were recruited from among literate prisoners and the warders.

### **6.4.2.1. TUTORS' INPUT TO PROVISION**

#### **Motivation**

The data showed that in all three programmes, the tutors and assistants were motivated by the sense of satisfaction they received from "doing good", "helping the less fortunate" "sharing a skill", "making a contribution" and in one case "satisfying a curiosity" about illiterate people.

#### **Experience**

None of the tutors had been trained to teach adults. One woman involved in prison provision was a retired teacher. The women tutors at the other two ABLE centres were also retired teachers. Of the sixteen tutors and facilitators who participated in the research six were retired teachers and one was close to retirement but was still teaching at the primary level. Only one of the five male tutors had any teaching experience. The others had at various times been policemen, bank teller, bus conductor, electrician and clerk. From the tutors' information they had been recruited because they volunteered or had been asked to assist in the provision by administrators of the programmes who knew them. At the time of the research the tutors had between four months and two years experience in ABLE provision but between one and thirty five years in formal school provision.

#### **Beliefs About Literacy, Illiterate Adults, Learning:**

##### **How People Learn**

Tutors believed that in general people learned best when they were relaxed and if the subject was interesting. They also believed that if the learning situation allowed learners

to use all of their senses and the environment was comfortable, learning would be enhanced. Other ideas common to the tutors of the three ABLE programmes were that learning was best facilitated through rhyme, focusing on patterns, and reasoning.

Although the tutors, like the students, cited many factors in the home, the school and the community, and the personality, they did not cite any of those factors as potential blocks to the adults' acquisition of literacy skills. In expressing their beliefs about what constituted potential learning blocks to the students they focused instead on aspects of the literacy lesson such as spelling, pronunciation, forming letters; the procedure of the learning experience such as following rules, sitting properly or holding the writing implement in the correct manner. The emotional and cognitive factors they cited were the students' embarrassment at making errors and their inability to recall what they had been taught. In keeping with comments made earlier, the tutors tended to separate the students from their life experiences when they were actually involved in or focusing on the delivery of ABLE provision.

#### **Influence On Students' Programme Experience:**

The tutors accepted the students' adulthood to mean that they were responsible and mature people but in their provision they did not demonstrate their acceptance of their students responsibility by making provision allowing them to exercise any autonomy in the organisation of the learning-teaching situation. This aspect of practice was further reinforced by the tutors' decision to assume such roles as guide, mentor, adviser and father figure. Despite the fact that all the tutors, except one prison tutor, opted for such "helping" roles, there was a difference in the nature of the relationship they expected to develop. For example the prison tutors expected to become substitutes for their students' parents or role models to be looked up to; the community-based tutors, like the church tutor, expected to be more of a confidante and friend.

The tutors did not deviate from what was practised in mainstream formal education. They rejected the use of Bajan in the class room and promoted English; they utilised texts which had been designed for children and their teaching methods were those associated with the teaching of small children in primary school. For example they often



slowed their speech when talking to the adult learners, they used very simple vocabulary items and they, not the students, selected all classroom materials which they expected the students to read. In all of the classes, the focus was on reading rather than writing. When writing was introduced, it was in the form of copying ready-made text from a work book or the chalk board. The students were not encouraged to write their own text.

#### **Ideas About Education:**

The data showed that as far as the tutors were concerned the current purpose of education was to prepare students for the future. That preparation included being prepared for a particular type of job and therefore the concerns for the present were seen to be primarily subjects in which students had to qualify or tasks in which they had to be proficient. In their comments on what the purpose of education ought to be the tutors accepted the principles outlined above but noted the need for education to place a greater focus on productivity and the development of spirituality. The constituents of good practice cited by the tutors included their ideas, cited earlier, regarding the conditions needed for effective learning.

#### **6.4.2.2. TUTORS' ASSESSMENT OF PROVISION**

None of the tutors had made any formal evaluation. In response to the questionnaire, their assessment was limited to observations they had made of students' behaviour, such as their becoming less aggressive, in the case of the prison provision, rather than to their literacy skills. Regarding themselves, the outcomes cited were in terms of changed impressions. The community-based tutors and the church-based tutors did not offer any information related to this issue.

#### **6.5. ABLE PROVISION AND RELATED GOALS**

##### **National Goals**

The connection between ABLE provision and identifiable goals at the national, institutional and individual levels is maintained in this research, not because it is accepted that pre-set goals are always essential to any educational provision but the Barbados Government and local educators have consistently aligned general educational provision and, by extension, ABLE provision, to national development goals, the

achievement of which they say must be built on the efforts of a literate work force.

The Government, as represented by the Ministry of Education set general educational goals for the primary level of the educational system in the form of the Statement of Philosophy Relating to Primary Schools of Barbados (1981) and implied that those basic goals of general educational provision should inform other forms of education at all levels since inputs at the primary level constituted the foundation of the whole education system. The general outcomes associated with such educational provision in terms of the characteristics of the people exposed to the provision were creativity, a disposition towards experimentation, confidence in one's abilities and the capability to analyze situations and apply knowledge to solve problems. Those factors were also expected to be the inputs to all educational provision in the form of strategies of teaching in all forms of education. That link between forms of educational provision was made by the current Prime Minister of Barbados, Erskine Sandiford, in his statement that the highest form of literacy achievable in Barbados should rest on a "comprehensive curriculum and body of learning for living and for livelihood" (Democratic Labour Party, 1991:4) and that such education should be implemented "through a life long network of formal, non-formal and informal settings" (ibid). The Prime Minister, in his Party's manifesto associated the following desired national outcomes to the attainment of the above mentioned "highest possible levels of literacy."

1. increase of production (manufacturing)
2. increase of employment
3. reduction of inflation
4. increase of export capability
5. keeping national debt at sustainable levels
6. increase in food production
7. improvement of security
8. enhancing the values and self esteem of the people
10. improvement of facilities for health, education, training, housing and the general infrastructure

In the promotion of local ABLE provision by the Government, both at the community-based and prison-based centres with which it is connected, none of the administrators or tutors or students made any connection between those goals and the practices of ABLE provision. In addition, there were no guidelines from the Government to inform that provision. The tutors themselves seemed not to have thought about the issue for, in their responses to the question of how their literacy provision related to national development, they made the general comment that if all of the people were literate the country would be considered developed.

With regard to the prison-based provision, the Government as represented by the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety (1991), expressed one goal: "to provide an opportunity" for prisoners to attain the following:

1. basic literacy and numeracy skills
2. trade skills necessary for employment
3. reduced likelihood of returning to prison

The wording of the statement implied that the three outcomes were interrelated and that the provision was to take that connection into account but there was no statement of how providers were to make those links. For example, in the Ministry's statement, the attainment of trade skills was cited as being "necessary for employment at the conclusion of a term of imprisonment thus reducing the existing high rate of recidivism" (Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, 1991: 2). Given the economic situation at the time when the statement was issued, the actual relationship between those outcomes was not as direct as the statement implied, for people were being laid off from their jobs and the activities of various industries were being reduced as a cost cutting measure. Thus whereas the attainment of the skills taught in prison might have been cited as requirements for specific jobs there was no guarantee that there would have been jobs available to utilise those skills. The statement also overlooked the fact that employers were often reluctant to employ persons with prison records, a situation highlighted by some prison-based students in their responses to the question of how they expected their literacy skills to be of use in helping them when they returned to the community. A third connection implied in the above three outcomes was that literacy and numeracy skills

were either connected to the attainment of the trade skills or the acquisition of jobs. Regarding the first connection, the data cited in parts one and two of this chapter showed that persons who could not read or write had acquired skills in the trades of masonry and joinery. The data also showed that others who had acquired neither trade skills nor literacy and numeracy skills had been employed.

Another assumption inherent in the statement was that being employed reduced the likelihood of people returning to prison. Again data in part two of this chapter (Table 6.6) indicated that five of the ten prisoners who responded to the employment question in the prison questionnaire (PQ.15) had been employed prior to their incarceration. No data was collected to see how many of the employed as opposed to the unemployed had been imprisoned before but the available data shows that employment need not be a preventative measure for breaking the law. In fact, there have been local cases in which the type of job held by certain persons made it possible for them to break the law.

Even though the national goal regarding prison ABLE provision was simply stated as the provision of "an opportunity", which would make the above outcomes possible, it can still be argued that the outcomes themselves, being desirable to the Government, were in themselves goals. As such, one may add that the "opportunity" being offered by the Government should have included not only the availability of tutors, space and some teaching materials but also guidelines related to the facilitation of learning experiences which could effect those outcomes. Rather, according to the information supplied by the tutors, those aspects of the prison ABLE provision were left to the tutors.

Underlying the national goals cited above were the essential personal and elements highlighted in the statement of philosophy, the national development plans for the past ten years, and the party manifesto of the current Government. These were creativity, innovation, independence of spirit, disposition to experiment, willingness to challenge existing norms, and to generally have a divergent outlook on life and a desire for self sufficiency. There was mention of the boldness to initiate change, and to develop a sense of autonomy, not seen as being opposed to having a spirit of duty or responsibility to one's community. Not one of those elements was encouraged in the three ABLE

programmes even though adult literacy education was repeatedly linked by Government representatives and local educators to the achievement of national goals. statements.

### **Institutional Goals**

According to the data institutions offering ABLE provision expressed very general goals and they did not issue any guidelines to inform their ABLE programmes. The community-based administrator was concerned about the embarrassment and other emotional suffering of the people who had literacy needs so his institution was aimed at "fighting" illiteracy. The administrator of the church-based centre was concerned about people being "ripped off" and about his congregation not being able to participate fully in the work of the church which required them to read and understand the Bible.

### **Students' Goals**

All of the community-based students had been encouraged to attend classes by their friends and relatives or had been persuaded by the media promotions during International Literacy Year. As the data showed they saw literacy as a good thing to have but had not set any specific objectives to its acquisition.

### **Tutors' Goals**

The tutors, whether they had volunteered or had been asked to offer service revealed that their major aim was to help the students to learn to read and write. None of the participants, according to the empirical data, had made any link to the general or specific objectives which the government had associated with education.

As the empirical data showed, in all three ABLE programmes the curriculum was pre-designed by the tutors or as in the case of the church, the administrator. The management of the provision and the relationships that sustained them was determined by the tutors who generally related to their adult students in a way similar to that used by traditional primary school teachers to relate to primary school children. Generally, the provision was designed not in terms of the adult students' goals but in terms of what was thought to have worked for children. That provision was incongruent with the idea that the students' literacy abilities would be enhanced enough to permit them to apply

their literacy in various national, insitutional and personal activities.

The data suggests that the practices of ABLE provision reinforced the attitudes and behaviours which those goals were intended to alter. It is possible that they may also reinforce some students' learning problems which might have developed as a result of similar teaching practices in their primary school experience. One element which seems to have contributed to that paradox of provision is the range of negative attitudes held by providers. Those attitudes include negative opinions about Bajan, which blocks it from being used as a possible effective teaching aid; reluctance to alter any aspects of the educational system, owing to its connection with the revered British education system; and an exaggerated emphasis on status which precludes teachers conceiving of themselves as equal adult learners with their adult non-literate students. The suggestion is that there must first be a change in those attitudes before teachers could acknowledge the input of those students to ABLE provision not just in terms of their literacy problems but also in terms of their goals and interests which can be used to shape the ABLE programme and inform all learning-teaching activities.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1. Summary

ABLE provision in Barbados, according to the data presented in chapter six above, was not informed by any specific goals set by the Government of Barbados, institutions offering provision or the participants in the provision. There were, however, some very general national, institutional and individual goals reflected in aspects of ABLE practice and these are summarised below.

##### 7.1.1. ABLE Provision and National Goals

The Barbados National Development Plan 1988-1993 (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1988) identified the following six basic goals for the education system:

1. enable all persons to realize their talents to the fullest
2. encourage mature and critical thinking
3. foster wholesome interpersonal and social relations
4. promote patriotism
5. encourage an understanding of Barbadian heritage and
6. re-affirm basic spiritual and moral values.

The rationale given for having those goals was that "the development of the nation is dependent on the excellence of the education system" (ibid:68) and those factors were the contributors to such excellence. Given the Government's expressed commitment to achieving such excellence, one would assume that the Government would ensure that those goals informed all educational provision on the island, regardless of the level. Inherent in that assumption is the idea that all providers of educational provision would be made aware of those goals and would be urged to use them to inform their practice. As was shown in chapter six, none of the instances of ABLE provision seemed to have been guided by those goals.

Accepting that in the Government's statement a talent was taken to be an activity which an individual can do well with minimal tuition, one may reason that for ABLE provision to promote the first national goal cited above, the facilitators would have had to know about the talents or aptitudes brought to the teaching-learning situation by the adults students and devise ways to incorporate them into the literacy instruction. One obvious way would have been to include among the teaching materials printed information related to the topics in which the students were interested. That material would then have been a useful means of introducing the language of literacy, teaching reading skills, and providing a source of additional information about the subject area in which the students were knowledgeable, competent or interested. Printed texts, in the original form or adapted, about those areas of interest might then have been used to motivate the students to practice reading, and possibly to encourage them to develop the particular talent by applying what they had read about it. Such practices with regard to choice of materials and methods were not implemented as evidenced by reports from participants and confirmed by the researcher's observations.

None of the ABLE activities or practices observed in the two centres seemed to encourage mature or critical thinking. Assuming that the adults in the ABLE class already practised both kinds of thinking, the class room activities did not appear to be useful means by which they could either be enhanced or reinforced. For example, at all of the ABLE centres teachers led all class room activity; students participated only in the form of responding to questions, taking turns at the black board or contributing to class exercises involving reading and spelling either as individuals or as a whole class. The content of texts and exercises were from children's work books and individual language items were either arbitrarily selected by the tutors, or taken from standardised English word frequency lists. There was usually no discussion of issues outside the context of the exercises being done or the import of sentences being created about the class room or the arbitrarily selected pictures used to generate words for spelling.

With reference to the third national goal cited above, the relationships in the ABLE classroom, according to data collected from students' responses and from the researchers' observation, reinforced those practised in the community between persons



of unequal social status, relationships which often involved the persons of lower status being belittled. Such practices cannot really be considered wholesome in a society which promotes the need to acknowledge the inherent value of, and interdependence between, all classes and groups of citizens. At all the centres the tutors were perceived as the ones in charge, they were accepted as the authority and treated with much respect. As was noted in the data, they tended to remain at the head of the class, usually seated and the students did not approach them unless called to present their written work. Furthermore, the only tutors who went to students' desks were the volunteers.

As indicated by the codes of good practice discussed in chapters two and three the adult literacy classroom is one place where adults should have the opportunity to explore the negative discrimination meted out to them on account of their inadequate literacy. One may assume that such exploration would be useful to help some of them to cope in actual situations of discrimination and enhance their sensitivity to other types of discrimination targeted at other disadvantaged groups. The examples cited above suggest that instead, the adult literacy class room, if not managed by sensitive facilitators could be a setting where unwholesome social behaviours are reinforced, albeit unintentionally. However as was highlighted in the tutor profiles in chapter six, adult tutors in all three centres seemed reluctant or not self assured enough to facilitate literacy on the basis that the students were equal adults sharing a teaching-learning situation and that any imbalance in that situation was one of relative knowledge and not one of human value.

The issue of patriotism was not raised in any of the classes in any form during the researchers's visits. One may assume that it has been taken for granted that all Barbadian are essentially patriotic. However, this issue may be connected to the third and fifth goals if one sees patriotism as being more than an empty expression of love for one's country as a geographical or political entity and extends it to include an appreciation of the elements that make the people of that country different and a commitment to understanding the differences.

Regarding the goal of promoting Barbadian culture, the major contradiction lay in the issue of language. Bajan Dialect is accepted as integral to Barbadian culture but has

never been accepted as an appropriate medium of instruction in the class room or a means of any form of communication other than jokes, story-telling and very informal discourse. In the three ABLE centres the majority of the students spoke Bajan Dialect, but owing to the linguistic similarities shared by Bajan Dialect and English and the pervasiveness of English in the media and in the society in general, they were obviously familiar with English. The tutors, however, dismissed the validity of Bajan Dialect in their instruction by focusing solely on English and according to some students they even referred to Bajan Dialect as "broken English." The researcher also observed that the tutors denounced the Bajan Dialect in their comments about students' pronunciation of words in English, revealing that they were unaware that in those cases the students' pronunciation was based on a consistent Bajan syllable structure.

An observation relating to one such instance is worth reporting here. One tutor, in response to a student attempting to read a sentence, said: "it irritates me to hear people say 'a'sep' for 'accept'". In that case, the student had been following the Bajan rules of pronunciation which require that a cluster of consonantal sounds be broken up into a sequence of a consonant and a vowel and vice versa. The student, being a native speaker of Bajan Dialect had reduced the sequence of sounds [a]-[k]-[s] to the sequence [a] [pause] [s]. It was clear to the researcher, as observer and as one familiar with the rules of both languages, that the tutor and the student were in the same position: each was comfortable with the language she used daily and did not know the rules governing the language with which she was passively familiar. The question one may ask is how can one promote a particular culture and heritage and repudiate the language which came into being along with that culture and was used as the medium to shape, preserve and transmit the supposedly more favourable elements of that cultural heritage.

The spiritual and moral values, mentioned in the sixth goal, given the accepted Christian orientation of the country, related primarily, though not exclusively, to Christian principles. No attempt was made to include such principles or related precepts into the literacy content. However, the reasons offered by tutors for becoming involved in the provision may be connected to those tutors' sense of some Christian duty to their fellowmen. That was inherent also in the reasoning of one inmate tutor who commented

that his involvement was an attempt to "do good" while he could. One must however, acknowledge that his comment could also have been motivated from a non-religious but humanitarian perspective. The researcher was aware that the community-based tutors were practising Christians and that the centre was obviously Christian-oriented, a point reinforced by the fact that the literacy class preceded church service each night and the tutors were Sisters in the church. The prison-based centre by virtue of its association with the law, which is grounded in Christian principles, may be seen as performing a Christian function and a public service simultaneously by punishing those whose offences violate the precepts of both Church and State. A Values Education Course was being piloted among the prisoners at the same as this research study was being carried out, but the course, which was informed by Christian principles was not being offered as part of the literacy programme then.

From the above discussion, it is clear that none of the national goals identified for the education system was used to guide ABLE programmes, not even by accident. In fact, the practices which the researcher observed and those which the students and tutors reported seemed to be at variance with practices which one would expect to have been in place if the programmes had been pursuing those goals. This observation may be viewed in light of the discussion in chapter one regarding the modern demands being made of education systems and the attachment to traditional modes of operation which inform those systems. The following statement by a former Prime Minister, the late Errol Walton Barrow, serves to highlight that attachment to the past and a resistance to change in local general educational practices:

The new strategy which we need must also seek to reform education and training programmes to impart new skills and upgrade old ones.[...] Our educational systems are necessarily thirty years behind our requirements because our educators are merely passing on what they absorbed thirty years ago (BUT, 1992).

#### **7.1.2. ABLE Provision and Institutional Goals**

One institutional goal which was shared by the three centres was the general one of improving literacy and in some way compensating for the deficits of the adults' formal schooling. The data suggests that among other things such deficits could be connected

to aspects of instruction and types of interaction experienced by the adults when they were children in formal schooling. It seems reasonable to expect that for the main institutional goal to be achieved those former experiences would need to be explored and used to inform current ABLE practice. Two obvious means of applying that information would be by choosing alternative instructional methods and innovative forms of classroom interaction in an effort to avoid reinforcing the negative effects of the former learning situation. Data from students' responses and the researchers' observations of class room practice indicated that students were taught as though they comprised a homogeneous group with no past. Yet the tutors in their comments acknowledged that the students were both adults and unique individuals, two assertions which contradict the assumptions inherent in their practice. According to the data collected from the three centres, the profile of practice for each did not match the profile of practice which one would associate with efforts to achieve the major goal which the institutions had identified.

### **7.1.3. ABLE Provision and Students' Goals**

The main goal expressed by the students was the intention or desire to learn to read and write. That goal, however, was not usually connected to the need to acquire basic knowledge or to gain employment, two specific needs which are linked in ABLE literature to the goal of literacy acquisition. Regarding the lack of connection between literacy and employment, most of the students in the community-based provision were already employed, some of them for as long as thirty years and some of them had even been promoted to supervisory positions. In the prison-based centre the lack of linkage between literacy and work seemed related to the fact that those who had inadequate literacy skills had spent their lives doing mechanical or craft work for which they did not think they needed literacy. In addition, some people seemed sure of getting some type of work with "a friend" even if they were still not able to read and write well when they left prison.

The lack of a connection between literacy and basic knowledge in the students' goals was probably due to the fact that despite being described as a "literate society" Barbados makes much use of oral-aural and visual channels of communication to

convey essential information. For example, three of the six radio stations have daily or twice daily call-in programmes which allow a cross section of people to exchange views and gain information on a wide range of current, controversial and educational topics. Some of the programmes focus on specific topics or themes and at those times, they are moderated by experts in the area who lead the discussion and then field questions from the listening audience. Topics ranged from issues relating to general health, specific medical issues, workers' rights, cultural and domestic matters to those concerned with legal rights, modern technology, and the nation's fiscal and foreign policies.

The fact that classes did not deal with national issues but focused on the elements of literacy seemed therefore not to bother the students. They also seemed not to be concerned that their interests, concerns and personal needs were not incorporated into the lesson content. It may be suggested that the students' acceptance of the narrow focus of the literacy class could have been influenced by the fact that they knew of no alternative forms of provision. In fact, former tutors of the community-based programme said that when they tried to link the literacy instruction with the students' goals and interest, some students, especially the older ones, did not accept that approach too readily and the older tutors objected. Thus as far as the students were concerned, they were getting the type of provision they expected.

In terms of the range of subjects offered as part of literacy provision, some students said that they wanted numeracy as well as literacy skills but numeracy was not offered at either the community or church-based centres. Inmate tutors at the prison-based centre said that they taught basic arithmetic. At the community-based centre, one student wanted to use the literacy class as a bridge to studying for a certificate in English but there was no indication that the content of her literacy programme differed from that of the other students. Other students expected to gain qualifications in specific areas as a means of moving from their current jobs to the ones they always wanted but again, judging from the focus of lessons and the use of primary school texts, those goals had also not been taken into account in the planning of individual lessons. By implication, one might say that they had also not been considered in the planning of the ABLE programme.

Some adult students (all women) at both the community and prison-based centres had set themselves the goal of being able to help their children with school work. Their assumption seemed to have been that having acquired basic literacy skills, they would be able to tackle school subjects well enough to guide their children. That assumption implied much confidence in their own intelligence, which they evidently perceived as being independent of their literacy. Since the only school-related subject mentioned in the literacy class room was English grammar, one may assume that the tutors did not know of the students' goals or, if they knew of them, they had not taken the students seriously and probably did not have that much confidence in the students' intelligence to apply their newly acquired literacy skills to reading about specific subjects. In either case, that specific goal identified by the students seemed not to have informed the ABLE provision at either of the two centres.

## **7.2. Conclusion**

An overview of local ABLE provision, based on the above discussion and on the data presented in chapter six above, suggests that there was an internal dynamic to the provision of adult basic literacy education (ABLE) in Barbados but it was not based on the awareness of specific national, institutional or personal goals. There were goals at each level and for each centre but they were general ones. The main institutional goal for all three centres seemed to be to provide the opportunity for people to become literate and as such, the provision they offered was guided by the students' expressed desire (or goal) to be literate, often detached from any specific application.

The reasons given by providers for their involvement in ABLE provision suggested that they were convinced of the intrinsic value of literacy for its own sake and so were not inclined to connect ABLE provision to any specific goals. They and the students appeared to have become caught up in the activity of the learning-teaching situation and in the absence of even specific short term goals, their activity gave momentum to the programme, kept it going, and therefore justified its existence. In those cases where students associated the acquisition of literacy with changes in their behaviour, the actual improvement in literacy skills appeared to be a motivator for them to continue attending classes. That seemed to have been the situation of one inmate-student who said that

initially, he did not want to attend the classes but after he attended and began to learn to read and write, he realised that he had become less aggressive and decided to change his attitude and continue attending classes. Another adult student at the community-based centre also reported being aware of similar changes in his attitude to people after he had begun to read and write.

One implication of the above examples is that if those students started their respective classes with no apparent goals, neither the prison-based nor the community-based programmes could have been informed by their goals. Given the data collected from all students, that seems to have been the situation. The data also indicated that although many people began the ABLE classes with the general aim of wanting to read and write, their initial successes might have prompted them to set more specific goals. This research project did not investigate that possibility but it is an area which needs to be looked at to find out the extent to which adult literacy students, after becoming aware of some possibilities of literacy mid-way into an ABLE session, begin to set specific goals and are prompted to or actually attempt to have the ABLE provision directed towards those goals. Additional questions to be asked would be how the students effect such influences; what input they are motivated to invest in the effort to achieve those goals and what are the eventual outcomes over time. It would also be necessary to have similar research done with regard to providers to find out if or to what extent their ABLE input become more goal-directed as the programme progresses; what influences they attribute to the change and what outcomes they perceive. Such research would obviously have to be longitudinal and would need to be carried out with the full participation of students, tutors and providers at all stages of the project.

The indication that students' goals did not inform local ABLE provision suggests that initial assessments prior to the beginning of the programme could be used to obtain information not only for deciding on the level of grouping to which students should be assigned but also for guiding tutors and students in setting relevant short term goals. Such information would no doubt make the lessons, the course and the programme relevant to the students' needs and provide the basis against which both the tutor and the student could monitor the students' progress. In fact, those assessment profiles would

be very useful for the programme as a whole for they could provide a record of its achievements over time which might be used to justify requests for funding or to account for the use of funds already received.

That initial assessment would be of particular use for those students (observed at the community-based centre), who demonstrated no change in literacy ability in spite of having attending classes regularly for over a year; who did not participate fully in class room activities, despite much coaxing, but who, nevertheless, continued to attend classes. Unfortunately, in the field work period of this research, there was not enough time to develop a rapport with them but their presence in the ABLE class demands that they be catered for, especially since some of them appeared to need special educational instruction in addition to literacy instruction. Their presence in the class further suggested that they were highly motivated to attend. That situation raises questions about their previous schooling and about students at various levels of formal school provision who might be similarly motivated but are not able to match their motivation with results because there are some blocks to their learning which have never been investigated.

Besides appearing to offer literacy because of its intrinsic worth, most tutors (paid and unpaid) seemed to be offering their time and skills on the basis that such involvement achieved a civic or humanitarian good. The impression created was that the intention of manifesting that good in the form of a contribution to ABLE provision was enough to justify their practice. It therefore seemed that they were not motivated to view their involvement in ABLE provision as a professional undertaking from the perspective of practice or as a reasoned contribution to national development from the perspective of purpose. Apparently the tutors were also not motivated to share ideas or network with others in an effort to inform themselves about their practice, in view of it being a relatively new area of educational provision for most of them. The apparent lack of collaboration among ABLE facilitators is reflected in the few links existing between them as providers. For example the researcher found that despite the work of the Barbados Adult Education (BAEA) only one of the tutors involved in local ABLE provision was a member and there had never been any contact between tutors from



different institutions. In fact, among those persons who were planning provision, either as individuals or as representatives of institutions, many had never heard of the BAEA.

### **7.3. The Case Study: Limitations and Contribution**

As a case study of ABLE provision in Barbados, there are not many generalisable findings which can be applied in other contexts, but this research has raised some possible issues for future research despite its limitations. Restricted access to documents and personnel was a major limitation in conducting the study. As the centres offering structured provision had not done their own evaluation of the provision they were offering they were reluctant to give access to information regarding attendances, funding, tutors' accounts of course progression and reports on student progress. Providers also said that they were reluctant to share information because they felt the need to protect the students and tutors. Discussions with some of them however, suggested that they also wanted to protect themselves for they were not confident that the provision which they offered could be favourably compared with that being offered by agencies elsewhere. In fact, the provider at the community-based centre said that prior to offering this researcher limited access to the centre, he had refused admission to at least fifteen persons who wanted to find out about 'his' classes and 'his' students.

That limited access was part of the reason why no quantitative data has been included in this dissertation. No access was given to the records of attendance or the tutors' reports or any documentation relating to the provision except press comments. Another reason for the absence of actual figures is that the prison-based centre had no record of the total number of persons needing literacy provision. There was also no systematic assessment of those students who actually attended classes to gauge the level of their literacy skills. There were also no tutors' reports of student progress and no documentation of teaching methods or materials used. At the time of the research a syllabus was being drafted but was not available for reference. The conclusions drawn about the provision have therefore been entirely dependent on what students and tutors said and on what the researcher observed. In most cases the statements of students were contrasted with those of the tutors and both were checked against the researcher's observations, as far as it was possible to do so. Many of the insights especially those

relating to language use and interpersonal relationships were informed by the researcher's knowledge of the social, cultural and linguistic setting.

With regard to issues raised in the literature, the case study of ABLE provision in Barbados highlighted the fact that illiteracy and unemployment are not necessarily always coupled. In fact, in the local situation, the majority of the students attending literacy classes were employed, some up to the level of supervisor, and many had been working for over ten years with the same firm. That situation seemed to exist both at the community-based centre, where students were required to pay for their tuition (the equivalent of £25 sterling per term), and at the Church-based centre, where the students were asked to make what ever contribution they could to the church.

Another general issue highlighted by the local data was the connection between self esteem, self efficacy and literacy. Some of the students mentioned that they expected their self esteem to be boosted as a result of their becoming literate, yet in casual conversation they revealed that they were held in high regard by their managers and neighbours and that in their families they were respected for being themselves, with no consideration to their illiteracy. Regarding self efficacy, some students were quite capable of coping effectively within the various areas of the society and judging from the way they were able to acquire mortgages, set personal goals and pursue them, and manage their homes and business affairs without feeling that any of those tasks were beyond them on account of their lack of adequate reading and writing skills. The apparent contradiction between their statements of need and their actual behaviour and apparent outlook on life raises the question whether the adult literacy students' connection of the above qualities with literacy was a result of their own perception of reality or was merely their adoption of the language used and the ideas promoted in local discussions of adult illiteracy. Given that such language and ideas are also evident in both the Regional and Extra-Regional literature, that observation is relevant to a discussion of ABLE provision wherever it is offered. The observation also suggests the need for local ABLE promoters to avoid presenting stereotypical profiles of non-literate adults as disadvantaged beings and instead promote more realistic pictures of them as ordinary citizens having educational needs like every one else.

Despite the limitations of this study it contributes to the study of ABLE provision by highlighting the issue of goal setting as an area of study which needs to be researched. As was pointed out in the literature reviewed in chapters two and three above, the goals emphasised by ABLE providers have been those of individuals, the community or the state. As far as the researcher has been able to ascertain there have been no ABLE initiative which included a systematic identification of all three sets of goals as part of the process of planning provision. The case study of ABLE provision in Barbados is a case in point and the data presented in this research study suggest that the apparent lack of direction of that effort might be partly attributed to the absence of that type of goal setting in particular and to the tendency not to match practice to even the general goals which have been identified.

Regarding its local contribution, this study on ABLE provision in Barbados is the first of its kind. Prior to the publication of Adult Education in Barbados (Ellis,1990 ) there seemed to have been no mention of adult literacy provision in any publication. This research project has highlighted some issues which according to the data are important for local provision and in terms of the literature, have not yet been investigated. This study has also provided one possible framework within which some of those questions can be raised at a local level by other researchers.

#### **7.4. Issues For Future Research**

The focus on ABLE goals which has informed this study can be further researched with specific reference to educational providers in ABLE programmes and formal school in the context of the much promoted need for people to be capable of adapting to and initiating change. The data collected for this study highlighted the fact that the tutors who are supposed to be agents of change are most resistant to and appear not to be aware of many needed changes in their own profession; the irony being that they maintain those attitudes while engaging in an effort which is aimed at making adults adjust to the social and economic changes that demand that they become literate.

Such a research study would complement that done in the Caribbean on Permanent Secretaries in the Ministries of Education (Paul, 1991), which was referred to in chapter one.

The researcher's comparison of the characteristics identified with those managers of the region's educational systems and those conveyed by the profiles of tutors in chapter six suggests that the educational managers and the educators share similar traits: they are conservative and conventional in role; convergent in decision making; re-active rather than pro-active in approaching their jobs, generally suspicious of innovation and reluctant to take the initiative. It is significant that all of those characteristics are opposed to those which the Prime Minister of Barbados, Erskine Sandiford, said the citizens of Barbados should develop through exposure to the education system and they are also contrary to the ideals set out in the statement of philosophy (discussed in chapter three) which is supposed to underpin the entire education system.

Other issues for research which have emerged from this study include the links between adult literacy provision and the formal school system especially with relation to the impact of instructional approaches on adults. So far there seem not to have been any investigation into the adult literacy students' response to ABLE instruction depending on the extent to which it related to or differed from what they had already been exposed to. That information could further inform practice by providing actual data to support the promotion of more innovative approaches to ABLE provision and formal schooling. A related area of potential research is the range of reasons given by students and tutors for the incidence of adult illiteracy in Barbados. Those findings would be important in view of the wide range of educational provision available in general and the fact that there is also universal compulsory primary education.

The research for this dissertation was informed mostly by the contributions from adults who were not literate in the form of their ideas, attitudes and beliefs. Those elements were referred to in this study only as inputs into provision by both providers and providees and their pervasiveness suggests that they may constitute an area of useful local research especially since the changes expected to be effected in adult basic literacy and general educational provision are essentially attitudinal changes. Those inputs from participants in Able provision, especially the students are also important because it seems that most decisions made regarding local ABLE provision and ideas publicised about the lives of non-literate adults are not theirs but the assumptions of other people

(usually literate people). In that regard, this research has highlighted profiles of those adult students which can be further expanded to emphasise the fact that adult literacy students are more than statistics and that illiteracy has not been a debilitating disease for many of them as the media and various educational agencies claim.

One idea which seems to underlie the above discussions is that the goal of attitudinal change must be common to all goals set in connection to ABLE provision whether they be individual, institution or national goals. Some adult educators in the Caribbean and Barbados have acknowledged the need for that major goal and have tried to convey to their colleagues and Governments that the adjustments attached to achieving it are not necessarily difficult, that the experience of adjustment is supposed to be integral to learning and growth, and that the outcomes can only be as positive as the effort. One such educator who has tried to promote that idea through her work for CARCAE is Nelcia Robinson (1988) who made the point quite well in her poem "Mellee", written from the point of view of an ABLE participant. The first stanza of that poem, quoted below, makes a suitable statement with which to conclude this study:

What a change!  
I find out what change mean  
An' it simple like kiss han'  
Doing something a different way  
Mekking a new thing, but for better  
Like Caterpillar to Butterfly.

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 1.**

### **Miscellaneous Questions from Brainstorming Exercise Described in Chapter 5.**

1. How did they find out about the class?
2. What prompted the decision to attend the class?
3. Was it a difficult step to take?
4. why did they have second thoughts?
5. Is the material what they wanted?
6. Do they feel comfortable with the teacher?
7. Why/ why not?
8. Besides getting new information what do they like about the class?
9. What do they not like about the class?
10. How is this experience similar to/different from their school experience
  - arrangement of classes
  - teachers talk to students
  - teachers' attitude to students
  - presentation of material
  - teacher's handling of student error
  - time devoted to on-task/ -off task activities
11. What changes would they like to see/why?
12. Is any aspect of the learning activity causing difficulty?
13. Ideas about why these aspects are proving to be a problem
14. How were they coping before regarding reading letters, shopping, travelling
15. Do they want to change these strategies?/why
16. How do they want to be able to cope in these situations?
17. How would a change in strategy affect how they feel about themselves?
18. What are they good at doing?
19. What are their interests, hobbies?
20. What are their achievements, hopes?
21. What do they not want?
22. Why don't they want it ?
23. What activity would they like to be able to participate in/ Why?
24. What occupation would they really want to have? Why?
25. What personal qualities would a person need to be able to do 23 & 24 ?
26. What makes them think so?
27. Do they have all/ some/ of these qualities?
28. How do they think they can acquire them?
29. How does their acquisition of 26 affect their lives and the lives of their those close to them?
30. what are the perceived connections between their achievement of 23, 24, 27, and national development?
31. Are they aware of Government's desire /plan of education for the people?
32. How did they become aware? / Is it important for them to be ?
33. Do they prefer to be taught in a group, one-to-one, as a class /why?
34. Do they prefer to be taught at home/ school / in a different locale/why?

## **Appendix 2**



## APPENDIX 2

### Questions For Student Respondents

#### Questionnaire (PQA) for Pre-entry Information

1a Please read aloud the title of this questionnaire and the words in this question.

1b Circle the length of time you attended primary school.  
1yr            2yrs            3yrs            4yrs            5yrs  
6yrs            7yrs            8yrs

1c Circle the length of time you attended a learning centre.  
1yr            2yrs            3yrs            4yrs            5yrs  
6yrs            7yr            8yrs

1d Circle the length of time you attended secondary school.  
1yr            2yrs            3yrs            4yrs            5yrs  
6yrs            7yrs            8yrs

2 Circle the letters you can name.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

3 Write your name.....

4 Tick the description that fits your present situation.  
(i) employed            (iii) self-employed  
(ii) not employed            (iv) was never employed

If your answer was (iv) go to 5b.

5a What work do you do?.....  
.....

5b What work would you like to do?.....

6a Tick the answer that best suits your situation.

How did you learn to do your job?

(i) by yourself through trial and error

(ii) formal training

(iii) by looking at how some did it

(iv) someone showed you how to do it

6b Circle the word that comes closest to describing your experience of learning to do this job.

difficult    so so    fairly easy    easy

7a Have you ever taught an adult to do anything?

Yes    No

7b Think of one thing and say what it was.

.....  
7c Which of the following most nearly describes how you taught them?

- (1) told them how to do it
- (ii) showed them how to do it
- (iii) helped them to do it
- (iv) any other suggestions

7d Circle the word that best describes how the experience was for you.  
difficult    so so    fairly easy    easy

8a Did the person learn to do it?  
well    not so well    not at all

8b What do you think was the reason for that?

.....  
9a Have you ever taught yourself to do anything?  
Yes    No

9b Think of one thing and say what it was.

9c Did you find it  
difficult    so so    fairly easy    easy

10a. Do you think there is a difference between teaching somebody something and explaining to somebody how to do something?  
Yes    No

10b. Give a reason for your answer.

.....  
11a What do you think makes it easy/hard for a teacher to teach a



.....  
.....  
15a                   Where would you like your classes to be held?  
                          (i) In a class room  
                          (ii) At your house  
                          (iii) At the teacher's house  
                          (iv) Say where.....

15b                   Why would you make that choice?  
.....  
.....

16a                   How would you prefer to be taught?  
                          (i) In a small group of no more than 10  
                          (ii) In a group with more than 10  
                          (iii) Just yourself and the teacher  
                          (iv) It does not matter

16b                   Why do you prefer that option?  
.....  
.....

This questionnaire is useless if the information cannot be used to help other adults who want to attend literacy classes. In order for me to be able to analyse it properly, I need you to supply the following information. I assure you that this, and all the information which you have given so far, will be kept in the strictest confidence. None of it will be given to anyone or used in any way to reveal your identity without your permission.

17                   Are you male or female?   Circle one.

18                   Please give your date of birth.....

19                   Which parish do you live in?.....

20                   Which parish do you work in?.....

## **Appendix 2.1**

## APPENDIX 2.1

### Rationale for questions 1a-20, Questionnaire (PQA).

- 1a Can the respondent read enough to fill out the questionnaire alone or will s/he need help?
- 1b-d How much formal education did s/he have?
- 2-3 What is the extent of the respondent's lack of basic reading and writing skills?
- 4-5a Student's employment status. Does it conform to that usually posited for illiterate persons
- 5b Student's expectations. To what extent might they be motivating factors in the his/her decision to attend literacy classes?
- 6a-b Available learning strategies.
- 7a-d Student's ability to adopt the teacher's role
- 8a-b Tendency to assess outcomes/situations with an attitude of blame others or one of self accountability.
- 9a-c Student's tendency to learn from feedback and own efforts.
- 10a-b Student's notion of what constitutes teaching. Is it restricted to school or does it extend into other areas of life.
- 11a-b Student's beliefs about what constitutes (i) the student/teacher relationship and (ii) what learning to read and write entails.
- 12a-d Student's beliefs about own ability and personality
- 13a-14b Student's possible bias towards age/gender.
- 15a-16b Student's preference for a particular teaching environment.
- 17 Pertinent to 13a-b
- 18 (i) To determine the groups which have responded most to the literacy campaign and (ii) pertinent to 14a-b
- 19-20 To determine which factors influenced students' choice of centre

## Appendix 2.2

**APPENDIX 2.2**

**Adult Literacy Students' (ALS) Responses to Pilot Questionnaire (PQA)  
Charted According to Individual Questions**

**Five students responded to each pilot questionnaire**

**Questions 1-6b**

<b>ID PA</b>	<b>Q1 ALS' schooling</b>	<b>Q2 does ALS know ABC + yes - no</b>  <b>Q3 can ALS write own name</b>	<b>Q4 ALS' employment status</b>  <b>Q5a type of job</b>  <b>Q5b job ALS really wants</b>	<b>Q6a how did ALS learn to do job</b>  <b>Q6b how easy/ hard was it to learn</b>
<b>PA1</b>	<b>primary:6 yrs secondary: 6yrs</b>	<b>+ +</b>	<b>1. employed 2. machine operator 3. secretary</b>	<b>1. it was demonstrated 2. easy</b>
<b>PA2</b>	<b>primary: 5 yrs secondary:2 yrs</b>	<b>+ +</b>	<b>1. employed 2. messenger 3. -</b>	<b>1. it was demonstrated 2. easy</b>
<b>PA3</b>	<b>primary: 6 yrs secondary: 4 yrs</b>	<b>+ +</b>	<b>1. employed 2. maid 3. -</b>	<b>1. it was demonstrated 2. easy</b>
<b>PA4</b>	<b>primary: 8 yrs secondary: 0</b>	<b>+ +</b>	<b>1. employed 2. packer 3. -</b>	<b>1. it was demonstrated 2. fairly easy</b>
<b>PA5</b>	<b>primary: 5 yrs secondary: 0</b>	<b>+ +</b>	<b>1. employed 2. maid 3. -</b>	<b>1. trial and error 2. easy</b>



Questions 7a-9c:

Id PA	Q7a has ALS taught another adult  Q7b what was taught	Q7c how did ALS teach  Q7d how easy/ hard was it to teach	Q8a how well did the person learn  Q8b ALS' explanation	Q9a has ALS taught self anything  Q9b what was taught  Q9c how easy/ hard was it
PA1	1. yes 2. bake	1. showed and helped 2. easy	1. well 2. person listened and watched carefully	1. yes 2. to plait own hair 3. easy
PA2	1. yes 2. bake	1. told person what to do 2. fairly easy	1. not so well 2. person did not understand	1. yes 2. drive 3. so so
PA3	1. yes 2. weave	1. told, showed and helped the person 2. hard	1. well 2. person kept at it five days a week	1. yes 2. bake 3. easy
PA4	1. yes 2. knit	1. showed the person 2. so so	1. well 2. person was eager to do it	1. yes 2. bake black cake 2. easy
PA5	1. yes 2. bone fish	1. showed the person 2. so so	1. not so well 2. person did bot pay attention	1. yes 2. write 3. so so

Questions 10a-12d

Id PA	Q10a difference between teaching and explaining	Q11a what can make it easy/hard to teach a child to read	Q11b what can make it easy/hard to teach a child to write	Q12a will it be easier harder for ALS to learn now than when they were at school  Q12b ALS' explanation	Q12c how easy/ hard will it be for someone to teach ALS to read & write  Q12d ALS' explana- tion
PA1	explaining includes showing  teaching is just telling	easy: if you already had an idea of reading  hard: if you did not know how to read	hard: some people learn more quickly than others; the teacher have to pay more attention to slow learners	1. easier 2. I can read and write already	1. easier 2. I have been to school and have more understand- ing
PA2	explaining involves listening  teaching involves doing	teacher can teach children to read by telling them	teacher can teach children to write by show-ing them	1. easier 2. I take time from work and has an opportunity	1. easier 2. I have more understanding; tutor knows that I need an opportunity at this time
PA3	explaining takes a shorter time than teaching	hard if the child does not know the words	easy if the child can write some letters	1. easier 2. I am older and had a former education	1. easier 2. she takes her time to explain and make sure I understand
PA4	explaining is learning teaching is doing	"	hard if the tutor has to show the child how to hold the pencil and form letters	1. easier 2. I have more under-standing	1. easier 2. I want to reach a goal
PA5	teaching requires patience	hard because it takes a lot of patience	n.r.	1. harder 2. I have many other things to think about	1. harder 2. an adult would be more difficult

Questions 13a-20

Id PA	Q13a age group ALS prefers for tutor  Q13b reason	Q14a gender of tutor which ALS prefers  Q14b reasons	Q15a where ALS prefers classes to be held  Q15b reasons	Q16a group size which ALS prefers  Q61b reasons	Q17 ALS' gender  Q18 ALS' age	Q19 parish where ALS lives  Q20 parish where ALS works
PA1	1. older than  2. will have more experience	1.either  2. a teacher is a teacher	1. class room  2. I would feel more at ease with other people	1. not more than ten  2. tutor will be able to pay more attention to every one	F  1961: 30 yrs	St. Mich. St. Mich.
PA2	1. older than self  2. will have more experience	1.either  2. I came to learn it does not matter	1. class room  2. it is a place to learn and meet people	1. not more than ten  2. tutor will have more time for you and you will learn more	M  1966: 25 yrs	St. John St. Mich.
PA3	1. older than self  2.will be more patient tolerant and experienced	1.either  2.I can learn with any	1. class room  2. easy to reach and surroundings will be more comfortable	1.doesn't matter  2. we can help each other regardless of number	F  1958: 41 yrs	St. Mich. St. Mich.
PA4	1. older than self  2. will be more patient& exp-orient	1.either  2. I can work with any person	1. class room  2. makes you feel like you are really learning & you meet people	1. more than ten  2. you get more attention	F  1957: 34 yrs	St. Thomas St. Thomas
PA5	1. older than self  2. will be more experienced	1.either  2. does not matter	1. class room  2. it will be private	1. not more than ten  2. to get better attention	F  1955: 37 yrs	St. Mich. St. Mich.

**Appendix 3.**

**APPENDIX 3.**

**Questions For Student Respondents**

**Questionnaire (PQB) for Entry Information**

1a            How did you find out about these classes?

.....

1b            If you can remember when you first heard about literacy classes being offered, please say what you thought about such classes then.

.....  
.....

1c            Say whether or not you feel the same way about these classes now.

.....  
.....

2a            If you have attended literacy classes before say when you started going from.

.....

2b            How long did you manage to go for?

.....

2c            What made you stop going?

.....  
.....

2d            If this is your first literacy class say why you never attended such classes before.

.....  
.....

3a            If you had second thoughts this time say what those thoughts were.

.....  
.....

3c            What finally made you decide to attend literacy classes now?

.....

.....  
4a Are these the only classes that you know of this time?  
Yes No

If your answer to 4a is Yes, go on to 5a.

4a What made you decide not to go to classes elsewhere?

.....  
.....

4b Why did you decide to come to these particular classes

.....  
.....

5a Does any of your friends know that you are attending literacy classes?  
Yes No

If your answer to 5a is No, go to 6a.

5b How did they find out?

.....  
.....

5c How did they react when they found out?

.....  
.....

5d What did you think about their reaction?

.....  
.....

6a Does anyone in your family know that you are attending these classes?  
Yes No

If your answer to 6a is No, go to 7.

6b How did they find out?

.....  
.....

6c How did they react when they found out?

.....  
.....  
6d            What did you think about their reaction.  
.....

7a            Do you intend to tell anyone that you are attending literacy classes?  
Yes      No

7b            Why have you made that decision?  
.....  
.....

Tick the option that best expresses your opinion.

8            Who do you think should decide what you are taught at these    classes?  
(i) the teacher  
(ii) you  
(iii) the Ministry of Education  
(iv) if none of these, give your own suggestion.

Write true or false next to the appropriate statements:

9a            People who can read and write well  
(i) always get the jobs they want  
(ii) sometimes get the jobs they want  
(iii) do not take jobs that they do not like  
(iv) never have to take jobs they do not like  
(v) can get the jobs they want if.....  
.....  
.....

9b            People who cannot read and write well  
(i) never get the jobs they want  
(ii) sometimes get the jobs they want  
(iii) do not take jobs that they do not like  
(iv) always have to take jobs they do not like  
(v) can get the jobs they want if.....  
.....  
.....

10a           What job do you really want?  
.....  
.....

- 10b Will be easier for you to get it if you can read and write better?  
Yes No
- 10c Why do you think so?
- 11 Fill in the spaces:  
By the end of this course, I would like to be able to  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 12a Do you think that it is important for everybody in Barbados to be able to  
read? Yes No
- 12b Why do you think so?  
.....  
.....
- 12c Is it important for everybody in Barbados to be able to write?  
Yes No
- 12d Why do you think so?  
.....  
.....
- 13a Why do you want to be able to read better?  
.....  
.....
- 13b Why do you want to be able to write better?  
.....  
.....
- 14a Do you wish you could learn to do these things without having to attend  
classes? Yes No
- 14b What makes you feel that way?  
.....  
.....  
.....



Tick the answer that best expresses your feelings.

15a How much do you think your life will change when you can read and write better.

- (i) a little
- (ii) not very much
- (iii) very much
- (iv) not at all

15b Why do you think so?

.....  
.....

16 In what ways do you expect your dealings with any of the following people to change when you can read and write better?

(i) your friends .....

.....

(ii) your family.....

.....

(iii) your workmates.....

.....

(iv) your neighbours.....

.....

17 When you can read and write better how different do you expect each of the following to be for you?

(i) church .....

.....

.....

(ii) shopping .....

.....

.....

(iii) travelling .....

.....

.....

(iv) getting news.....

.....

(v) entertainment.....

.....

(vi) making decisions.....

.....

(v) contributing to discussions.....

.....

18a Do you think you will feel any different about yourself when you can read and write better? Yes No

18b Why do you think so?

19a Do you think that your being able to read and write has any thing to do with Barbados being a developed or undeveloped country?  
Yes No

19b Why do you say so?

.....

Put true or false next to the options that best express your opinion.

20a The Government's education plans are for  
(i) adults who want to learn to read and write  
(ii) the physically disabled  
(iii) university students  
(iv) the mentally disabled  
(v) children who have dropped out of school  
(vi) adults who want to go back to school  
(vii) people who never went to school  
(viii) school children

20b Why do you think the Government does not have any education plans for  
.....  
.....

21 Why do you think you are not able to read and write as well as you would like to ?.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix 3.1.**

## APPENDIX 3.1

### Rationale for questions 1a-21. Questionnaire (PQB).

- 1a-4b To what extent is the student's decision to attend classes a response to the national campaign or to personal need?
- 5a-7b What are some of the prevailing attitudes about illiteracy?
- 8 To what extent do students expect their learning to be determined by others?
- 9a-10c Student's concept of the relationship between literacy and employment/job satisfaction
- 11 (i) Extension of 8 above.  
(ii) Possible extension to 3c above.
- 12a-13b Student's ideas about the importance of literacy - possible extension to 11 above.
- 14a-b To what extent does the student really want to attend classes?
- 15a-18b To what extent does the student expect drastic life changes as a result of his/her learning to read and write better.
- 19a-20b Is the student aware of Government's alignment of literacy and national development?
- 21 To what does the student attribute his/her inability to read and write?

## **Appendix 3.2**

## APPENDIX 3.2

### Adult Literacy Students' Responses to Pilot Questionnaire (PQB) Charted According to Individual Questions

#### Questions 1a-4c

Id PB	Q1a how ALS found out about the literacy classes  Q1b what ALS thought of such classes then  Q1c what ALS think of them now	Q2a did ALS attend literacy classes before  Q2b for how long  Q2c why ALS stopped  Q2d why ALS never went to literacy classes	Q3a did ALS have second thoughts about attending  Q3b why ALS decided to attend classes	Q4a did ALS know of other classes  Q4b why ALS did not go to another class  Q4c why ALS decided to come to this class
PB1	1. radio 2. it would be helpful and uplifting 3. same	1. no 2. - 3. - 4. none was available	1. none 2. I knew that I needed help	1. no 2. n.r. 3. was more suitable; for self betterment
PB2	1. a friend 2. nice 3. same	1. no 2. - 3. - 4. never heard of them	1. none 2. wanted to learn to read better	1. no 2. n.r. 3. n.r.
PB3	1. radio 2. nice; a way to improve self 3. same	1. no 2. - 3. - 4. did not know of them	1. none 2. wanted to improve myself	1. no 2. n.r. 3. n.r.
PB4	1. radio 2. an opportunity 3. feel much better about them now	1. no 2. - 3. - 4. did not know of them	1. none 2. wanted to get in some more reading and wanted something to do in the evening after work	1. yes 2. n.r. 3. n.r.
PB5	1. radio 2. good way to improve reading and writing which were not good	1. no 2. - 3. - 4. did not know of them	1. none 2. wanted to improve reading and writing to be better at work	1. no 2. n.r. 3. n.r.

Questions 5a-7b

Id PB	Q5a do ALS' friends know of their going to class  Q5b how they found out	Q5c reactions of ALS' friends  Q5d what ALS thought of their reaction	Q6a do ALS' family know of their going to class  Q6b how they found out	Q6c reaction of ALS' family  Q6d what ALS thought of their reaction	Q7a will ALS tell anyone if they have not done so yet  Q7b reasons why/ why not
PB1	1. no 2. -	1. nr 2. -	1. nr 2. -	1. nr 2. -	1. no 2. I did not tell them when the fees were paid so why tell them at all
PB2	1. yes 2. told by ALS	1. they were encouraging 2. felt good	1. yes 2. told by ALS	1. they were glad 2. felt happy	1. yes 2. it will help them
Pb3	1. yes 2. told by ALS	1. they were encouraging 2. felt great	1. yes 2. told by ALS	1. happy for ALS 2. felt happy	1. yes 2. the class will help them
PB4	1. no 2. -	1. nr 2. nr	1. yes 2. they encouraged ALS to find out about the class	1. they were happy 2. nr	1. yes 2. nr
PB5	1. no 2. -	1. nr 2. nr	1. yes 2. told by ALS	1. they gave sup-port 2. felt pleased	1. yes 2. the classes have been helpful

Questions 8-10c

Id PB	Q8 who should decide what is taught: 1. tutor 2. ALS 3. Ministry of Educa-tion 4. other	Q9a people who can read and write 1. always get the jobs they want 2. sometimes get the jobs they want 3. do not take jobs they dislike 4. never have to take jobs they dislike 5. can get the jobs they want if... t true/ f false	Q9b people who can't read or write 1. never get the jobs they want 2. sometimes get the jobs they want 3. do not take jobs they dislike 4. always have to take jobs they dislike 5. can get the jobs they want if...	Q10a the job ALS really wants  Q10b will being literate make it easier to get this job  Q10c explanation
PB1	4. tutor and ALS	f,t,t,f,	nr	1. policeman (very badly too) 2. yes 3. job involves reading & writing
PB2	4. tutor and ALS	f,t,f,t,	t,t,f,f,	1. driver 2. yes 3. will be able to read signs
PB3	4. tutor and ALS	f,t,t,f,	t,t,f,f,	1. priest 2. read / understand the Bible & other books
PB4	4. tutor and ALS	f,t,t,f,	t,t,f,t,	1. servant 2. yes 3. more comfortable reading & writing
PB5	1.	f,t,t,t,	f,t,t,t,	1. present job 2. yes 3. the job requires a lot of writing



Questions 11-14b

Id PB	Q11 by the end of the course ALS should be able to :	Q12a should all Barbadians be able to read  Q12b why	Q12c should all Barbadians be able to write  Q12d why	Q13a why ALS want to read  Q13b why ALS want to write	Q14a would ALS want to learn to read and write without having to come to class  Q14b ALS' reasons
PB1	read and write better	1. yes 2. every one is an asset; the better educated they are the better for Barbados	1. yes 2. for the betterment of self and country	1. to improve self 2. to write better	1. no 2. I enjoy the classroom feeling
PB2	read and write well	1. yes 2. they will be able to think better	1. yes 2. to read books	1. to improve self 2. so others can understand	1. yes 2. I will get help here
PB3	read and write well	1. yes 2. there is a lot of information for them to understand and use	1. yes 2. to fill out forms and write to family	1. read books and understand things for myself 2. for others to understand what I write	1. no 2. in addition to reading and writing you make friends
PB4	read and spell better	1. yes 2. it is important	1. yes 2. they would be able to do things for themselves	1. everything is reading 2. every where you go you have to sign things	1. no 2. I am benefit- ing from this class
Pb5	read, write and spell well	1. yes 2. it is a skill everybody should have	1. yes 2. nr	1. read to my children 2. write to friends	1. no 2. this is the only way I know

Questions 15a-18b

ID PB	Q15a how much does ALS expect literacy to change their lives  Q15b why	Q16 changes ALS expect from 1. friends 2. family 3. work mates 4. neighbours	Q17 changes ALS expect in 1. church 2. shopping 3. travel 4. getting news 5. entertainment 6. making decisions 7. contributing to discussions	Q18 does ALS expect to feel different about self when they become literate  Q18b ALS' reasons
PB1	1. very much 2. would be able to improve self	1-4. does not expect any changes	1. nr 2. does not shop 3. as usual 4. a better understanding 5. as usual 6. as usual 7. more intellectual	1. yes 2. I would able to read and write better
PB2	1. very much 2. will be able to read	1-4. no change	1. no change 2. labels 3. signs 4. newspapers 5. no change 6. no change 7. new ideas	1. yes 2. I would have improved self
PB3	1. very much 2. will be able to read for self	1. no change 2. will help children with home work 3. will have discussions 4. no change	1. read Bible better 2. write list & read labels 3. fill out documents 4. newspaper 5. no change 6. see things in a different light 7. handle self better	1. yes 2. will have a different outlook on life
PB4	1. very much 2. you get to write more each day and under- stand more more	1. communicate with them better 2. will help children with homework 3. put up a stronger defence 4. no change	1. sing from hymnal and read e Bible 2. shop better 3. travel unassisted 4. newspaper 5. my decisions would be more thought out 6. have more to talk about	1. yes 2. because I would be able to read and write
PB5	1. very much 2. can relate to friends better	1. write to them 2. read to family assist children with homework 3. relate to them better 4. read together	1. read the Bible 2. labels 3. signs and maps 4. newspaper 5. titles 6. better decisions 7. better discussions	1. yes 2. will be able to read and write everything

Questions 19a-21

Id PB	Q19a is ALS' literacy related to Barbados' development  Q19b ALS' explanation	Q20a government's education plans are for  1. adults who want to learn to read and write 2. the physically disabled 3. university students 4. the mentally disabled 5. children who have dropped out of school 6. adults who want to go back to school 7. people who never went to school 8. school children  t = true/ f = false Q20b ALS' explanation of those not planned for	Q21 why ALS cannot read and write as well as they would like to
PB1	1. yes 2. Barbados is the people and the people is Barbados	t,t,t,t,f,f,f,t,  lack of money	n.a. (ALS completed the questionnaire unaided)
PB2	1. yes 2. it will be better for the country	t,t,t,t,f,f,f,t,  nr	did not attend school often
PB3	nr	nr	nr
PB4	1. yes 2. being a developed country everybody should be able to take part	t,t,t,t,f,f,f,t,  nr	have not been writing or reading since leaving school
PB5	1. yes 2. if you cannot read and write you are not much help to the country	-, -, t, -, t, t, t, t,  nr	dropped out of school early

**Appendix 4.**

**APPENDIX 4**

**Questions For Student Respondents**

**Questionnaire (PQC) for On-course Information**

1a How similar is this experience to the one you had at school?

.....  
.....

1b How different is this experience from the one you had at school?

.....  
.....

2a What do you like/do not like about each of the following:

(i) the way the teacher makes you feel when you make a mistake

(ii) the arrangement of the classroom.....

(iii) the way the teacher makes you feel when s/he explains things to you ..... n e w

(iv) discussing other matters in class that have nothing to do with reading and writing.....

3a Does your tutor talk the same way you do?

3b What makes you say that?

.....  
.....

Tick the option which best suits your situation.

3c The difference between the way you speak and the way your tutor speaks makes it difficult for you to understand what the teacher says

(i) sometimes....

(ii) most of the time.....

(iii) at first but you understand when s/he repeats it....

(iv) if none of these applies to you, complete the next question (3d)

3d The way the tutor speaks .....

.....

4a Would you say that the way you talk is as good as the way the teacher talks? YES NO

4b What makes you say so?

.....  
.....

5a Which of the following labels would you use to describe the way the teacher talks.  
Bajan English Broken English  
Barbadian English

5b Why would you choose that one?

.....  
.....

5c Which of the following labels would you use to describe the way you speak?  
English Bajan Barbadian English  
Broken English

5d Why would you choose that one?

.....  
.....

6a If you had your own way, what would you change about these classes?

.....  
.....

6b Why would you make these changes?

.....  
.....

7a Is there anything you wish you had known before you joined the class?  
Yes No

7b What is it?

.....  
.....

7c If you had known this how do you think that would have made the experience different for you?

.....  
.....

8a Is there anything which is giving you more problems than you expected?  
Yes No

8b What is it?

.....  
.....

8c What do you think is causing this?

.....

8d Who do you think can help you more in dealing with this?  
(i) the teacher  
(ii) yourself

8e Why do you think so?

.....

9a What can you do now that you could not do when you first came to the class?

.....

10a How long have you been attending the classes?

.....

10b How many classes have you been unable to attend?

.....

11a Would you like to continue in the next set of classes?  
Yes No

11b What are your main reasons for saying so?

.....

11c Say whether there is anything which you think might stop you from attending literacy classes

## **Appendix 4.1**



## APPENDIX 4.1

### Rationale for questions 1a-11. Questionnaire (PQC).

- 1 To what extent does the student relate the current learning event to his/her school experience?
- 2 How do students feel about the teacher/student relationship?
- 3a-5d Does the student see language as a problem?
- 6a-b What elements of provision do the students think are missing?
- 7a-c What elements of preparation do the students consider to be lacking?
- 8a-e (i) What areas of content are most prolematic to  
students?  
(ii) What are the Students beliefs about their own abilities and the amount of  
autonomy they have over their own learning.
- 9 Student's self assessment
- 10a-b Student's attendance
- 11a-b Student's commitment to continuning  
the learning process.
- 11c What stumbling blocks exist beyond the control of the students?

## Appendix 4.2

## APPENDIX 4.2

### Adult Literacy Students' Responses to Pilot Questionnaire (PQC) Charted According to Individual Questions

Seven students responded to this questionnaire

Questions 1a-3d

Id PC	Q1a similarity between ALS' experience of school and this literacy class	Q1b differ-ence between ALS' experienceof school and this literacy class	Q2 does ALS like/ dislike 1.tutor's response to ALS' mistakes 2. layout of class room 3. how ALS feel about how the tutor explains things to them 4.discussing issues in class besides reading & writing	Q3a does ALS and tutor talk alike  Q3b ALS' explanation	Q3c does ALS understand tutor's language 1. sometimes 2. most times 3. only after tutor repeats  Q3d the way the tutor speaks.. ...
PC1	left school too long to remember	aware as an adult of what life is like when you can't read or write	1. nr 2. like 3. like 4. like	1. no 2. she speaks better English	1-4. nr  ...I understand how my tutor speaks
PC2	some of the work is similar	as adults we are able to deal with our own mistakes	1-4. nr	1. no 2. tutor always corrects our broken English	1-4. nr  ...the tutor speaks English
PC3	nr	classroom environment is relaxed; the class progresses at the rate of the slowest	1-4. nr	1. no 2. tutor uses proper grammar at all times	1, 3,
PC4	nr	we are given individual attention	1-4. nr	1. no	nr
PC5	it is like starting from stage one	this experience has caused me to have more self confidence when I have to speak	1-4. nr	1. no 2. tutor knows when to put his words in the right form	3,

PC6	the setting of the class	friendlier experience there is no strap on desk or over the tutor's shoulder	1-4. nr	1. no 2. Standard English	1,
PC7	the work: types of sentences, parts of speech, letter writing & poetry	at school conditions were stricter; lit. class challenges ALS to remember what was learnt at school	1. he corrects you and you don't feel embarrassed 2. like 3. like 4. appreciates it sometimes if it is amusing	1. no 2. tutor speaks Standard English most of the time and I don't; .I guess that is the way it is supposed to be ; .I am not comfortable; .I don't practise speaking English	3,

Questions 4a-7c

Id PC	Q4a is ALS' way of talking as good as the tutor's  Q4b why	Q5a ALS' label for their tutor's way of talking  Q5b ALS' explanation	Q5c ALS' label for their way of talking  Q5b ALS' explanation	Q6a what would ALS want to change about the classes  Q6b why	Q7a is there anything that ALS would have liked to know before coming to class  Q7b what  Q7c why
PC1	1. no 2. tutor is educated; I am not	1. English 2. nr	1. Broken English 2. I do not know the right English; I am now learning	nr	nr
PC2	nr	1. English 2. tutor teaches English and not broken English	1. Broken English 2. choice based on the corrections in ALS' work	1. add days and hours 2. would improve our studies	1. yes 2. more subjects 3. if you fail in one you might gain in the next
PC3	1. no 2. tutor has a command of English and I don't	1. Barbadian English 2. tutor pronounces some of words in a Barbadian slang	1. Broken English 2. I do not have a good command of English	1. the overall structure 2. there are no special goals set out to aim at	nr
PC4	1. no 2. I know what I want to say but I cannot express myself like the teacher	1. English 2. that is the one the tutor instills in us to speak	1. Barbadian English 2. it is easy for me to express my self to people	1. the whole arrangement of how things are 2. the present one does not make sense	1. yes 2. I wish I knew what we were working towards
PC5	1. yes 2. tutor puts his words over in the best way he knows	1. Barbadian English 2. nr	1. English 2. nr	1. we need a set standard of our classes 2. we would be able to look back at the end of the term and see what we have achieved	1. yes 2. that there was a set standard

<b>PC6</b>	<b>1. no 2. lack of Standard English</b>	<b>1. English 2. nr</b>	<b>1. Barbadian English 2. it has a mixture of standard English and dialect</b>	<b>1. ALS need to put more effort into studies so that tutor can see where they are going</b>	<b>nr</b>
<b>PC7</b>	<b>1. yes 2. tutor speaks so that ALS can understand</b>	<b>1. Barbadian English 2. nr</b>	<b>1. Bajan</b>	<b>1. put slow students in a different class; get ALS close to O'level standard 2. want class to go according to the two changes describes above</b>	<b>1. yes 2. there are no other subjects</b>

Questions 8a-11c

Id PC	Q8a does ALS have any specific problem  Q8b what  Q8c why ALS think is the cause	Q8d who can help more with the problem 1. tutor 2. ALS  Q8e why	Q9 what can ALS do now since attending the literacy class	Q10a how long has ALS been attending classes  Q10b how many classes has ALS missed	Q11a would ALS want to continue next session  Q11b why  Q11c what could stop ALS from attending
PC1	1. yes 2. cannot spell or do present and past tenses 3. I am a slow learn- er; I was always a 'c' at school	1. tutor 2. she knows what work I can do	1. I write a lot better; . I read o.k.; . I try to speak well	1. nr 2. nr	1. yes 2. I want to learn and understand what I read 3. I love the class but something wants looking into; ...there is a problem somewhere
PC2	1. yes 2. spelling and sound alike words 3. time and revising	1. self 2. it takes more time to deal with the work	1. my reading was not up to standard but it has improved	1. 3 yrs 2. one	1. yes 2. to improve my education 3. if my health fails
PC3	1. yes 2. retaining what I have been taught 3. mental disability	1. self 2. nr	nr	nr	1. yes 2. limitation in using proper English hinders ALS from achieving life goals
PC4	1. yes 2. exercises with nouns and verbs 3. concept of 'person'	1. self 2. nr	nr	nr	nr
PC5	1. yes 2. spelling 3. did not spend enough time	1. tutor 2. nr	nr	1. 1yr & 3mths	1. yes 2. to learn more

PC6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. yes</li> <li>2. inconsistent with spelling</li> <li>3. lack of concentration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. self</li> <li>2. must read more; I become sleepy when I begin to read</li> </ul>	nr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1yr &amp; 5 mths</li> <li>2. four</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. yes</li> <li>2. have not reached far enough to stop</li> <li>3. getting the fees</li> </ul>
PC7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no</li> </ul>	nr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. memory has been refreshed; aware of having wasted time at school and need to start over</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3mths</li> <li>2. two</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. yes</li> <li>2. to see the differences in the exercises and note if they are progressing</li> <li>3. the repeating of exercises for ALS who are late or were absent; the slow ones should be in a different class</li> </ul>



## **Appendix 5**

**APPENDIX 5**  
**Community-based Students' Questionnaire (CQ)**

Location of Class:

1 If you can read these questions and complete this questionnaire by yourself, please circle the appropriate word below. YES NO

2 How did you find out about these classes?  
.....  
.....

3 If you have attended adult literacy classes before, answer the following questions:  
(i) How long did you attend? .....  
(ii) When did you stop going? .....  
(iii) What made you stop going? .....

4 If this is the first time you are attending a literacy class, say why you did not attend such a class before.  
.....  
.....

5 If there was any particular incident or experience that forced you to attend this class say what it was.  
.....  
.....

6(a) Are you aware of any other literacy classes being offered now? Circle your answer. YES NO

(b) If your answer to 6a was YES, list the reasons why you decided to come to this particular centre.  
.....  
.....

7(a) If you have told friends that you are attending these classes, say what their reactions have been.  
.....  
.....

(b) Tick the words below that best express how you felt about their reactions.  
(i) pleased (ii) angry  
(iii) hurt (v) embarrassed

8(a) If you have told anyone in your family about these classes say what their reactions have been.

.....

(b) Tick the words that best express how you felt about their reactions.

- (i) pleased
- (ii) angry
- (iii) hurt
- (iv) embarrassed

9 What reactions did you really expect to get from your (i) friends .....

..... (ii) family .....

.....

10(a) If you have not told anyone about the classes yet, do you intend to? Circle the appropriate word. YES NO

(b) Why have you made that decision? .....

.....

11(a) Who do you think should have the final word on what you are taught at these classes? Tick the option that best expresses your opinion.

- (i) the teacher
- (ii) you, the student
- (iii) the Ministry of Education
- (iv) you and the teacher

(b) Give reasons for your answer .....

.....

12(a) Tick the group that you would prefer to be taught in.

- (i) a group of fewer than ten people
- (ii) a group of more than ten people
- (iii) just you and the teacher
- (iv) If none of these appeal to you give the specific size that you prefer. group

(b) Why did you make that choice? .....

.....

- 13(a) Age might not matter to you, but if you had a choice, which group would you prefer your teacher to be in ?  
 (i) younger than you  
 (ii) older than you  
 (iii) in the same age group as you
- (b) Why would you prefer that group? .....
- .....
- 14(a) Would you prefer your teacher to be  
 (i) male  
 (ii) female
- (b) Why would did you make that choice? .....
- .....
- 15(a) Tick the option which best expresses where you would prefer your classes to be held. If none of these appeals to you give your own suggestion at (v) below.
- (i) at your home  
 (ii) at the teacher's home  
 (iii) in a class room  
 (iv) in a place not associated with school e.g. a park  
 (v) .....
- .....
- (b) Why did you make this choice? .....
- .....
- 16 In the space below write F if you are female and M if you are male. ....
- 17 Give your date of birth in the following order:  
 day.....month .....year .....
- 18 In which parish do you live? .....
- 19 In which parish do you work? .....
- 20 Tick the option that best describes your present job situation
- (i) government employed  
 (ii) private employed  
 (iii) self employed  
 (iv) not employed now  
 (v) was never employed

21(a) If you ticked (i), (ii), (iii), say what work you do.  
.....

(b) How long have you been doing this job?.....

(c) If you ticked (iv), say what work you used to do. ....  
.....

(d) For how long did you do this work? .....  
22 Tick the option which best describes how you learnt to do this job. If none of these relate to your situation, put your own option at (iv).

- (i) Someone demonstrated how to do the tasks involved and you had assistance as you practised.
- (ii) You learnt on the job by trial and error
- (iii) You practiced by yourself without any help until you could do it well.
- (iv) .....

23(a) Regardless of your current job situation, what job do you really want? .....  
.....

(b) Why do you want this particular job?  
.....

(c) List the skills or qualifications which you must have to qualify for this job?  
.....

(d) Put a tick [ ] over each qualification or skill mentioned in (c) above if you already have it.

(e) Put an [X] over the qualification or skill mentioned in (c) which you expect to by attending these classes.

24 What else do you expect to get from these classes?  
.....  
.....

25(a) Circle A for always, S for sometimes or N for never in response to the statements below about **people who can read and write well.**

- (i) They get the jobs they want.                   A   S   N
- (ii) They take jobs that they do not like.   A   S   N                   (iii) They have problems finding work.           A   S   N
- (iv) They do their work very well.           A   S   N

(b) Complete the following statement:  
People who can read and write well will get the jobs they want if .....

- 26(a) Circle **A** for always, **S** for sometimes or **N** for never in response to the statements below about **people who cannot read and write well**.
- (i) They get the jobs they want.           A   S   N
  - (ii) They take jobs that they do not like.   A   S   N
  - (iii) They have problems finding work.    A   S   N
  - (iv) They do their work very well.        A   S   N

(b) Complete the following statement:  
People who cannot read and write well will get the jobs they want if .....

27 How many people do you know who cannot read and write well? Do not include the ones who are attending classes with you. Put the number here .....

28 How have you managed to do your business without any one finding out that you cannot read and write well? .....

- 29 How do expect your dealings with the following to change when you can read and write better?
- (i) friends .....
  - (ii) family .....
  - (iii) workmates .....
  - (iv) neighbours .....

30 How do you expect your performance in any of the following areas to change when you can read and write better?

(i) shopping .....

.....

(ii) travelling .....

(iii) getting information .....

..... (iv) finding ways of entertaining yourself

(v) making decisions .....

.....

(vi) contributing to discussions at home or elsewhere

31 If there are other activities which you think will change for you when you can read and write better, add them here. ....

.....

32(a) Circle YES or NO below to show whether or not you think that your ability to read and write has anything to do with the development of Barbados? YES NO

(b) Try to give a reason for your answer.

33 When did you start these classes? .....

.....

34 What could stop you from coming to classes altogether?

.....

35(a) List the reasons why you cannot read and write as well as you would like to. ....

.....

36 Circle the approximate length of time you attended any of the following schools.

primary: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs 5yrs 6yrs 7yrs

secondary: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs 5yrs 6yrs 7yrs

composite: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs 5yrs 6yrs 7yrs

senior: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs 5yrs 6yrs 7yrs

37 How is the learning experience of these classes different from or similar to the experience you had at school? Use the following topics to help you answer. Feel free to add other areas.

(i) the way the lessons are presented:

.....  
.....

(ii) the relationship between you and the teacher:

.....  
.....  
.....

(iii) the textbooks and other materials you use:

.....  
.....

(iv) the way you relate to your classmates:

.....  
.....

(v) the way the classroom is arranged:

.....  
.....

38 What changes would you like to see take place in these classes?

.....  
.....  
.....

39 How would these changes improve the classes?

.....  
.....

40(a) What did you hate most about school?.

.....  
.....

(b) Why did you feel that way?.....

.....

41(a) What did you like most about school

.....

(b) Why did you feel that way? .....

.....  
.....



42 If you did not try to learn anything since you left school  
go on to question 42. If you did try to learn something give  
the following information:

(i) What did you try to learn? .....

.....

(ii) Where did you go to learn it? .....

.....(iii) How long did you go for?.....

(iv) Did you learn what you intended to? Circle the appropriate word.

YES NO

(v) Say why you did or did not learn it. ....

43 What school did you last attend?.....

.....

44 What class were you in when you left school?

45 How old were you when you left school? .....

46 If you stopped school before you were 16, say what made you stop.

.....

.....

47(a) Would your being an adult make it easier for you to do better these  
classes than you did at school? Circle the appropriate word

YES NO

(b) Why do you think so? .....

.....

.....

48 Circle **A** for **always**, **S** for **sometimes** or **N** for **never** in response to the  
following statements about the language your teachers use in the  
classroom.

(i) The teacher uses Bajan Dialect. A S N

(ii) The teacher uses Standard English. A S N

49(a) Tick the answer that best describes your situation. when the teacher speaks  
standard English it is difficult for you to understand.

(i) sometimes

(ii) most of the time

(iii) all of the time

(b) Tick the option that best explains what makes it difficult for you to  
understand Standard English in class. Add additional information at (iv) below.

(i) the meaning of the words

(ii) the sound of the words

(iii) the way the words are put together.

(iv) .....

50 Complete the following statements to show why you would call yourself an adult.

(i) I am an adult because I have .....

.....

(ii) I am an adult because I am .....

.....

(iii) I am an adult because I know .....

.....

(iv) I became an adult when .....

.....

51 In comparing Bajan Dialect to Standard English, which of the following statements would you make? Tick the options that best express your opinion.

(i) Talking in Bajan is a bad way of talking.

(ii) Bajan is just a different language from English, no better, no worse.

(iii) Bajan is not really a language.

(iv) Speaking in English is always better than speaking in Bajan.

52 If you ticked (i),(ii) or (iv) say why you think English is better than Bajan Dialect.

53(a) If you are not having problems with your lessons go on to question 54. If you are having problems give the following information.

(i) What are the problems? .....

.....

(ii) Why do you think you are having these problems?

.....

.....

iii) What can help you to solve these problems?

.....

54(a) If it is difficult for you to attend classes regularly or if anything is preventing you from benefiting fully from these classes explain here:

.....

.....

.....

55 What would you have liked to know about the classes before you began attending? .....

.....

.....

56 How would this information have helped you?

.....

57(a) Name one thing which you have taught another adult.

(b) Circle the word which best describes how the experience was for you.

easy                                      not too easy                                      hard

(c) Try to explain why it was that way. ....

58(a) Name one important thing which you have taught yourself.

(b) Circle the option which best describes how the experience was for you.

easy                                      not too easy                                      hard

(c) Try to explain why it was that way. ....

59 How does your learning to read and write differ from your learning to do what you did? .....

60 What is the difference between teaching someone to do something and teaching yourself to do the same thing? .....

61 Circle T for true or F for false in response to the following statements about the government's education plans. Besides school children, the government provides education for

(i) adults who want to learn to read and write better	T	F
(ii) the physically and mentally disabled	T	F
(iii) adults who never went to school	T	F
(iv) adults who want to study to qualify for better employment	T	F

62 How does your inability to read and write as well as you would like to make you feel about yourself? .....

63(a) Do you think that people who can read and write better than you are better people than you? Circle the appropriate word. YES No

(b) Give a reason for your answer.....

64 List the things you have learnt to do as a result of attending these classes.

65(a) List those things which you still cannot do.

Why do you think you have not been able to learn these skills yet?

## Appendix 5.1

APPENDIX 5.1

Summary of Responses From Community-based Students to Questionnaire CQ

Q1 who did quest. self/other	Q2 how learners heard of class	Q3 previous classes?	Q4 why not?
other (11) self (4)	friend (4) relative (4) radio (4) t.v. (1) newspaper (1) employer (1)	0/15	did not know 0/15

Q5 why attend?	Q6a aware of other provision now	Q6b why stay with this one?
1. read letters 2. children's homework 3. cope with current work 4. take written exam 5. correct deficiency 6. reaction to abuse 7. after promotion	yes 6 no 7	1. convenient for bus 2. away from home

Q7a told friends	Q7b friends' reaction	Q7c effect on learner	Q8a told family
yes (13) no (2)	positive (8) negative (4) neutral (1)	pleased (7) ambivalent (5) embarrassed (1)	yes (15)

Q8b family's reaction	Q8c effect on learner	Q9a/b expected reactions
positive (13) negative (1) neutral (1)	pleased (12) ambivalent (2)	1. laughter 2. encouragement 3. support

Q10a plan to tell others?	Q10b why not?	Q10c why?
no (3) yes (12)	protect image	1. share benefits 2. get help 3. christian testimony

Q11a/b  
 should have autonomy  
 over provision?/ why

- 1. government (2)            - thankful for opportunity
- 2. teacher (7)                } teacher knows best
- 3. student & teacher (6) } can monitor/eval progress

Q12a  
 preference  
 class size

Q12b  
 why

- fewer than ten (4) - individual attention
- students help each other
- more than ten (10) - " " "
- no preference (1) - if every one gets attention

Q13a  
 teacher's age  
 preference

Q13b            (\*\*page missing from 1 quest  
 why?            13a - 19)

- no preference (5)            - be good at job
- some young ones are good
- older than learner (8) } responsible, explain well,
- same age (1)                } experience, give encouragement
- patience, inspire confidence
- tolerant

Q14a  
 teacher's sex  
 preference

Q14b  
 why?

Q15a /b  
 class location pref.  
 why

- no preference (8)            - classroom (15) /
- female (6)                    - accustom            1. more comfortable (psych.)
- can be more                2. no distractions
- open with                3. no disruptions
- 4. more people to help
- 5. feels as part of something
- 6. more familiar

Q16  
 learners'  
 gender

Q17  
 learner's  
 age range

Q18  
 parish  
 living

Q19  
 parish  
 working

male (4)  
 female (11)

19 - 54

Michael (7)  
 Andrew (3)  
 James (2)  
 George (1)  
 Thomas (1)

Michael (4)  
 Andrew (2)  
 James (1)  
 Thomas (1)  
 Ch.Ch. (1)

Q20 employment status		Q21a current job	Q21b length of time	
gov. emp. (4)	-	agr. lab.	7-20 yrs	
	-	cook		
	-	maid		
	-	pipe fitter (supervisor)		
priv. emp. (5)	-	housekeeper	2-31 yrs	
	-	domestic		
	-	caterer		
	-	book binder		
self emp. (1)	-	upholsterer	6yrs	
unemployed (5) (2 never employed)		MTW labour	2 yrs	(former jobs)
		odd jobber	1 yr	
		gas attendant	2	y r s

Q22 how skills learnt	Q23 desired job	Q23b why	Q23 skills needed have*
1. trial & error	1. Gov. maid	1. easy	1. practical*
2. demonstrations	2. secretary	2. security	2. academic
	3. salesman	3. service	3. literacy
	4. catering	4. interest	
	5. nurse		
	6. mechanic		
	7. receptionist		

Q24 expected benefits	Q25 a/b literate get work based on:	Q26a/b illiterate get work based on:
1. read and write	1. skills (1)	1. explain circum. (3)
2. spell and add	2. cert. (5)	2. skills (1)
3. speak English	3. effort (5)	3. literacy (8)
4. converse	4. experience (2)	4. certification (1)
5. confidence		5. effort (2)

Q27  
illiterates  
known

(2 - 20 )  
total = 68

Q28  
how they coped  
with illiteracy

1. children help
2. keep to self
3. forthright
4. shop with friends
5. select helper
6. recall adverts.

Q29  
expected changes in  
relationships

1. none (7)
2. independence
3. more responsible
4. other's respect
5. other's jealousy
6. better treatment
7. lose fear

Q30  
expected changes  
their in activities

1. none (2)
2. travel
3. fill forms
4. newspaper
5. shopping (labels)
6. discussions (more  
knowledge)

Q31  
other changes

1. write letters
2. child's homework
3. change job
4. self employment
5. speak better
6. more self control
7. less inferior

Q32  
their literacy  
and national  
development

- relate (4)
- no relate (4)
- not sure (7)

---

Q33  
attend  
classes

6 mths - 2 yrs

Q34  
possible  
blocks to  
continuing

1. bus fare
2. fee
3. sponsor
4. sickness
5. boredom
6. work hours

Q35  
reasons for  
illiteracy

1. afraid of people
2. not ask questions
3. lashes at school
4. stop to babysit
5. brain hard
6. teacher's neglect
7. no help with work
8. mother saw no value
9. dyslexia/ hyperactive
- 10 misses due to asthma

---

Q36  
schooling

p only (7)  
p & spec.(2)  
p & sec.(4)

Q37  
how is school  
like lit. class?

1. no diff. (2)
2. lit lessons:  
detailed
3. sch: gov. books
4. can't remember

Q38  
desired  
changes

1. all advance
  2. read aloud
  3. more spelling
  4. maths
  5. more days, hours
  6. speech classes
  7. ability groups
-



Q39 how will changes improve provision	Q40 what hated about school/why?	Q41 what liked about school/why?
1. want to go beyond reading & writing	1. blows (4)	1. primary years
2. learn more in less time (maths)	2. ridicule	2. playing
	3. not knowing work	3. subjects (prac.)
	4. noise/crowds	4. nothing

Q42 courses done since school	Q43 last school	Q44 class	Q45 age
1. needle crafts	1. senior (7)	class 6 (3)	14
2. cookery	2. comp. (2)	class 4 (5)	13 - 16
3. mechanic	3. spec. (2)	form 1 (1)	11
4. woodwork*		form 2 (1)	13

Q46 why they left	Q47 being an adult effect on learning	Q48 teacher's use of Bajan/SE
1. fight	- yes (8)	W: Bajan never
2. final class	1. ambitious	SE always
3. know no work	2. goal oriented	M: Bajan some
4. help mother	3. knowledge	SE always
5. family problems	4. determination	
6. a waste of time	5. understanding	
	6. see value of ed.	

Q49 learner's SE comprehen.	Q49b source of lang difficulty	Q50 definition of adult
always (7)	1. pronunciation	1. age
sometimes (5)	2. vocabulary	2. parent
	3. sentence struc.	3. family
		4. responsibilities
		5. voted
		6. experiences
		7. at age 14, 20,
		8. right from wrong

Q51  
attitude to  
Bajan/SE

1. equal to SE (4)
2. ambivalent (3)
3. SE better (5)

Q52  
explanation

1. Eng better than  
other lang.
2. need Eng. for job
3. people understand  
Eng better

Q53  
problems in  
class

1. clusters
  2. syllables
  3. big words
- 

Q54  
problems  
with attend.

1. busfare

Q56  
comments on pre-  
class information

- adequate

Q57  
learner's  
teaching exp.

1. drive
2. maid work (jobtraining)
3. book binding ( " )
4. cooking/baking ( " )
5. fitting gas pipes ( " )

Q57b/c  
how was the  
ask/why

1. easy (7) -
  1. they knew subject
  2. person needed skill
  3. person willing
  4. person understood
2. hard (1)
  1. person could not read  
or write

Q58  
what learner taught  
self

1. sewing
  2. basket plaiting
  3. cooking/baking
  4. honesty/helpful
  5. house painting
  6. washing
- 

Q59  
skills learning vs.  
literacy learning

1. same commitment
2. lit has no room  
for trial & error
3. practical is easier

Q60  
teach self vs.  
teach other

1. more time with self
  2. teaching other allows  
mutual learning
- 

Q61  
awareness of  
government's  
ed. policy

Q62  
feelings about  
own illiteracy

1. embarrassed
2. dependent
3. seeks excuses
4. resigned
5. self conscious

Q63  
feelings about  
literate

1. superior (6)
2. knowlege equals  
literacy
3. "can hold own"

6. sad/bad\*
  7. inferior
- 

Q64

what has learnt  
from class

1. new words
2. begin to read  
newspaper
3. sounding out words
4. improve reading /  
writing
5. joining letters
6. putting words  
together
7. nothing yet (1)

Q65

what is still  
to be learnt

1. read, write, .  
spell, vocab
2. handwriting
3. fill out forms
4. nouns, verbs ets
5. speak SE
6. writing slow

Q65b

why not  
grasped yet?

- self study
- more teaching
- not taught
- not taught
- all new
- not taught
- more practice
- need library

**Appendix 6.**

**APPENDIX 6.**

Prison-based Students' Questionnaire (PQ)

1 If you can read this questionnaire and fill in the answers without assistance, circle the appropriate word below.  
YES NO

2 Answer 2a or 2b

a) If you are at these classes because you asked to attend, say why you wanted to attend.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) If you are at these classes because you were sent, say why you were sent.

.....  
.....  
.....

3 What school did you last attend?

.....

4 What class were you in when you left school?

.....

5 How old were you when you left school?

.....

6 If you stopped school before you were 16, say what made you stop.

.....  
.....  
.....

7 List the things you hated most about school and try to say why you felt that way about each thing you mention.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8 List the things you liked most about school and try to say why you felt that way about those things.

.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
9a) When you think about school what is the first thing  
that  
usually comes into your head?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) Try to explain why this has stuck in your memory.  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10 If you did not attend any classes to learn any thing since  
you left school, go on to question 12. If you attempted to  
learn anything, give the following information:  
i) What did you go to learn? .....  
.....  
ii) Where did you go?.....  
.....  
iii) How long did you go for?.....  
iv) Did you learn what you intended to? YES NO  
v) Try to give the main reason why you did or did not learn  
what you wanted to. ....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11 In what ways is the learning experience you have in these  
classes different from or similar to the one you had at  
school?  
I have listed a few topics below to help you answer this  
question as fully as possible. Feel free to comment on these  
and add others that you think are important.

i) The way the lessons are presented: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

ii) The relationship between you and the teacher: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

iii) The way the class room is arranged: .....  
.....  
.....

..... iv) The textbooks and other materials you use:  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
.....

v) The way you relate to your classmates: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12 What is the main difference between the education you are offered in the prison and the one you were offered at school?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13 If you were given the chance, what changes would you make to this programme? Give a reason for each change which you suggest.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

14 Say exactly how you think these classes can help you when you leave here.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

15 Put a tick next to the appropriate answer below:  
i) When you came here you had to give up your job.  
ii) You were unemployed at the time.

16 If you answered i) above, say what work you did.

.....  
17 What job would you really like to do?  
.....  
.....

18 Why do you like this type of work?  
.....  
.....  
.....

19 a) If you do not know what skills or qualifications you must

have to get this type of work go on to question 21. If  
y o u k n o w , l i s t t h e m .

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) If you already have some of the above qualifications and skills put a tick next to the appropriate ones.

20 Which of the following means did you use to help you to acquire these skills/qualifications? You may tick more than one if necessary.

- i) regular school
- ii) evening classes
- iii) taught by a friend
- iv) classes at the prison
- v) constant practice after seeing some one do it

21 What encouraged you to keep working until you acquired these skills? .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

22 What might prevent you from getting the other skills or qualifications?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

23 Having come here, what are your chances now of getting the job you really want?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

24 If you did not do as well at school as you would have liked to, what would you say were the main reasons?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

25 a) Would your being an adult make it any easier now for you to do well in these classes? Circle the appropriate word.  
YES NO

b) Why do you think so?

.....



26 Complete the following statements to show why you would call yourself an adult.

i) I am an adult because I have .....

ii) I am an adult because I know .....

iii) I am an adult because I am .....

iv) I became an adult when .....

27 Do you see any connection between the development of Barbados and the ability of all adults here to read, count, and write well? Circle the appropriate word.  
YES NO

28 Give reasons for your answer. ....

29 List the ways in which these classes have helped you so far. ....

30 What is the most important thing you have learnt from these classes? .....

31 Which parish were you living in when you came in here? .....

32 How long had you been living in that parish? .....

33 Give your date of birth in the following order:  
day.....month.....year.....

## **Appendix 6.1**

APPENDIX 6.1

Summary of Responses to Prison-based Questionnaire PQ: Women

<p><b>Q1</b> cannot* can + read &amp; write</p>	<p><b>Q2a/b</b> did not* did + ask to attend classes/ why</p>	<p><b>Q3</b> schooling</p>		
<p>(6/6)+</p>	<p>1. time 2. opportunity 3. further ed. 4. better living (6/6)+</p>	<p>1. sec.comp. (2) 2. sec. priv.(2) 3. college US (1) 4. primary (1)</p>		
<p><b>Q4</b> last form</p>	<p><b>Q5</b> age</p>	<p><b>Q6</b> why they left?</p>	<p><b>Q7</b> hated school?</p>	<p><b>Q8</b> liked school?</p>
<p>class 7 (1) 4th form (2) 5th form (2) college (1)</p>	<p>15-18</p>	<p>1. no guidance 2. bad company 3. failed exam 4. imprisoned</p>	<p>1. subj. 2. all fem.</p>	<p>1. subj 2. pool</p>
<p><b>Q9a/b</b> main thoughts of school/why</p>		<p><b>Q10a</b> post school studies</p>	<p><b>Q10b</b> why stop?</p>	
<p>1. subjects - favourite 2. teachers - counselling 3. freedom - no commitments</p>		<p>1. shorthand typing 2. business 3. accounts</p>	<p>1. money problems 2. pregnancy 3. arrested</p>	
<p><b>Q11</b> school vs. prison experience</p>		<p><b>Q12</b> school vs. prison ed. provision</p>	<p><b>Q13</b> changes needed</p>	
<p>1. no diff. (5) 2. sch: peer age more attention confide in teacher own materials sat at back of class 3. class arrangement 4. class relations</p>		<p>1. teacher takes more time 2. learn more in maths &amp; econ. 3. less time for subjects, less encouragement = no motivation 4. limited choice 5. same (2)</p>	<p>1. supplies 2. more class time 3. woodwork fieldwork</p>	

**Q14**  
**potential**  
**benefits**

1. self employ.  
e.g sewing
2. CXC exams

**Q15**  
**job status**  
**on arrival**

1. employed (3)
2. unemployed (3)

**Q16**  
**type of**  
**work**

1. electron. assembler
2. electrical tech.
3. ass. psych. nurse

**Q17/18**  
**job really**  
**want/why**

1. designer/seamstress (2) - creativity
2. own electron. business - independence
3. nurse/cert. accountant - people/numbers
4. hotel - waiter/cook - people/languages/  
adventures

**Q19**  
**skills needed/**  
**have \***  
**for ideal job**

1. more tech.  
knowledge  
of area
2. subjects \*
3. training &  
(contacts)
4. have skills  
(3) \*

---

**Q20**  
**method of**  
**acquiring**  
**current skills**

1. school (3)
2. taught by friend/
3. father (2)
4. practice (3)
5. prison (2)

**Q21**  
**motivation**  
**for effort/**  
**success**

1. encouragement
2. desire
3. enjoyment
4. desire to know
5. ambition

**Q22**  
**possible**  
**blocks**  
**to success**

1. finances
2. nothing
3. not trying
4. lack of interest

---

**Q23**  
**effect of**  
**prison record**

1. none on self employed
2. still the same person
3. very great
4. not sure

**Q24**  
**why failed**  
**at school ?**

1. ignorant of  
value of ed.
2. father/ home  
problems
3. little effort
4. bad company

**Q25**  
**adulthood**  
**effect on**  
**learning**

- + know imp. of  
education
- always eager  
to learn
- + have goals
- + have the  
will to  
achieve

**Q26**  
definition of  
adult

1. have responsibility
2. independent
3. mature body
4. age
5. know self
6. have children
7. experiences
8. know right from wrong

**Q27/28**  
literacy & nat.  
development

1. yes (5)
2. sophisticated  
technology
3. opportunities  
for work
4. up-to-date ed  
system

**Q29**  
benefits of  
prison ed.

1. sew own  
clothes
2. help child  
with maths
3. better oral  
English
4. keep out of  
trouble
5. better self
6. continue

**Q30**  
most important  
lesson learnt  
from classes

1. pastry & sewing
2. self esteem
3. self sufficiency
4. second chance at  
education

**Q31**  
parish

St. Mich (4)  
Ch.Ch. (1)  
Miami (1)

**Q32**  
time

**Q33**  
age

25 - 35

Summary of Responses to Prison questionnaire PQ: Men

<b>Q1</b> cannot* can+ read & write	<b>Q2a/b</b> didnt* did+ ask to attend classes/ why	<b>Q3</b> schooling
3* 10+	(2* 11+) 1. improve specific subject 2. read & write 3. improve general education 4. improve business	sec. gram. (2) sec. comp. (3) senior sch. (4) England (1) primary (1) gov. indus. sch. (1) private sec. (1)
<b>Q4</b> last form	<b>Q5</b> age	<b>Q6</b> why they left?
5th (3) 4th (4) 3rd (2) 2nd (1) class 7 (2) class 4 (1)	10 - 18	1. worked to help mother 2. not cope with subjects 3. accident affected memory 4. eager to join older friends 5. truancy/ drugs 6. wanted money
<b>Q7</b> hated about school	<b>Q8</b> liked about school	<b>Q9</b> main thoughts of school/why
1. lashes 2. no books etc. 3. teachers had pets 4. no playing field 5. no push from teachers 6. every thing (1)	1. subjects 2. teachers 3. girls/ sex 4. socialising/ lunch time/ games 5. everything (4)	1. lost opportunity 2. fun with friends 3. favourite subj 4. girls/sex 5. morning assembly
<b>Q10a</b> post school studies	<b>Q10b</b> why stop?	<b>Q11</b> school vs. prison ed. experience
1. spray painting 2. arc welding 3. steel bending 4. joinery/tiling 5. wood work 6. bicycle mechanic 7. CXC subjects (1)	1. not paying well 2. crime	1. free movement in class 2. can help others with maths 3. no books/pens 4. teachers give with " no great

plumbing/tailoring

feeling"

- 5. less cooperation among mates
- 6. more cooperation among mates

**Q12**  
**school vs. prison**  
**ed. provision**

- 1. same attention needed
- 2. forced to cope can't leave
- 3. treated as a fool
- 4. limited subj. choice
- 5. easier lessons
- 6. teachers explain more

**Q13**  
**changes needed**

- 1. christian values
- 2. a trade for all youths
- 3. more major subjects
- 4. individual help for slow learners
- 5. choice between literacy/craft
- 6. no compulsion to attend lit. class
- 7. library system
- 8. supplies

**Q14**  
**potential benefits**

- 1. intellect. devel.
- 2. r/w letters
- 3. get a job

**Q15**  
**job status**  
**on arrival**

- employed (9)
- unemployed (4)

**Q16**  
**type of work**

- 1. car wash
- 2. spray painting
- 3. beach vendor (-li)
- 4. joiner/tiler/mason
- 5. import/export
- 6. labourer
- 7. blockmaking
- 8. supermarket ?

**Q17/18**  
**job really want/why**

- 2. like it
- 3. meet people, learn lang
- 4. good at it
- 5. quick money
- 7. easy job
- 9. arc welding - good at it
- 10. manager/direct. has ed. for it.
- 11. sanitation work - good hours

(numbers for Q16 are repeated for Q17 if the same job is referred to )

**Q19**  
**skills needed**  
**have\* for**  
**ideal job**

- 1. reading & writng (1)
- 2. knowledge/ practice \* in the field

**Q20**  
**method of**  
**acquiring**  
**current skills**

- 1. school (4)
- 2. eve. class (2)
- 3. pris. class (1)

**Q21**  
**motivator**  
**of effort**

- 1. liked field
- 2. father
- 3. teacher

3. maths (1)

4. on job (2)

4. friends

---

**Q22**  
**possible blocks**  
**to success**

1. prison record
2. money

**Q24**  
**why failed**  
**at school?**

1. teachers' negligence
2. " prejudice
3. slow learner
4. poverty -missed classes
5. stubborn/own way
6. not pay attention
7. followd friends
8. drugs/truancy
9. parents' problems

**Q23**  
**possible effects of**  
**prison record**

1. public distrust / fear/ dislike
2. none for craft worker

**Q25**  
**adulthood &**  
**effect on learning**

1. knows basics already
  2. more willing
  3. can see benefits
  4. understands needs/  
situations
  5. no help (4)
- 

**Q26**  
**definition of adult**

1. age
2. domestic responsib.
3. is a parent
4. self support
5. bodily changes
6. knows right/wrong
7. experiences
8. owns house/land

**Q27/28**  
**literacy & nat.**  
**development**

1. no (1)
  2. no need for ext. help
  3. self employment
  4. illit. can be cheated  
out of land by foreigners
- 

**Q29**  
**benefits of**  
**prison ed.**

1. specific subjects
2. improved reading
3. begin thinking again
4. writing, counting

**Q30**  
**most important lessons**  
**learnt from classes**

1. there is someone to help
  2. coop. more with mates
  3. less aggressive
  4. to stay far from there
- 

**Q31**  
**parish**

1. St. Michael (3)
2. Ch. Ch. (3)
3. St. James (2)
4. St. Philip (1)

**Q32**  
**length of time**

5 - 35

**Q33**  
**age**

19 - 35



**Appendix 7**

**APPENDIX 7.**

**Tutors' Questionnaire (TQ)**

Where applicable, tick the answer(s) best suited to your situation and feel free to supply additional information or clarification where you think it is needed.

Answer 1a and/or 1b) depending on the type of work you do. 1How long have you been

a) training tutors to teach literacy skills? .....

b) teaching literacy skills to adults? .....

2 What encouraged you to get involved in adult education  
p r o v i s i o n ? . . . . .

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3 If you have worked or are currently working in another area  
of education or outside of education, state the area(s).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4 Say how the work mentioned in 3. has been helpful in  
your work as a trainer and/or tutor.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5 If you have taught at a different level, supply the  
the following information.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Length of time</u>
----------------	--------------	-----------------------

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....6 If this experience has been useful to you in  
your

current work with adult literacy students, say how.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7 List what you think are the main causes of adult illiteracy in Barbados? If you want to elaborate on any points, use the back of this page.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8 (a) What criteria do you use to label someone as an adult?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8 (b) How would you justify the above statement?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9 Ruling out any possibility of mental or physical disability what do you consider to be the main difference between an adult who is learning to read and write and a child who is learning to read and write?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10 If you accept that teaching adults require a different approach from teaching children, say what the main difference should be.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11 What do you consider to be the main stumbling block(s) one is likely to encounter in teaching an adult to (i) read

.....  
.....  
.....

(ii) write

.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
12           What is your own working definition of literacy?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13           How is your teaching of fully illiterate/ functionally  
             illiterate/ literate adults influenced by this  
             definition? .....

14           What are the main materials you use for  
             (a) training tutors.....  
.....  
             (b)     teaching     adult     literacy           students  
.....  
.....  
.....

15           Answer 15 and/or 16 depending on your area of work.  
             (a) Tick the appropriate options to show whether your  
                      **training materials** were created  
                      (i) outside of the Caribbean  
                      (ii) in the Caribbean but not in Barbados  
                      (iii) in Barbados by persons other than you or your  
                      students  
                      (iv) by you  
                      (v) by you and your students  
             (b) Use this space to rationalize your choice of any  
of           the above sources.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

16           (a) Tick the appropriate options to show whether your  
                      **teaching materials** were created  
                      (i) outside of the Caribbean  
                      (ii) in the Caribbean but not in Barbados

- (iii) in Barbados by persons other than you or your students
- (iv) by you
- (v) by you and your students

(b) Use this space to rationalize your choice of any of the above sources. ....

.....

17 What difference would you expect there to be between teaching a practical skill to an illiterate person and teaching the same skill to a literate person?

.....

18 What impressions did you have of fully/functional illiterate persons prior to teaching/working with them?

.....

19 If your opinions of the persons mentioned in 18. above have changed, say to what extent. ....

.....

20 Answer 20 and/or 21 depending on your area of work.

(a) What role do you think the tutors want you to play besides that of trainer? .....

.....

..... (b) What led you to this conclusion.....

.....

(c) What role do you prefer to play and why have you have made that choice?

.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

21 (a) What role do you think the adult students expect you to play besides that of tutor and why do you think so? .....

(b) Say what role you prefer to play and why you have made that choice. ....

22 Answer 22 and/or 23 depending on your area of work. What input do your **student tutors** have in the following areas of their **training**?

(i) selecting the content of the course .....

(ii) affecting the presentation of material .....

(iii) determining the length of the course .....

23 What input do your **adult literacy students** have in the following areas of their education?

(i) selecting the content of the course .....

(ii) affecting the presentation of material .....

(iii) determining the length of the course .....

.....  
 .....  
 24 (a) As a **tutor**, how many students can you adequately cope with in one class? .....  
 (b) How many students (average) are you required to teach in one class? .....  
 25 (a) As a **trainer**, do you put a limit on the number of students you work with in a session? Circle the appropriate answer: YES NO  
 (b) Give the rationale for your setting or not setting a limit. ....  
 .....  
 .....

26 If the difference between Bajan Dialect and English is a problem in your literacy classes, say to what extent that is so. ....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

26 Say whether or not you think Bajan Dialect can be used as a teaching tool in local literacy classes and why you hold that opinion.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

27 What do you think is the main connection between literacy and the following?  
 (i) national development .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 (ii) personal development.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

... What is your own definition of development?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

29           Based on your observations, what do you think is the purpose of education in Barbados? .....

30           If you think the above purpose is inadequate, say what you would like it to be and why. ....

31           If you have any particular beliefs about the way people learn, say what they are. ....

32           Say how the above beliefs have helped you in your current work with adults. ....

33           Circle the age range that you are in.  
15-19   20-29   30-39   40-49   50-59   60-69   70-79

34           a) Circle the age ranges of your students.  
15-19   20-29   30-39   40-49   50-59   60-69   70-79  
b) In which of the above ranges does the majority of your students fall? .....

35           In what ways would you like the news media to help your students?.....



.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

36 List the facilities which you would need to create the ideal learning environment for students taking adult literacy classes.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix 7.1**

**APPENDIX 7.1**

**Summary of Tutors' Responses to Questionnaire TQ**

Responses are from tutors of the three literacy centres

<b>Q1</b> <b><u>time in</u></b> <b><u>provision</u></b>	<b>Q2a</b> <b><u>reasons for</u></b> <b><u>teaching lit.</u></b>	<b>Q2b</b> <b><u>recruitment/</u></b> <b><u>motivation</u></b>	
4 months - 2 years	1 knew of need 2 wanted to help 3 curiosity 4 challenge 5 skills to offer 6 experience with adults	1 volunteered after: a) meeting an illit. b) seeing tv talk show 2 asked to help 3 offered job 4 extension of duties	
<b>Q3</b> <b><u>profession</u></b>	<b>Q4</b> <b><u>influence on</u></b> <b><u>practice/self</u></b>	<b>Q5</b> <b><u>teaching</u></b> <b><u>experience</u></b>	<b>Q6</b> <b><u>influence on</u></b> <b><u>practice</u></b>
1 electrical technician 2 conductor/warder 3 bank teller/artist/warder 4 police 5 teacher 6 clerk	1 belief: we all have difficulty learning 2 more patience 3 belief: no diff. between late teens and early twenties 4 less shy 5 can work with people from diff. walks of life	1 - 35 yrs	1 belief: need to be delicate and careful with adults
<b>Q7 - Causes of illiteracy:</b>			
<b><u>Home</u></b>		<b><u>School</u></b>	
1 truancy- baby sitting/illness 2 no parental support/guidance 3 illiterate parents 4 young children working 5 social/psych. climate at home 6 malnutrition 7 parents ignorant of the value of education=> cannot pass these values		1 lack of remediation at primary and second.level 2 neglect of comprehension and writing skills 3 too large classes 4 bad teaching methods 5 teachers not trained in remediation 6 teachers not aware of students' problems 7 social and psychological climate at school 8 neglect of late/slow learners 9 age grouping 10 focus on 11+ exam 11 little development of individual students 12 no attention to the non-	
<b><u>Society</u></b>			
1 no opportunity for further education at primary or sec. levels 2 poverty - parents cannot pay for education 3 lack of values 4 break up of extended family 5 no jobs for qualified=>			

education seen as pointless  
6 pressure to pass the 11+ exam

academic  
13 no discipline

### Q7 - Causes of illiteracy cont'd

#### personal/individual

- 1 no interest in school
- 2 no interest in making an effort for one's own development
- 3 satisfaction with superficial gains
- 4 preference for immediate gratification
- 5 students prefer to drop out of school to work
- 6 preference for ``the easy life''
- 7 innate deficiencies

### Q8 - Definition of adult:

#### **temporal maturity**

- 1 18 and over
- 2 over 16 and not at school
- 3 voting age 18
- 4 above age of legal responsibility
- 5 over age 21 with mental maturity
- 6 over 18 with a sound mind

#### **mental/psycho. maturity**

- 1 can make decisions for one self
- 2 knows right from wrong
- 3 having responsibility for one's actions to self and others
- 4 independent thinkers
- 5 adaptability to situation
- 6 self motivated
- 7 openness to spiritual influence
- 8 ability to apply self to tasks

#### **Attitudes**

- 1 respects authority - can separate position from person

#### **Behaviour**

- 1 does not behave like a child
- 2 can communicate fluently in speech and writing

### Q9 - difference between adult lit. student and child:

#### adult

- 1 fearful/easily embarrassed
- 2 little motivation to learn
- 3 have inactive brains
- 4 need good programmes and monitoring
- 5 minds are already set => difficult to ``divert''
- 6 negligent
- 7 easily discouraged
- 8 no belief that they can learn
- 9 always compare current information to previous experience
- 10 stubborn in their ways
- 11 handicapped by feelings of failure and inadequacy

#### child

- 1 has an open mind
- 2 is willing
- 3 is creative
- 4 has a resilient mind
- 5 memory can be easily developed
- 6 willing to accept that teacher knows best
- 7 accepts information owing to lack of experience
- 8 can be easily led
- 9 naturally curious

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 12 distracted by their problems    | 10 ready to learn   |
| 13 resentful of young teachers     | 11 have fresh minds=><br>no false notions<br>and concepts |
| 14 know things but know them wrong | 12 more positive  |
| 15 easier to teach than children   |   |
| 16 harder to teach than children   |   |

**Q9 - difference between adult lit. student and child (cont'd)**  
adult child

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 17 need to be un-educated and then<br>re-educated                         | 13 readily accepts help<br>14 must go to school |
| 19 adults learn if they make learning<br>a priority => self<br>motivation |   |
| 20 they have a level of shame that must be worked<br>''around''           |   |
| 21 experience works in their favour                                       |   |
| 22 they have a different psyche   |   |

**Q10 - Methodology used in adult education provision**

attitude

- 1 demand and give respect
- 2 accept the situation as one  
involving mutual learning
- 3 accept them as they are
- 4 patience=> let them dictate  
pace of teaching
- 5 encourages rather than  
patronises
- 6 avoid situations that lead to  
embarrassment
- 7 remove fear of inadequacy
- 8 focus on adults' successes  
rather than their deficiencies
- 9 keep their reading and writing  
deficiencies a secret

intervention

- 1 relate course to adult's  
interests
- 2 find out what they want to  
learn
- 3 put information in the  
'lifelike' manner
- 4 need use of more audio-  
visual material and  
group work
- 5 focus on the individual
- 6 less formal approach
- 7 use the adults' language  
and likes in lessons
- 8 use their experiences and  
their knowledge in class
- 9 a lot of repetition
- 10 methodical, step by step  
presentation of material
- 11 constant reviews of work
- 12 a lot of practice

**Q11 - major obstacles to teaching adults**

to read

- 1 phonics
- 2 adults do not 'maintain' anything  
in their brains=> no recall
- 3 hard to get over 'wrong'  
pronunciation
- 4 do not try to call words for  
themselves
- 5 the effort - progress is  
painfully slow
- 6 fear being embarrassed
- 7 difference between name of  
letters and the sounds

to write

- 1 lack of practice  
(the telephone has  
reduced need for  
letter writing)
- 2 do not like to  
make corrections
- 3 bad writing posture
- 4 how they hold the pen
- 5 they hate these (4,5)  
procedures
- 6 identifying and  
forming letters

- 8 ashamed of inability
- 9 dyslexia
- 10 lack of one to one teaching
- 11 panic about making errors in front of others
- 12 hearing and seeing problems

- 7 need to get things
- 8 lack of imaginative material to use
- 9 they write exactly what they hear

**Q12 - Definition of literacy**

**Q13 - Influence of definition on practice**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 ability to read, write and communicate ideas adequately at all levels</li> <li>2 confidence to read, write and express own views</li> <li>3 being competent in reading and writing skills</li> <li>4 ability to think clearly</li> <li>5 ability to read and write in one's own language</li> <li>6 ability to read, write, count with a degree of accuracy but without any help</li> <li>7 ability to use reading and writing skills in a functional capacity</li> <li>8 ability to read and write to the level of one's age</li> <li>9 ability to read, understand and reproduce material in writing so that it can be easily read</li> <li>10 ability to read, write and do a basic skill such as art</li> <li>11 ability to read and write with clarity and understanding....</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> <li>.....&gt;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focus on practice to develop these skills</li> <li>create opportunities for practice in class</li> <li>breaking words into syllables=&gt; letters</li> <li>sympathise with their handicap; be patient</li> <li>gear everything at their level;</li> <li>highlight their abilities regardless of level</li> <li>the literate argue too much; the f.illiterate</li> <li>study attainment levels; grade and group students let materials and methods to levels</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

**Materials used**

<u>Q14</u> <u>what</u>	<u>Q15</u> <u>from where</u>	<u>Q16</u> <u>why</u>
1 chalk board, charts handouts	1 local	1 easy to erase
2 chalk and talk	2 foreign	2 result from teaching indiv. students
3 books, newspapers	3 tutor	3 volunteers have no input
4 sight word cards	4 tutor/students	4 based on initial diagnostic tests
5 pix. for composition individual/group work		
6 printed exercises		

**Q17 - Expected differences between literate and illiterate in doing a practical skill**

literate

- 1 little difference
- 2 may understand more quickly
- 3 no difference if instructions are not written
- 4 depends on person's perception and adeptness at practical tasks
- 5 asks fewer question - over confident about ability

illiterate

- 1 may be better - able to compensate for lacking 'theoretical' skills
- 2 might not understand certain aspects
- 3 may need help with measurements
- 4 asks many questions
- 5 persistent
- 6 may take longer to understand
- 7 work well with their hands

**Impressions of illiterate adults before and after involvement in teaching**

Q18

past

- 1 none - had an open mind .....> came to give guidance
- 2 fully illiterate is very .....> aggressive; resort to violence to make a point
- 3 funct. illiterate use complicated..> words to create an impression of being educated
- 4 ignorant of the world .....>
- 5 they were unfortunate;.....> there was little or no place for them in society
- 6 they have limited job options
- 7 none
- 8 none

Q19

present

- they work more slowly
- after teaching, they lose some aggression
- become motivated after attending classes
- some have more common sense than literates; eager to have skills; good people to work with
- they have much to offer many are highly skilled
- they fear losing their jobs
- they are intelligent

**Teacher's role in the adult classroom**

**Q20**

**Q21**

Expected role

< how it was conveyed

preferred role > why

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 helper who is patient and tolerant < observation & discussion with students                                  | 1 teacher/friend/tutor > confidence - makes learning situation easier                      |
| 2 helper who is not aloof or impersonal (=unprofessional) < trainers discussing needs of tutors and students   | 2 helper? open and accessible > easier on tutor & student                                  |
| 3 someone who does not make them feel ashamed; someone who will encourage them <they trust me                  | 3 --   |
| 4 role model, disciplined & polite; father fig & friend - no intimidation or insults < superiors & own beliefs | 4 plays all roles; esp father > feels good to help   |
| 5 mentor < they seek help with problems; ask many questions  | 5 tutor> not wise enough to be anything else   |
| 6 mother, father, wife, husband God < require help always with   | 6 teacher> have some say in developing the whole person                                    |
| 7 controller <tutors' actions; students seek leadership & close attachments; parent, intimate contacts         | 7 tutor, classroom only > dislike company, bother; protector> despise preyers esp. immoral |
| 8 confidante, counsellor < hurts block progress; facial express. & body lang.                                  | 8 teacher/counsellor > talk puts one at ease; unveils personal information                 |
| 9 guide - direct to new info < they wait for instructions  |  |
| 10 adviser < they telephone & seek help with problems  | 10 same  |

**Q22/23 - student input:**

course content

presentation

length

- |  |   |               |
|--|---|---------------|
| 1 teacher's diagnostic test & discussion with students | 1 relaxed, informal, open (influenced by level of subj. | 1 nil         |
| 2 set curriculum                                       | 3 they like notes -                                     | 2 adults tire |



but likes/dislikes considered	helps retention; short attention -	easily; like shortcourse
3 curricular/extra interests	begin with main points and add	14 weeks
4 students list needs	re-inforcements	

**Q24/25 - student teacher ratio**

<u>actual</u>	<u>preferred</u>
i) 15	i) 13 - 17
ii) 20	ii) 10 - 12
iii) 6 - 12	iii) 9 - 10
iv) 12	iv) 15
v) 15	v) 10 - 15 (depending on subject)
vi) 5 - 10	vi) 12
vii) 20	vii) 12
viii) 15	viii) 10 - 20
ix) observed: 2 - 9	ix) 25 ( with grouping)
x) 10 - 15	x) 10 - 15
xi) 14	xi) 8 - 10

**Status of Bajan Dialect in adult literacy provision**

<u>Q26a</u> <u>current use/problem</u>	<u>Q26b</u> <u>potential</u>
1 tutor pronounces English words in a Bajan way	1 phonetic - need for emphasis and care on spelling => understand words that are read
2 (problem - students write as they speak)	2 No => confusion; complicates learning; not international lang.
3 correction is easy _ most aware of spoken Stand.Eng. (did not expect problems in view of closeness)	
4 oral exercises: Bajan -> Eng; no problem - teacher is Bajan; the dialect is not foreign	4 for humour; to a certain extent; exclusively
5 accepts both; no problem since Bajan cannot be written; English is spoken fluently;	5 for comparing & relating things students do not understand
6	6 Yes. Formal Eng. seen as ``talking down''
7 part of one's character - creeps into writing essays, speaking	7 No
8	8 stepping stone to talking and writing

9 problem: syntax, pron, spell.

10 10 comfortable - breaks them out of shyness

11 usage is embarrassing;  
restrict to local context;  
English => whole person

### Connection between literacy and development

#### Q27a

##### lit. & national development

- 1 higher lit => faster dev.
- 2 high lit. no foreign labour
- 3 literate pop. can fit into proposed dev. schemes.
- 4 more people would understand the politicians are saying
- 5 make good leaders ( though all leaders are not good)
- 6 handle national problems

#### Q27b

##### lit. & personal development

- 1 self esteem; produce more; contribute more
- 2 illit thought of as fools feel less than average
- 3 no boundaries; confidence
- 4 innovative; creative;
- 5 can provide for family; positive soc. contribution
- 6 progress in life
- 7 competent; give service at chosen level or field; continue one's education;
- 8 can cope with problems; interact better with others;
- 9 expect to make an impact

#### Q28 - Definition of literacy:

- 1 progress towards utopia; similar to man's evolutionary dev.
- 2 growth by improvement
- 3 progress towards betterment
- 4 achieving goals: spiritual, social, financial
- 5 progress in every aspect '' '' living conditions
- 6 having a valuable national resource - people
- 7 from unrefinement to competence, capability, resourcefulness
- 8 ability to use skills for one's betterment
- 9 more able to cope with stress of life; sense of independence
- 10 provide for oneself through enjoyable work
- 11 growth : physical, mental, spiritual

Questions related to above: asked in pilot but omitted later:  
\* what skills are needed to function effectively in Barbados?

reading, writing, spelling, speaking in Standard English, ability to add, subtract; basic life skills.

- \* what does ``function effectively'' mean?  
being an active member of society;  
relatively independent in performing basic literacy functions.

### Purpose of education in Barbados

<b>Q29</b> <b><u>What it seems to be</u></b>	<b>Q30</b> <b><u>What it ought to be</u></b>
1 spiritual side is lacking	1 bring back bible; spiritually strong christians counsellors; aim: all round personal devel.
2 prepare for the future; create our own leaders; gain respect of less dev. cope with the outside world	2 adequate
3 knowledge=> equal opp. for rich and poor	3 compulsory, necessary; advertise its value;
4 => literate adults	4 => skilled adults; skills to aid productivity;
5 obtain: white colar job, large pay cheque, luxury	5 broader scale; more opp. to improve self ; more polytec. => skills for less fortunate;
6 enable pop. to carry out all operations needed to in modern world	tertiary ed. not only for who can afford it.
7 knowledge in academic & practical subjects	
8 to obtain certificates	8 training for the job market
	9 moral and mental instruction; responsibility=> training=> economic & political stability;
11 maintain a high lit. => improve nat. devl.	10 foster patriotism 11 raise lit rate => produce people operate competently
<b>Q31</b> <b><u>Beliefs re. how people learn</u></b>	<b>Q32</b> <b><u>Influence on practice</u></b>
1 when relaxed; able to see	1 allows class discussion

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| touch, practise concepts                               | & hands-on exercises                                    |
| 2 build on strengths;<br>do not focus on weaknesses    | 2 refer to achievements:<br>domestic & social           |
| 3 interesting subject                                  |   |
| 4 memorise rhyme/pattern;<br>learn by sight, reasoning | 3 replace rhyme with reason;<br>e.g. re learning tables |
| 5 environment; ideals                                  | 4 use people's environment as<br>educational aid        |

**Q31 cont'd**

- 6 like babies: see-imitate  
hear- repeat;  
good memory = no problem
- 7 older people remember=>  
what they can relate to /  
understand

**Q32 cont'd**

- 6 much repetition => it sticks
- 7 use their experiences to  
explain words
- 8 students study 'around' their  
jobs: carpenters, maids,  
plumbers - reading/spelling

<b>group</b>	<b>Q33 tutors' age range</b>	<b>Q34 student age range</b>	<b>popular age range</b>
R-BC	60-69	15-19/ 30-39/	
C-BC	60-69	20-29/ 30-39/ 40-49	
"	60-69	15-19/ 20-29/ 40-49	
"	30-39	15-19/ 20-29/ 30-39/	
"		40-49/ 50-59	
"	40-49	40-49/ 50-59	
"	29		
P-BC	20-29	15-19/ 20-29	15-19
"	20-29	20-29/ 30-39	20-29
"	30-39	20-29/ 30-39	20-29
"	30-39	20-29/ 40-49	20-29
"	60-69	20-29	20-29
"	20-29	20-29	20-29

**Q34 - What help would you like from the press?**

- 1 special section for people who cannot read.
- 2 more objective reporting about offenders. (not all are  
criminal minded)
- 3 more ed. programmes on radio & t.v.
- 4 reassurance for illiterates that they are not 'castouts'

- 5 essay competitions, quizzes,
- 6 t.v. programmes to help them learn at their own pace
- 7 publicity for illiterates who have achieved=> encouragement to continue : regular t.v interviews, articles
- 8 print various exercises; promote teaching projects
- 9 more accurate proof readers ( set good examples?)
- 10 sponsor students;
- 11 provide materials for reading
- 12 pictorial composition writing
- 13 free supplies of material (vested interest in readers)
- 14 advertisements using students - show them studying etc

### **Q36 - ideal conditions for adult literacy provision**

- 1 library with specific reading materials: books, charts; space to display student's writing
- 2 clean, pleasant surroundings; bright walls; moveable furniture => group work;
- 3 comfortable seating
- 4 well lit area
- 5 adequate stationery;
- 6 occasional lecture by prominent people in society
- 7 change of attitudes held by tutors and people in charge = major factor in people's development
- 8 audio-visual material
- 9 adequate textbooks
- 10 equipment for extra-curricular activities
- 11 relaxed atmosphere away from formal class room: round table - living room type of arrangement
- 12 access to outdoor areas

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