TEACHING IN A NEW SETTING: ADULT BASIC EDUCATORS IN A NATIONAL WORKPLACE LITERACY PROJECT
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF A NATIONAL WORKPLACE LITERACY PROJECT

by

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(ABSTRACT)

Workplace literacy is a movement that has gained popularity in our society in the last decade. Despite the prolific amount of literature on the subject, very little research has been done to determine how teachers are functioning in this new setting. The problem addressed by this study involved how teachers move into a new workplace literacy setting and the issues they face as they establish their classes in this new setting. The purpose of the study was to determine the kinds of issues which teachers might encounter as they move into this setting.

Questions about how teachers experience moving into a workplace literacy setting located at the job site was examined through qualitative research. A case study narrative providing rich description was conducted about one national workplace literacy project from the beginning of the project throughout the eighteen-month grant period. Classroom observations, participant observations, and
interviews were completed. The method of constant comparison was used to analyze the data for patterns of similarity and dissimilarity.

Six principal categories emerged from the data. The findings are presented in six broad categories: (a) a definition of workplace literacy; (b) awareness of company culture; (c) company involvement; (d) the workplace literacy student; (e) the workplace literacy classroom; and (f) the role of the teacher.

From these findings, conclusions were drawn about teacher training materials for individuals in workplace literacy settings. It was determined that a need does exist for a usable teacher's manual containing information regarding workplace literacy programs. Additional research is necessary; one suggestion included replicating this study in another workplace literacy project to determine whether similar issues would emerge.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals have contributed to my success in this dissertation process. I am richer for having completed this goal but also for having developed these relationships.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Workplace literacy has emerged in recent years as a national priority. As the technological advances and foreign competition of the last two decades have created a more sophisticated work environment, the need to develop a more literate work force has become a topic of much discussion. Once some business leaders recognized that the new technology would dictate a more qualified work force, workplace literacy projects began to be implemented by more and more businesses either independently or as partnerships with local education entities. As a result of these workplace literacy partnerships, educators have found themselves thrust into a new setting.

The union of business and industry with educational institutions that provide adult education services is, theoretically, a logical one. When a business identifies the need for basic skills instruction, the obvious place to turn is to public education. Inherent in that decision is the assumption that educators should be able to "fix" whatever basic literacy problems those employees have. What the educator's role involves in the workplace literacy project may vary from actual classroom instruction to curriculum development to program design and implementation.
Although workplace literacy is very much a "buzzword" of the 90's, as yet very little research has been conducted on how instruction is delivered in the workplace literacy project. Questions about how these programs are being conducted and the educator's role in these programs are being formulated and are appearing in the literature (Imel & Kerka, 1992, p. 5): "What qualities are required to be an effective workplace educator? How can practitioners be selected, trained, and supported to provide high-quality service? Do traditional adult education providers have adequate preparation and background knowledge to teach workers?" To gain some insight on these and other questions, workplace literacy programs are being examined.

This study examined the process an educator undergoes upon entering a workplace literacy program. The primary focus was on how adult basic educators dealt with the workplace setting in one workplace literacy project. This study represents a pioneer effort to examine how educators are functioning in the workplace literacy setting, and the outcomes of this study may be used to inform in the preparation of staff development and training materials and programs to introduce teachers to the workplace as a setting for literacy education.
Background of the Problem

Workplace literacy programs, while certainly becoming more popular in the 90's, are hardly a new concept. Industries such as Planter's in Virginia have been operating literacy programs for their employees since the 1970's (McLendon, 1988). Some of the projects, such as Corning, incorporate basic literacy skills into the human resource development and training departments and utilize in-house personnel to provide the instruction (Foucar-Szocki, 1992). Others are careful not to include the basic skills program as part of the training program (Petrini, 1991). Still other programs, the largest of which is the U. S. Army, invest in the development of computer-assisted programs to provide literacy instruction to its employees (Wilson, 1990). Once legislation was passed that tied workplace literacy to adult education funding, projects involving partnerships between business and industry increased. Indeed, some believe that workplace education would probably be nonexistent if it were not for government participation (Zacharakis-Jutz & Dirkx, 1993).

In the 1980's, with the publication of documents related to the workforce (Workforce 2000, 1987; The Bottom Line, 1988), the concept of workplace literacy rose to a national level. Due to the heightened national awareness of literacy in general, and of workplace literacy specifically,
in 1988 Congress passed the Stafford-Hawkins School Improvement Act that authorized the National Workplace Literacy Program. This act was especially significant because, for the first time, Adult Education funding was earmarked specifically for partnerships between businesses and education groups. Essentially, the National Workplace Literacy Program would provide for implementation of job-related programs of literacy and basic skills that could lead to new employment, continued employment, career advancement, or increased productivity for workers (Adult Learning and Literacy, 1992).

Despite the focus on workplace literacy, by 1989 only 11% of the businesses indicated they sponsored any type of literacy education (Lee, 1989); but with the federal government providing incentives--and with adult education funding tied to workplace literacy--gradually more and more businesses began offering educational programs. Initially, thirty-seven projects were established and funded by the National Workplace Literacy Program; by 1992, the literacy projects had increased to fifty-five.

Because these projects focus on literacy and basic skills and because the grants are awarded to partnerships between business and education, frequently much of the coordination and teaching are done by practitioners in Adult Basic Education. Unfortunately, these partnerships may be
used as a means for adult educators to survive; because of reduced state and federal budgets, adult educators are forced to look for alternate sources of money, and workplace literacy grants provide just such an alternative. Some believe, however, that these grants are obtained in order to maintain the routine operations rather than serve business or the employer (Zacharakis-Jutz & Dirkx, 1993).

With these partnerships between business and education, adult basic educators may find themselves working in a new context that presents some interesting challenges. Whenever a workplace literacy project is established, educators of the institution involved in the partnership may be asked to accomplish a variety of duties. Those duties may include any or all the following: conduct a needs assessment; perform a literacy audit; develop program goals and objectives; write job-specific curriculum; orient company liaisons to educational procedures; train employee supervisors who will teach the curriculum; market the program to employees; recruit participants; or, last but not least, actually teach some classes. Along with this list of job duties, educators also may find themselves grappling with the company's political agenda, juggling the needs of the students with the expectations of the company, facing criticism about the traditional approach to teaching in this new environment, or confronting issues regarding the

Teachers in the workplace literacy project may become caught up in the politics of an institution and find that teaching may become more of a tightrope walk between the expectations of company personnel and the needs or goals of the student/employee. Gowen's (1993) research illustrates this dilemma in that teachers created lessons based on job content only to find the students disliked the instruction and resisted the company's telling them what they should learn instead of allowing them to have input into their program of study. Another problem is how an educator deals with the problem of company administrators providing lip service to workplace literacy while the first line supervisors refuse to allow their employees to participate. Because of these potential conflicts, educators must become acculturated to the political climate and learn how to accommodate (Hull, 1993; Gowen, 1992; Galagan, 1990; Breeden & Bowen, 1990).

Yet another difficulty that the educator may face involves how success is measured in this new context. In the workplace, the traditional goals for students—achieve grade level in reading, pass the GED, master fractions in
math—are often replaced by much more nebulous ones—ability to read work orders correctly, ability to write procedures or complete job descriptions. In the workplace, students often are not evaluated by the ability to pass an examination; rather, often the evaluative measure may be degree of improvement as detected by an immediate supervisor. More likely, a teacher's effectiveness in a workplace literacy project may be gauged by whether supervisors of workplace literacy participants can detect a difference in the quality of work or a change in behavior or attitude in the employees. These evaluative measures are much more abstract, and positive or negative results are more difficult to obtain (Keeley, 1990; Philippi, 1988; Mikulecky & Winchester, 1983; Diehl & Mikulecky, 1980).

To exacerbate the situation, often business leaders seem disinterested in the less tangible, often minuscule results that classroom teachers are accustomed to seeing with students. For employee supervisors, the proverbial "bottom line" may be whether an employee can prove competence of a work-related task, not whether the employee has raised the reading portion of the TABE test one grade level. Expecting, even demanding, these "bottom line" results can be a new experience to a public school educator unaccustomed to the business world. While it is not
unreasonable for employers to expect mastery of job specific
tasks, it does present a new perspective for some educators.

Another concern is the overwhelming use of the
traditional approach to teaching in the workplace literacy
projects. Because many teachers have been trained as K-12
public school teachers, a traditional, pedagogical method is
often utilized in many workplace literacy programs. Three
recent publications point out the complexity of providing
workplace-specific instruction in this setting;
specifically, Hull (1993), Gowen (1992), and Schultz (1992)
raise pertinent questions about the use of traditional
methods of teaching coupled with the functional context
approach to teach adults. While basic skills' instruction
may be disguised as workplace-related, teachers are still
relying on the same traditional methods of teaching the
content. Yet, the traditional model of a teacher in front
of the classroom pouring out knowledge to the students is
the very model that, most likely, failed these individuals
in the first place. As Hull (1993, p. 40) specifically
emphasizes, "we should do a serious rethinking of the nature
of the instruction we imagine for workers."

Finally, educators in ABE come from all backgrounds:
elementary education, secondary education, home economics,
reading, math, English. Frequently, they are hired on a
part-time basis. Often, their only preparation and training
for adult education is on-the-job or through self-prescribed professional development. Chall, Heron and Hilferty (1987) pointed this out: "Every major published report on adult literacy cites the problem of part-time, often inadequately trained, and underpaid staff members" (p. 193). As a result, business counterparts—those who are quick to criticize—decry the lack of professional training, particularly with regard to working with adult students (Ford, 1992; Jurmo, 1989).

As adult educators become more involved in workplace literacy, these are some of the issues facing them. How educators are dealing with these issues is important to the profession. Garrett Murphy, New York State Director of Adult Education, warns that "if literacy is not a flash in the pan, if it is to continue to be important, we must be successful. Therefore, we need better ways to teach, and better materials" (Prete, 1990, p. 80). The same applies to workplace literacy.

Statement of the Problem

Because the National Workplace Literacy Program has only been in existence since 1988, very little research has been conducted on the impact of these programs. Little, if any, formal data collection has been conducted in the projects which have been funded since 1988. Likewise, little has been required in the way of program evaluation
for many of these projects (Kutner, Sherman & Webb, 1991). Despite the burgeoning literature on workplace literacy in the last five years, very little is mentioned about teacher qualifications, teacher preparation, or teacher training (Imel & Kerka, 1992). In fact, if teacher training is mentioned at all, the subject is viewed as an area of concern and one that warrants needed research (Hull, 1993; Foucar-Szocki, 1992; Galagan, 1990; Jurmo, 1989). The U. S. Department of Education (1992, May) has also highlighted the need for staff development and training for instructors in workplace literacy programs.

Currently, little training is available for educators to help prepare them for the workplace setting. Most of the knowledge that an educator acquires about workplace literacy is through self-directed learning or on-the-job training. And for the adult basic educator, especially, this approach to teacher training is quite common. Historically, in adult education and adult literacy programs, teachers from any discipline (not to mention those who are not even trained as educators) are allowed to teach ABE and GED classes with little or no pre-service training. According to Kazemek (1988) and Harman (1985), adult teachers, if they have any training at all, have more than likely been trained in elementary or secondary education. And while Balmuth (1986) points out that a person's competence to teach at one level
does not guarantee competency on another level or in another subject area, individuals from a myriad of backgrounds are hired to teach in ABE programs.

Essentially, this study focused on how a selected group of teachers adapted to teaching in a specific context. How did teachers experience teaching in a workplace literacy project? Were teachers able to cope with the needs, wants, and/or demands of those involved in the workplace literacy setting? How did teachers adapt to meet the expectations of all the stakeholders, not only the educational representatives and students but also the company liaisons? This study attempted to develop an understanding of teachers' behaviors in the workplace that might help to address training needs of educators in this setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how a specific group of people functioned in a workplace literacy setting. The experiences which individuals faced as they attempted to teach job-specific skills to adults in an environment other than the traditional educational setting were the focus of this study. From the data collected in this workplace literacy program, information about how teachers coped in this setting were assimilated and compiled. That information provides insight for other educators, novice or experienced, to become more
knowledgeable about this task. The information came from a limited sample—one workplace literacy setting. To accomplish this purpose, the following research questions were posed.

Research Questions

Following is a list of general research issues that served as a guide for the collection of data.

1. How is the workplace literacy project implemented into this work setting?
2. How are educators involved in the development and delivery of the workplace literacy classes?
3. What skills are required of teachers in the workplace literacy project?
4. How are teachers who are assigned to work in the workplace literacy project oriented and/or trained for this context?
5. How does the workplace as the context of literacy education impact these teachers?
   
   (a) How do students view the role of the teacher in the workplace literacy project?
   
   (b) What are the expectations of the company representatives for the educators working in the workplace literacy project?
   
   (c) What are the major issues faced by educators and students in the workplace classroom?
(d) How do management expectations contribute to or diminish these issues?

Significance of the Study

This study proposed to examine the role of the educator in the workplace literacy setting. A study of how educators adapted within a new setting such as a workplace literacy project was significant for several reasons. First, the union of businesses and educational institutions through workplace literacy projects creates a new context in which educators must work. Identifying how those educators cope with this different context could provide a research base for teacher training of future adult educators in similar settings. In addition, the literature reveals a long history of staff development and training needs for ABE teachers in traditional settings; much of that literature substantiates the need for more staff development and training of adult education teachers in general. This study provided insight into the training of ABE teachers for a different setting—the workplace.

Finally, after examining the strategies and materials used in one workplace literacy setting, specific concerns which adult educators faced while adapting to this new setting were discussed. This study contributes to the field of adult education by providing needed research about teachers in workplace literacy programs specifically and
will lend insight to the training of teachers in adult basic education and literacy programs in general.

Limitations

There were limitations to this study. The site was not randomly selected. Because this study involved a case study of a single workplace literacy project, the findings of this study cannot be directly generalized to other workplace literacy projects. However, theoretical generalization was plausible. Finally, the possibility of observer bias was also a limitation.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definition of terms provided the standard of meaning.

1. Adult Basic Education: an education program that provides academic and life coping skills instruction for adults who function below the high school completion level.

2. National Workplace Literacy Project: grants for job-related programs of literacy and basic skills that result in new employment, continued employment, career advancement or increased productivity for workers.

3. Stakeholders: those persons who have a stake in the project being evaluated; those persons who are affected by that entity. In this workplace literacy project, stakeholders include the following: employee/students in the
program, company personnel affected by the project, educators involved in the project, and union officials involved in the project.

4. Workforce Literacy: traditional, academic, basic skills instruction. Included would be ABE, ESL, or GED preparation.

5. Workplace Literacy: job-specific curriculum that has been tailor-made to address an area at the worksite.
CHAPTER 2
THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The National Workplace Literacy Program, as established by the Stafford-Hawkins School Improvement Act of 1988, funded fifty-five projects across the country in 1993. Because many of these projects are partnerships between existing ABE/literacy projects and local industries, much of the curriculum development and instruction is done by practitioners in adult basic education. The purpose of this study was to observe how adult basic educators moved into a new environment and provided instruction in workplace literacy projects. Thus, the review of the literature focused on two inter-related areas: an examination of how educators are currently being prepared to work in a new context, the workplace, and what the literature reveals about the need for staff development for workplace literacy programs; and a brief overview of current practices for staff development and training of adult basic educators in general.

Staff Development and Training in Workplace Literacy Projects

Some authors contend that the workplace literacy movement evolved directly from Thomas Sticht's analysis of literacy demands in the military (Kutner, Sherman, Webb, & Fisher, 1991; Sticht, 1975). In the last twenty years,
however, the issue of literacy in the workplace has received national public attention and has been a campaign plank for many politicians. To find evidence of this increased interest in workplace literacy, one need only to examine the literature. A computerized literature search of Proquest and Infotrac for the terms "workplace literacy" and "literacy" in general produced only five citations for the years 1981-1988; from 1989-1993, there were almost 150. Clearly, workplace literacy is a phenomenon that is being discussed not only in adult education circles, but in the business sector as well. The literature on staff development and training in workplace literacy is presented in four sections: definition of workplace literacy, program delivery, functional context curriculum—a critical perspective, and teacher training for workplace literacy programs.

A Definition of "Workplace Literacy"

A clear consensus on the definition of "workplace literacy" is difficult to obtain. Perhaps the simplest definition is offered by Philippi (1988): "job-specific reading, writing, and computation tasks" (p. 22). Workplace literacy instruction, as outlined by the Department of Education, should "focus on the literacy and basic skills training workers need to gain new employment, retain present
jobs, advance in their careers or increase productivity" (Department of Education Newsletter, 1992, p. 1).

Seemingly, the purpose of workplace literacy programs, at least as far as the National Workplace Literacy Program is concerned, is twofold: (a) to provide basic skills instruction in reading, writing, and math; and (b) to provide higher-order thinking skills and interpersonal relations. In fact, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) makes a critical distinction between the workplace literacy initiative and basic skills education: "The most effective way of learning skills is in context: placing learning objectives within a real environment rather than insisting that students first learn in the abstract what they will be expected to apply" (p. XV). To help individuals complete the goals listed by the Department of Education, workplace literacy educators could be expected to provide a range of educational services quite different from the traditional ABE/GED curriculum typically offered in adult basic education programs.

Some program developers make a distinction between the services that are being provided under the catch-all phrase "workplace literacy" and are differentiating between "workplace literacy and "workforce literacy." The term "workforce literacy" refers to those skills designed to prepare an individual for long-term employment beyond what
the specific job tasks of a person's present job might entail. In contrast, "workplace literacy" refers to the job-specific skills which must be mastered in order to function at a particular job (J. G. Traylor, personal communication, May, 20, 1992; Knell, 1990). Those classes that are determined to be workforce literacy are those that have traditionally been adult basic education and GED preparation; those classes designated as workplace literacy are those that have been developed for the specific work site.

One of the more complete definitions of workplace literacy has been developed by Robert Knower of the New York State Education Department. In an attempt to develop some organizational scheme of the many workplace literacy programs in his state, Knower defines literacy in a continuum and provides information about curriculum development, instruction, and assessment. Table 1 depicts this organizational scheme.

As Knower's diagram illustrates, the word "literacy" can have multiple definitions and the content, curriculum, even the type of program offered, will be determined by how workplace literacy is defined by those who implement the program. Understanding how workplace literacy is defined by each individual project and its stakeholders is important.
# Table 1

**Literacy Defined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy as a...</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill</strong></td>
<td>Largely Based on ABE/GED Skills</td>
<td>Diagnostic/Prescriptive, often Individualized</td>
<td>Standardized Achievement Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td>Literacy Task Analysis Can be Worker Centered</td>
<td>Diagnostic/Prescriptive, Competency-Based Instruction</td>
<td>Criterion-Referenced Tests/Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social &amp; Cultural Practice</strong></td>
<td>Worker Centered, Builds on Learner Strength</td>
<td>Whole Language</td>
<td>Portfolio, Authentic Assessment, Participatory Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Worker Centered Builds on Student Generated Themes</td>
<td>Whole Language, Problem Posing, Continuous Dialogue</td>
<td>Participatory Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Performance</strong></td>
<td>Responsive To TQM Organization Needs Analysis</td>
<td>Whole Language</td>
<td>Participatory Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Delivery

By far, the most common approach used to deliver instruction in workplace literacy programs is through the functional context approach (Sticht, 1987). Essentially, this approach which advocates using job-related materials to teach the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, was popularized by the U. S. Departments of Education and Labor and was outlined in Bottom Line (1988). Currently, a collection of handbooks is available that details the steps in developing a workplace literacy program through the functional context approach: Functional Context Education: Workshop Resource Notebook (Sticht, 1987); Workplace Basics and its companion Workplace Basic Training Manual (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990); and Literacy at Work: The Workbook for Program Developers (Philippi, 1991). These books are designed for the practitioner and provide guidelines for establishing workplace literacy programs. They deal with the "how to" of implementing a workplace literacy program in a site, the mechanics of implementation.

While it may vary from program to program, the following steps to developing a workplace literacy program are critical: perform a literacy audit or job task analysis to determine job specific basic skills requirements and whether the workforce is meeting them, design a training
program, set the goals for the employee basic skills program, assess available resources, recruit the trainers, work with partners, build the curriculum, and evaluate the program (Workplace Literacy: Reshaping the American Workforce, 1992; Philippi, 1991; Carnevale, Gainer & Beltzer, 1990; Bottom Line, 1988; Sticht, 1987). According to Philippi (1991), a well-designed functional context curriculum contains the following components: employee needs assessment, job simulation pretest, lessons modeling how to apply skills to job performance, customized skills application exercises using job materials and scenarios, and job simulation posttest.

Research indicates that most workplace literacy projects deliver instruction in one of four ways.

1. Incorporating basic skill's curriculum as part of the overall HRD program and providing the service by using existing staff.

2. Uniting forces with local community college or adult education/literacy program deliverer to provide instruction.

3. Investing in self-paced, computerized programs.

4. Combining the options in 1, 2, or 3.
Functional Context Curriculum—A Critical Perspective

In examining the literature on workplace literacy in general, it is impossible to ignore the handful of authors who criticize the fundamental philosophy on which workplace literacy is based. Kazemek (1991) likens his criticism of the attempts to develop workplace literacy programs as "tantamount to being against the side of the angels" (p. 52). Yet, he proceeds and asserts that the emphasis of literacy training for employment is not designed to help those in need but to "advance the interests of certain elite groups in society" (p. 52). This philosophy is echoed by Hull (1993) who believes that if we are ever "to create structures for participation in education and work that are equitable and democratic...we must allow different voices to be heard" (p. 21). And, Gowen (1992) in her qualitative study of a workplace project in a rural, Southern hospital also substantiates the claim that the functional context approach in this particular program was used to exercise control (p. 75). She asserts that the use of the functional approach to workplace literacy is, rather than an attempt to help students, an attempt to force employees to conform to what mainstream employers and educators expect.

How does this information relate to a study of what teachers need to know to work in this context? Quite
obviously, by knowing the philosophical, ontological and theoretical constructs upon which any workplace project is based, teachers may be more prepared to deal with the practical, fundamental issues that can and will arise. Also, for all three authors, an absence of employee/student participation in the formulation of the very program which is designed for them has been and will continue to be a detriment. Hull refers to the "other stories"--those of the students--which must and should be heard (p. 44); Kazemek proposes we consider "adult literacy education as storytelling" and not "adult literacy education as consumerism" (p. 61); and Gowen discusses how the differences between employer and employee goals really surfaced only after the project was well underway (p. 108).

Rather than demand that workers participate in educational programs for which they have little ownership, an alternate approach is participatory adult education. In an attempt to address this need for workplace literacy which includes input from all stakeholders, Kay and Sarmiento (1990) have designed a manual on how to develop worker-centered workplace literacy programs. This approach advocates a worker-centered perspective and keeps the program from being basic skills instruction disguised as workplace education. "Without authentic and meaningful worker participation, these literacy programs become
prescribed educational activities that fall far short of meaningfully addressing workers' needs" (Zacharakis-Jutz & Dirkx, 1993, p. 96).

**Teacher Training for Workplace Literacy Programs**

The research is beginning to provide examples of or substantiate the need for extensive staff development and training for practitioners in workplace literacy programs (Kakela, February, 1993; Foucar-Szocki & Mitchell, 1993; Seamon & Newcombe, 1990; Mikulecky & Winchester, 1983). Not surprisingly, little information is available in the literature on how to prepare teachers for working in the workplace literacy setting. However, what is clearly stated in the literature is that educators need to be more prepared to enter this new setting (Hull, 1993; Foucar-Szocki, 1992; Imel & Kerka, 1992; Rose, 1992; Kutner, Sherman, & Webb, 1991; Philippi, 1991; Petrini, 1991; Prete, 1990; Jurmo, 1989; Packer, 1989; Harman, 1985). And, from the 1991 conference of program directors of the second cycle of the National Workplace Literacy Program, five themes emerged as important to the development of workplace literacy programs; theme number three indicates that the range of skills teachers need for work-based programs are best taught through ongoing systems of staff development and networking (Workplace Education: Voices from the Field). The U. S.
Department of Education states that educators who are trained in delivering work-based curriculum are rare; additional training, staff development activities, and the growth of professional associations for workplace literacy educators is crucial to the success of workplace literacy. The report lists staff development as one of the five issues that will shape the future of workplace education programs:

Partnerships are increasingly recognizing that instructors in workplace literacy programs need special skills that extend beyond training for traditional education...Professionalization of the field of workplace literacy instruction will be enhanced most significantly by involvement of full-time staff in high performance organizations and by the growth of professional associations of workplace literacy educators (Workplace Literacy: Reshaping the American Workforce, 1992, p. 62).

Unfortunately, too, is the fact that business and industry may be "on to us" in adult education; in other words, the fact that individuals who work in ABE programs are all too often not specialized in dealing with adults has become public knowledge. For example, Ford (1992) states, "They (business personnel) sometimes rush out and hire consultants or teachers who provide them with off-the-shelf academic or functional literacy programs...(and) wind up disappointed when nothing changes" (p. 54). Even more acidic is Jurmo's evaluation of adult education teachers:

The workplace literacy field needs considerable professional development...Adult literacy people as a rule have very little professional development. Many are school teachers who took an extra job at night to earn a few bucks. They never were trained in adult education. Employers should be aware of that lack in professional
expertise and they should be concerned about it. They should be putting pressure on public-policy makers and others to deal with it (p. 19).

Finally, Hull (1993) offers this description of the type of instruction which is being delivered in the workplace literacy programs:

I am dismayed, then, to see how frequently proposals for and descriptions of workplace literacy programs rely on school-based notions of teaching and learning. Categories for instruction tend to follow traditional models: ESL, basic computer-based programs. Basic skills instruction may be dressed up with occupationally specific materials--hotel workers might practice reading with menus, for example--but the format for the this instruction is a teacher in front of a classroom of students with workbooks and readers (p. 40).

With evaluative comments such as these prominent in the literature, professionals in adult basic education should take a critical look at the training for individuals in workplace literacy programs. And, as the next section on staff development for teachers within the field reveals, historically the lack of teacher training for adult educators has been and continues to be a prevailing problem.

Staff Development and Training in Adult Basic Education

Background

Since its inception, leaders in the field of Adult Basic Education (ABE) have recognized the importance of staff development and training for teachers. In 1966, two years after Adult Basic Education was officially sanctioned by the federal government through the Economic Opportunity
Act, the program was placed in the U. S. Office of Education, and funds were established for every state to employ and train qualified adult educators and to develop curriculum and techniques appropriate for adult learners (Knowles, 1977). From the beginning, the Adult Education Act endorsed the implementation of staff development programs and the need for extensive research of teacher training methods. In an address to a NAPSAE Conference, Dr. Monroe Neff (1968) reported that of twelve issues as determined by the fifty ABE state directors, teacher training ranked number two led only by financing.

After several attempts were made on a national basis to deliver staff development programs to teachers, the responsibility and funding were deferred to individual states in 1975. Research conducted by Hunter and Harman (1979) indicates that, once the states assumed control of staff development funds, a decrease in the effectiveness of both training and experiential activities occurred. While this is not meant to imply that all states developed ineffective staff development programs, once the staff development component was delivered to the states, the inability to identify a common base among staff development programs in the country soon resulted; also, a number of factors made it difficult to deliver staff development and training to practitioners in ABE.
Barriers to ABE Staff Development and Training

Clearly, the most difficult barrier to establishing staff development/training in ABE, and an issue which is familiar to most in adult education, involves the "marginality" of the profession (Clark, undated). Because all persons in adult education--administrators, teachers, and students--participate often on a part-time basis and in fragmented segments of time, it is difficult to impose stringent requirements. The teachers who are involved in ABE either have another full-time career which requires allegiance or they are in ABE only on a part-time basis by choice; therefore, requiring additional staff development and training for these practitioners is difficult.

Furthermore, even if a teacher would like to, the chances of moving into a full-time position with benefits are small, especially with funding continuing to be another major issue. Likewise, the pay incentives are not available to encourage teachers to pursue higher education (Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991; Bowes, 1984). Although many teachers see the relevance of becoming a more knowledgeable of the adult learner, sheer time and economics prohibit graduate school from being a feasible option.

Second, even if teachers wanted to pursue course work in ABE, the opportunities are scarce. Euer (1988) states, "The number and availability of adult education courses
needs to be increased at the college level so that those interested in teaching the ABE student my broaden their educational horizons and level of expertise" (p. 193). At the graduate level in 1988, some 125 institutions offered programs in the general field of adult and continuing education; about half included some basic education component. Still, it is "rare to find fully developed graduate program leading to a master's degree (in adult basic education)" (Business Council for Effective Literacy, 1987, p. 5).

Yet another problem is logistics. Even for teachers who desire additional training, not that many institutions provide course work or support services in adult education. In addition, few colleges of education have teacher trainers who are knowledgeable and experienced specifically in adult learning or in adult basic education. Only recently have colleges of education begun to address the specialized needs of this field, and those that do are relying on traditional forms of teacher training. Again, a barrier: Who wants to get a bachelor's degree and teacher certification in ABE when the best one can hope for is part-time employment?

Perhaps the most critical barrier exists within the field of adult basic education itself. Certification requirements for ABE teachers are minimal or non-existent (Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991; Foster, 1989);
thus, since teachers are not required to be certified, most of them must learn to work with the adult student in other ways, if at all. One study (Reuys, 1987) reports that only eleven states have certification requirements that include special preparation training in adult education, and another fourteen require K-12 or secondary certification. Twenty-five states require no certification at all (Kutner, Herman, Stephenson, & Webb, 1991; Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991).

Most administrators of ABE programs recognize that teachers need additional training to work with adults, that there is a large turnover among the part-time teaching force, and that the attrition rate in ABE programs is high; and most of these administrators focus the blame on economics. Without the ability to reward teachers for continuing their educational pursuits, administrators are reticent to impose restrictions on them that would make additional training mandatory. Some authors, including Kazemek (1988), claim that "the lack of financial support seems to guarantee a lack of professionals" (p. 469).

ABE Staff Development: A Critical Perspective

The lack of training or preparation among practitioners in adult basic education is cited in the literature. Many adult education teachers, if they have any formal training
at all, have been trained in elementary and secondary education; therefore, some critics contend that teachers, despite on-the-job training, may not be attuned to the needs of the adult learner (Kazemek, 1988; Harman, 1985). As Balmuth (1986, p. 30) points out, "a competent elementary teacher does not automatically turn out to be a competent teacher of adults". As Kazemek (1988, p. 469) states, "The fact that most of ABE's 41,000 paid instructors are moonlighting elementary and secondary teachers who have no special training in teaching adults should be a serious issue to those of us who are involved in adult literacy education." And, as the workplace literature has shown, that continued lack of training will only continue to serve as a deficit.

The reasons given for ABE teachers being inadequately trained are numerous: most of the teachers are part-time (Kazemek, 1988); the pay incentives are not available to encourage teachers to pursue additional training (Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991; Kutner, Herman, Stephenson, & Webb, 1991; Bowes, 1984); vague activities, general apathy, and lack of communication (Bowes, 1984; Moore & Hoskins, 1982); and while the development of innovative approaches to literacy education and ABE staff development are actually supported by Section 310 of the Adult Education
Act, proven innovations are difficult to implement on a large scale (Berlin, 1984; Leahy, 1986).

Unfortunately, the lack of the trained professional is often highlighted as the scapegoat for many of the woes which plague adult basic and ESL education services (Foster, 1989; Kazemek, 1988; Harman, 1985). Teachers are hired, often at the last minute, expected to walk into a classroom filled with adults all functioning on different levels, and teach. Sadly, the teacher finds himself or herself just trying to survive while madly learning everything possible about this new world of teaching adults. And, with the infusion of workplace literacy into adult basic education, the part-time educator finds herself, once again, trying to survive, this time while learning about an entirely different environment, the workplace.

Efforts to improve ABE teacher training and staff development are also well-documented in the literature (Jorgenson, 1990; Hemphill, 1990; Nunes & Halloran, 1987; Reuys, 1987; Fellenz & Conti, 1985; Jones & Lowe, 1985; Fellenz & Conti, 1984; Mocker & Spear, 1982; Mocker, 1974; Ganeles, 1974). Despite efforts to provide staff development and training to practitioners in adult basic education, critics question the approaches. By far, the most common form of staff development in adult education is the workshop. One major concern, however, is that the one-
shot preservice or inservice workshop may not be the most effective means of delivering the material. Rather, an ongoing staff development program using a myriad of strategies and techniques seems to provide more success. Tibbetts (1991) states,

Until we stop fragmented, one-shot presentations under the guise of staff development, and build cohesive, sequential staff development programs, we will continue to have fragmented learning without effective transfer. The process of staff development must mirror the process of student learning for both to be effective (p. 6).

In an attempt to address the concern as described by Tibbetts, many staff development professionals have implemented more proactive approaches to teacher training (Marlowe, Branson, Childress & Parker, 1991; Smith & Bowes, 1986; Jones & Lowe, 1985; Fellenz & Conti, 1985). In addition, some research has been and is being conducted on what methods of staff development are most effective with ABE instructors. Many of these methods are cited and duplicated in the literature. Most often listed include site visitations, summer institutes, regional workshops, technical assistance teams, internships, teacher observation/classroom visitations; video/audio feedback; practice; formal adult education training; self-directed learning; peer coaching; and action research (Kutner, Herman, Stephenson, & Webb, 1991; Jones & Lowe, 1985; Bowes, 1984; Dade, 1984; Fellenz & Conti, 1984).
Conclusions

In the literature on staff development and training for adult basic educators, several points are well documented. First, staff development and teacher training were intended to be considered as integral components of any ABE program. Second, a number of barriers have impeded the establishment of a broad-based training program for practitioners in ABE. Third, ABE has not been without criticism of its staff development and training for teachers; however, despite the criticism, or perhaps because of it, those dedicated to professional development of ABE practitioners have continued to work toward comprehensive staff development programs. Finally, the field of ABE must continue to answer the challenge (Kutner, Herman, Stephenson, & Webb, 1991; Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991; Kreitlow, 1991) to develop a training delivery system that can address the needs of ABE practitioners. And now, those needs have been expanded to include working in a new context: the workplace literacy project.

What implications does this research have on a study of practitioners in workplace literacy projects? Since many of the workplace literacy projects are manned by adult basic educators, the concern is, of course, that staff development and training for workplace literacy will be "business as usual." In fact, the workplace literacy literature reports very little on training for teachers in the context of these
programs. Most of the focus has been on the development of the program curriculum and delivery; and most recently, some professionals are questioning the effectiveness of the functional context approach in workplace literacy programs. Emphasized, too, in these critical assessments is the lack of training for professionals who teach in the workplace literacy programs.

The adult basic education literature on staff development and training provides a basis for developing staff development and training for practitioners in workplace literacy projects. That, coupled with the literature on workplace literacy in general, offers support that an examination of how educators are functioning within workplace literacy projects is important.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

In this chapter are presented the population and setting of this research, the description of the research design, the process of data collection, and the method of data analysis. The qualitative case study method was used to study how educators adapt to working in a new context. The framework for this research was developed around broad research questions.

Population and Setting

The population for this study included participants of a National Workplace Literacy Project which was awarded to a community college and an industry in rural Texas. This project was selected primarily because of its geographical proximity to the researcher; but also this project provided the researcher the opportunity to examine one of the national workplace literacy projects to see how basic skills education is being provided in this new setting.

The college and the industry joined forces to provide literacy instruction to employees in a rural, economically oppressed area. The area has a well-documented need for workplace literacy programs for two reasons: this area has one of the highest percentages of illiteracy reported in the state; and it also contains a high proportion of
economically disadvantaged and displaced workers. Many of the displaced workers were laid off by the same company that is participating in this national workplace literacy project. Located in a rural, agrarian area that was heavily hit by the recession of the 1980's, this workplace literacy project was established to address some of the educational needs of this area.

The setting for this study is similar to other workplace literacy projects in that it is a union of industry and education to provide a service to the employees. Also, like many other government-funded projects as this, the project's curriculum is based on the SCANS competencies, (a series of five competencies and a three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities that the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills deemed necessary for effective job performance); and the project director used the functional context approach to develop job-specific curriculum. Both ABE teachers and employee supervisors are providing classroom instruction; the ABE teachers provide basic skills instruction and the employee supervisors or college instructors provide instruction in job specific curriculum in the technical areas which was developed by the project director.

This particular setting is unique, however, in that the project administrators chose to make a clear distinction
between many of the activities that in many other programs are all grouped under workplace literacy. For this project, two distinct sub-divisions were created: workforce literacy and workplace literacy.

Workforce Literacy and Workplace Literacy

A distinction was made between workforce literacy and workplace literacy in this particular project. Project administrators defined workforce literacy as "traditional, academic, basic skill's instruction" (J. G. Traylor, personal communication, September 15, 1993). Workforce literacy instruction included any of the following activities: adult basic education, English as a second language, GED preparation, basic math and writing for the workplace, application and resume writing, goal setting, and interpersonal skills. Workplace literacy, in contrast, was defined as "job-specific curriculum that has been tailor-made to address an area at the worksite" (J. G. Traylor, personal communication, September 15, 1993). For this particular project, workplace literacy classes were developed to address technical writing, specialty tubing math, statistical process control, and mechanical physics.

The students involved in the workforce literacy classes were further classified into two categories: those who are employed by the company and those who are not.
Because the educational services of a project such as this could benefit the community as well as the employees, the company and the college personnel agreed that the workforce literacy classes should be made available to the entire community, in addition to the employees. In the workplace literacy classes, however, only employees were encouraged to participate.

Participation in the workforce literacy classes was purely voluntary for the employees. While some employees are in need of a GED or other credentials, they were not released from work to attend classes; however, the company does encourage participation in the workforce literacy classes by scheduling the classes at convenient times so employees may take advantage of them and by reimbursing the cost of the GED examination once an individual has taken it.

Participation in the workplace literacy classes may or may not be voluntary. In the workplace literacy classes, some of the students are college graduates but were expected to participate in order to enhance a skill which they use on the job. Table 2 illustrates the program participation.

The teachers who provided instruction in these two categories were a diverse group. In the workforce literacy classes, instructors were, for the most part, ABE teachers
Table 2

Student Participation: National Workplace Literacy Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE--VOLUNTEER</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE--NON-VOLUNTEER</th>
<th>NON-EMPLOYEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WORKFORCE LITERACY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ABE</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*GED</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Writing Skills</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Success2000</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKPLACE LITERACY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Technical Writing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Specialty Tubing Math</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Statistical Process Control</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Mechanical Physics</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or college instructors who had some experience working with basic skills. The teachers were all certified teachers with a variety of backgrounds, including mathematics, elementary education, home economics, and English. In the workplace literacy classes, the teachers were either employee supervisors who had no background in education or educators trained for a specific area (i.e., computer training or English/writing). Employee supervisors were selected to teach statistical process control, specialty tubing math, and mechanical physics; certified teachers taught the Technical Writing. The curriculum for the workplace literacy classes was developed, for the most part, by the project director. In some instances, the project director or a college instructor served as the instructor (such as Resume Writing and Technical Writing).

Before the start-up of the workplace literacy project, the teachers received no formal staff development or training. Teachers who were hired to teach in the workplace literacy classes received a one-on-one orientation with the project director and were encouraged to work closely with her as the classes were conducted; teachers who were hired to work in the workforce literacy classes were handled as other adult basic education teachers and expected to participate in the staff development activities for the cooperative's ABE staff.
Research Design

A case study research method was used in this study to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of a workplace literacy program, and from that information to determine what educators must know to function in that context. This study examined the implications for teacher training in a workplace literacy project; because very little research has been done on strategies for training teachers in this setting, the most plausible method was an inductive design. In addition, the inductive design allowed the researcher to go into the setting and to ask "how" teachers were coping in this setting and to gather a rich, thick description of the context, not only from the teacher's perspective but also from the employee supervisors, project administrators, and student/employees as well. By using this research method, respondents were not limited to brief reactions which survey research would dictate; rather, an in-depth examination of this setting was allowed through inductive study. Case study research provided the opportunity to monitor the experiences of educators as they prepared to work in this new setting and to see firsthand what information might make this process easier.

The case study method allowed for the collection of data from all the primary stakeholders, including educators, students, and company personnel. For this qualitative case
study, the raw data included transcripts from interviews, participant observation field notes, investigator diary entries, and information from documentary analysis. These four data gathering procedures are four of the five procedures as outlined by Merriam and Simpson (1989). Participant observation and in-depth interviews were used at the site to gather information about teacher training needs. Finally, the researcher maintained a diary of daily activities, thoughts, feelings, and reactions.

Instrumentation

In a qualitative study, the investigator serves as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Simpson, 1984). Using the case study (which describes and interprets a situation or social unit from the perspective of the researcher), observations and interviews were conducted. A series of interview questions as well as a schedule of observations and interviews were used to serve as a guide to the continuous data gathering and analysis process. See Appendix A for a copy of the interview questions and Appendix B for an observation and interview schedule.

Collection of Data

Data collection for this study focused on what teachers were experiencing as they moved into the workplace literacy
setting. The data was collected through observations and interviews. Marshall & Rossman (1989, p. 109) indicate in chart form that to obtain information about institutionalized norms and statuses, the method "interviewing informants" is considered the "most effective and hence best form"; to obtain incidents or histories, the "observation" format is cited as "best suited." Thus, to gather information about institutional status of teacher training needs through specific incidents and/or individual histories, this researcher relied primarily on the interview and observation techniques.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to equip the researcher with experience in qualitative case study method, to acquaint the workplace literacy participants with the researcher to establish familiarity and trust, and to field test observation schedules and interview schedules. The researcher visited the site on at least twenty different occasions and conducted four separate classes during the pilot study. The classes included Writing for the Workplace and Writing for the GED in the workforce literacy program, and Technical Writing in the workplace literacy program. In addition, the researcher conducted six interviews: one with the project director, one with an ABE teacher, one with the
employee liaison, and three with students. The project administrators also provided the researcher with copies of all the data collection instruments that had been administered as well as copies of the participant responses. A detailed description of the pilot study is included in Chapter 4.

The pilot study lasted for five months. During that time, the researcher was able to build familiarity and trust among the students, faculty, and administrators. The pilot study also helped to establish the parameters of the study: who should be interviewed, how and when the participant observations should be conducted, and which procedures should be used for data collection. Data from the pilot study was not included in the final study; however, observations from the pilot study served to direct the researcher as a schedule of participant observations and interviews was developed. (See Appendix B for a copy of the schedule.)

Observation of Classes

The researcher began formal data collection in January, 1994. First, a series of participant observation sessions were established. These were designed to gather data from both the workforce literacy and the workplace literacy classes. They are participant observations because the
researcher acted both as an observer and also as a participant; the researcher was invited to teach one class of Technical Writing in the workplace literacy component so as to experience the classroom in the work setting firsthand; in addition, the researcher conducted Writing for the GED classes for the workforce literacy component. The researcher visited classes in both workforce and workplace literacy and recorded observations of how the teachers were functioning in the context of this setting.

Because of the diversity of activities being conducted through this national workplace literacy project, it was determined that observations of each of the different types of classes should be conducted, thereby providing a wider variety of individual teacher experiences. To continue to strengthen the level of trust, the researcher visited classes frequently and made herself available both before and after class; using this strategy, opportunities for informal discussions about the teaching process occurred. Also, the researcher conducted writing classes in both the workforce literacy and workplace literacy programs.

Table 3 lists both the workforce literacy classes and the workplace literacy classes. While most of the workforce literacy classes began in January, 1993, they are either recurring classes or ongoing in an individualized, learning center format; observations in these classes occurred during
the pilot study and continued throughout the study. Because the curriculum had to be customized for the specific worksite, the workplace literacy classes had differing start-up dates. These classes were conducted as soon as the curriculum was developed and a teacher was identified. Observations in these classes also began during the pilot study, but the majority were observed from January through May, 1994. (See Appendix B for an observation schedule and Appendix C for a listing of field notes of observations.)

**Interviews**

Finally, as another means of data collection, interviews were conducted. These interviews were scheduled to occur toward the end of the data collection process so that the researcher could continue to develop deeper levels of trust among primary stakeholders.

An interview has been described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Marshall & Rossman, quoting Kahn & Cannell, 1989, p. 82; Merriam quoting Webb, 1988, p. 72; Dexter, 1970, p. 136). The initial interviews, which were scheduled to last for one and one half hours, were tape recorded. The researcher described at the start of the interview how the process would work. (See Appendix C for a copy of the script describing the process.) After the interview, the researcher transcribed the entire tape and entered the data
### Table 3

**National Workplace Literacy Project: Schedule of Classes**

#### Workforce Literacy Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length of Class</th>
<th>Title of Class</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1993 – May 1994</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>ABE/GED</td>
<td>ABE Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1993</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Writing for the Workplace</td>
<td>Project Director/ABE Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1993</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Math for the Workplace</td>
<td>ABE Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1993</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Application/Resume Writing</td>
<td>Project Director/Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1993</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Success 2000: Goal Setting/Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>College Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Workplace Literacy Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length of Class</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1992 – May 1994</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Technical Writing</td>
<td>Project Director/ABE Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1994 – May 1994</td>
<td>2-two hour sessions</td>
<td>Mechanical Physics</td>
<td>Employee Supervisors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
into Ethnograph. A copy of the transcribed interview was sent to the interviewee along with a cover letter. (See Appendix D for a copy of the cover letter that was sent to participants.) If subsequent interviews were conducted, these were added to the end of the initial interview. In some instances, if, for example, one question or point was discussed, the information was recorded in the field note observations.

The pilot study provided a means for determining which stakeholders should be interviewed to determine how teachers were functioning in the workplace literacy context. Individuals who could potentially be interviewed were divided into categories. The three categories include employee/students, instructors, and administrative personnel, both company and educational. Those categories insured that all stakeholders would be considered for selection.

The pilot study also allowed the researcher to establish contact with the individuals involved in the workplace literacy project. From that initial contact, nine individuals were identified: the Project Administrator, the Project Director, the Employee Liaison, the terminated full-time GED teacher, the full-time Success2000 teacher, the part-time GED instructor who was sent to work in the Adult
Education Center, the Employee Instructor in the Specialty Tubing Department, and two students.

**Employee/Students.**

The selection of student interviewees occurred early in the study. During the pilot study, it was discovered that only two employees were taking advantage of the workforce literacy program (GED preparation), so both men were asked if they would agree to an interview. They did. Because all the other participants in the workforce literacy program were non-employees, these two men were interviewed formally during the data collection phase. There were several reasons for selecting these two individuals. First, both men had already been interviewed once informally, and they had seen the researcher at the plant off and on for eighteen months; thus, that level of trust continued to solidify. Second, because of the interaction with these two men during the duration of the project, and because a year had lapsed between the dates of the interviews, these men were observed during the entire project. Third, one of the two men was also involved in the specialty tubing classes in the workplace literacy component; because he had availed himself of every opportunity this grant had provided, he proved to be a valuable person to interview. Finally, both students had also participated in the Success2000 classes, although not voluntarily.
Instructors.

The educators who worked in this program represented a range of experiences and backgrounds. To illustrate this diversity, the educators were categorized, based on their experiences as educators. First, the employee instructor who taught the SPC classes had no training as an educator; his degree is in business and finance. Second, the Success2000 instructor had experience in college teaching only but none in the work environment. Third, the project director was experienced as a public school and college educator and curriculum writer but had not taught adult basic education. Fourth, there was an experienced ABE/GED teacher (certified as public school teacher) who had no training or experience in the workplace. Finally, the terminated teacher had experience as a public school teacher but had never taught adults, either in the workplace or ABE/GED. In addition, the researcher, whose experiences range from public school, to ABE/GED, to college level instruction as well as English as a Second Language in the workplace, served as an instructor. Table 4 depicts this range of experiences.

Administrative Personnel.

Three individuals were classified under administrative personnel. First, the employee liaison was identified as an administrator for the project because she was involved in
the project from the beginning and she served as the company contact for all aspects of the grant. She also had an active part in the selection of some of the instructors who taught the classes. She and the two college representatives included in this category worked very closely to develop and sell the workplace literacy project to management. The two college representatives include the Dean of Adult and Developmental Education from the college who is identified as the project administrator; and the project director, also an employee of the college. The project administrator was responsible primarily for the fiscal affairs of the grant, while the project director worked with task analysis, curriculum development, and instruction.

Analysis of the Data

Data analysis was a continuing, ongoing process during the data collection. As research was gathered, the data was transcribed and translated into a usable format for analysis. To analyze the data, the five steps suggested by Marshall & Rosin (1989) were followed: (a) organize the data, (b) generate categories, themes and patterns, (c) test the emergent hypotheses against the data, (d) search for alternative explanations of the data, and (e) write the report.
### Table 4.

**Varied Teaching Backgrounds of Educators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Secondary Education</th>
<th>College University Teaching</th>
<th>ABE/GED Instructor</th>
<th>HRD/Company Training</th>
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</table>
Organize the Data

During this stage of data analysis, the researcher collected data using the field notes from observation, transcripts of the interviews, and the personal log of daily activities, thoughts, feelings, and reactions. All of these were transcribed onto a word processor and labeled either FNO (field notes from observation), IT (interview transcript), or PL (personal log); in addition, each entry was given a numerical identification as well. This information was processed using a computer assisted program, The Ethnograph.

The interviews were conducted using the questions in Appendix A. Responses to the questions were audio taped and transcribed. (See Appendix D for an introduction to the taping session.) A copy of the transcript was sent to the interviewees for verification. (See Appendix E for a sample of the letter sent to interviewees.) In addition, the field notes from the observations and the personal log of daily activities were transcribed. (Appendix C contains a listing of field note observation sessions.) Once the data were loaded into The Ethnograph, the researcher began to assign codes to the information. The codes signified categories, and the data were coded into as many categories as possible. Initially, the information was logged chronologically and grouped into the three categories: (a) employee/student
response, (b) instructor response, and (c) administrative personnel response. As the coding continued, categories were collapsed, and reorganization of the data became necessary. To insure anonymity, interviews were all grouped together and labeled merely IT (interview transcript) with a numerical identification. To illustrate or provide support, quotes are used heavily as data sources. Appendix F contains the excerpted interviews for the quotes used in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The researcher kept a log as coding occurs to describe the reasons for the category development.

**Generate Categories, Themes & Patterns**

The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glassier & Strauss, 1967, pp. 107-112; Goober, 1978, p. 56). When the coding of the observation sessions, field notes, interviews, and memos was completed, the researcher established a system of reorganization. Using a "cut and paste" method, the researcher organized the data into 763 code words initially.

As the second iteration of coding began, the researcher used two means to collapse the information. First, the code words that were repeated were grouped together. A personal journal entry explains this decision:

I have been completely through the data and have compiled 763 code words. I can recall that many of the passages were given similar or repetitive codes. Now, I will go
back through the data and will group together any repetitive codes I find (PL Memo 26).

Once the repetitive codes were collapsed, the researcher used a second technique for organizing the data. For the categories which seemed similar, yet different, the researcher contacted the interviewees for clarification and discussion. Again, a personal journal entry describes this process:

Well, collapsing repetitive codes certainly helped to eliminate so many stacks, but I still have several categories which I am not sure about. I will check informally with the person I interviewed and, after discussing these codes with them, I will see how these fit (PL Memo 28).

Once this second iteration was completed, the data were subsequently collapsed into 376 codes. From that point, the researcher began to develop organizational patterns for the remaining 376 code words. As these 376 codes were placed in categories, over one-third pertained to the role of the teacher in this setting: (a) teacher attitudes, (b) teacher behaviors, (c) teacher qualities, (d) classroom techniques and (e) classroom strategies. The second most frequent with 43 codes was (f) teacher training ideas and (g) teacher training approaches. Next were (h) teacher qualifications and a category labeled (i) unique problems. In addition, (j) areas of company involvement, (k) a definition of workplace literacy, and (l) understanding of workplace
culture also emerged as categories. Finally, (m) outcomes for students and (n) company goals were also developed.

Another iteration of the data was conducted at this stage. Of the fourteen original categories, only six remained in tact: Definition of Workplace Literacy, Workplace Culture, Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Behaviors, Teacher Qualities, and Teacher Qualifications. However, because of the ambiguity among categories and the repetition of ideas, much of the information separated and placed under the four categories related to teachers had to be re-coded. It was determined that a large category, the Role of the Teacher, would be developed with three meta-categories: Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Qualities, and Teacher Qualifications. The categories Teacher Training Ideas and Approaches and Classroom Techniques and Classroom Strategies also emerged as ambiguous categories, each overlapping with the others, so a category entitled the Workplace Literacy Classroom was developed. Likewise, Company Goals and Areas of Company Involvement were combined into one category--Company Involvement; also, Unique Problems and Outcomes for Students were combined into a category labeled the Workplace Literacy Student. This subsequent restructuring of the categories resulted in six total categories: (a) A Definition of Workplace Literacy; (b) Awareness of the Company Culture; (c) The Workplace Literacy Student; (d) the
Workplace Literacy Classroom; (e) Company Involvement; and (f) the Role of the Teacher. A description of each of the categories, the properties of each category, along with stories of the participants, is included in Chapter 6.

As categories began to emerge from the coded data, new pieces of data were compared with the existing categories to determine if they fit or if a new category should be established, hence the name constant comparison method.

**Testing Emergent Hypotheses & Searching for Alternative Hypotheses**

During this stage, the themes about what information would aid teachers in this new context was evaluated for plausibility, credibility, and usefulness. In addition, the researcher evaluated the central themes that had emerged against the research questions to determine whether the questions had been thoroughly examined. Finally, during this stage the researcher looked for any other explanations for the data and the linkages among them.

**Write the Report**

As part of the analytic process, the researcher compiled the results in written form. Chapter 4 provides a description of the Pilot Study; Chapter 5 gives a description of the workplace literacy project; Chapter 6 lists the findings; and Chapter 7 includes a summary of the
findings and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 4
PILOT STUDY

During the spring of 1993, a pilot study of the workplace literacy site was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was two-fold: to familiarize the researcher with qualitative case study research and with the study site; and to acquaint workplace literacy participants with the researcher to build familiarity and trust.

It was not the intent of the pilot study to gather data for the dissertation; rather, it was intended to gain access to the worksite, to develop a relationship with the stakeholders in the program, and to develop an understanding of this workplace literacy program. To that end, four general questions guided the researcher through the pilot study.

1. How are students/employees responding to the workplace literacy program?
2. How has the workplace literacy program affected the employees' behavior at work?
3. How is the program being perceived by participants and stakeholders?
4. How are educators experiencing the workplace literacy project?
Activities during the Pilot Study

In implementing the pilot study, the first step was to establish contact and rapport with the primary stakeholders of the research grant. From the grant funding, two areas were being developed and implemented. In the workforce literacy program, the company and the college representatives collaboratively established a Grand Opening/Open House for the new learning center that would be available for employees and community people alike on January 12, 1993; this event also marked the beginning of the pilot study which lasted for five months. At the learning center, a new teacher had been hired to conduct traditional adult basic education activities that were available to both employees and community people. Meanwhile in the workplace literacy component, the project director was developing and implementing Technical Writing classes for employees; conducting a task analysis for the specialty tubing department of the company; and hiring a teacher to develop and conduct Success2000, a series of workshops/classes for both employees and JTPA-eligible participants on workplace-related issues. Table 5 provides a schedule of activities that the researcher participated in during throughout the pilot study.
Table 5.

Pilot Study: Schedule of Activities

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<th>Activity</th>
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| January 12, 1993  | Attend Open House  
|                   | Lone Star Literacy Center |
| January 19, 1993  | Visit with Dean of Adult Education |
| February 15, 1993 | Interview Project Director |
| February 26, 1993 | Interview ABE Teacher |
| March 8, 1993     | Interview Hospital Administrator about her needs for Workplace Literacy Program |
| March 18, 1993    | Observe Classes |
| March 22-23, 1993 | Conduct Technical Writing Class |
| April 12-15, 1993 | Conduct Basic Writing Class |
| April 13, 1993    | Meet with Employee Liaison |
| April 17-21, 1993 | Observe Classes |
| May 3-6, 1993     | Conduct Basic Writing II Class |
| May 5, 1993       | Meet with Dean & Director of ABE Program |
| May 8-13          | Observe Classes |
| May 26, 1993      | Participate in Evaluation of Program |
| May 27, 1993      | Attend Meeting with Grant Evaluation Team |
Observations in Workforce Literacy

Initially, the GED program was considered by administrators to be a tremendous success. Classes were offered on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:00 a.m. until noon, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Over eighty-five students were enrolled. While some employees took advantage of the Adult Education Center, most of the students enrolled were community people, taking advantage of the proximity of the Center. A GED teacher and an aide were hired for the program.

The GED teacher had experience as a public school teacher; however, he had never taught in any kind of adult education program. Ambiguity about his role, to whom he reported, and the relationship of the GED program to the rest of the workplace literacy program surfaced almost immediately:

From my observations, I can see a lot of confusion. [The GED teacher] is not clear to whom he should report: the company liaison, who physically is close by and who visits the center on occasion; the ABE director at the college from who he gets materials and supplies; or the project director of the Workplace Literacy Project under whose direction the grant is being completed (PSO #8).

The new GED teacher experienced ambiguity in several areas. First, he had a job that was completely new to him. He did not know exactly what the GED examination covered, nor how to present the material to students. Relying on his experiences as an educator, he conducted classes in a
traditional format in the one area that all students indicated a need based on pre-assessments, mathematics. However, administrators were unhappy to find students all working on the same material at the same pace.

[The GED teacher] is conducting his classes in a traditional format. I can tell that the employee liaison and the project director would rather see a more individualized approach being utilized. Also, the project director wants to see this Hypergraphics system being used. However, [the teacher] is doing all he can just to stay ahead of his classes. He doesn't appear to have the time or the inclination to learn how to use the system now (PSO #10).

Yet another indication that the teacher's inexperience in the ABE setting occurred while I was conducting a Writing Seminar for GED students:

Today, as I was teaching how to write for the GED essay, I was astounded (and saddened) at how many of the questions were posed, not by the students, but by [the GED teacher]. As I discussed potential topics for the essay portion of the GED, he asked, "Glenda, how could I obtain some of these copies?" I asked, "Do you not have any GED workbooks from any of the various publishers? There should be topic ideas there?" He honestly had never seen these books, and classes have been going on for almost two months now (PSO #21).

Finally, a third incident occurred that indicated how this individual would have benefited from some orientation to the program:

I learned today that [the GED teacher] went to Longview today to look for literacy materials at an education supply store. I questioned him on why he would drive all the way to Longview (50 miles) when the college had not only materials but staff that should be able to help with that. He responded, "Well, I didn't know that, and I felt it would be easier just to go to the education supply place myself!" (PSO #17)
By March 1993, the GED teacher was frustrated on two counts. First, experiences such as the ones listed above had made the job difficult. Second, attendance had begun to dwindle. Despite reassurances that attrition is not uncommon in ABE programs, he still felt responsible and wanted to "do something" to make the students want to attend. In addition to these issues, he experienced a confrontation with the Workplace Literacy Project Director.

Once the program, Success2000, was developed, plans were made to implement it into this workforce literacy project, as well as in several neighboring programs. To be successful, the class needed numbers and documentation of attendees was necessary. The project director saw the curriculum for Success2000 as being beneficial to all students, including those who had getting a GED as their primary goal. Therefore, she assumed the students would want to participate and that the GED instructor would encourage them to do so as well. However, when students voiced concern about giving up their content-related classes (math, writing) for Success2000, the GED teacher, choosing to support the students' goals rather than the institution's, did not require that they attend the Success2000 classes. This resulted in conflict between the GED teacher and the Project Director.
Finally, in late March, sensing that the GED teacher might need some help, the ABE Director asked another GED teacher, one with many years of experience, to spend a few hours at the Adult Education Center to help the new teacher and to attempt to build the program's attendance back up. However, the situation did not improve. By August, the situation had deteriorated to the point that the GED teacher was asked to leave. And he, in his frustration with the way the program was being managed, willingly obliged. The ABE Director hired a replacement, this time asking the part-time teacher to be available from the beginning to mentor the new teacher, and classes resumed in the fall of 1993.

Observations in Workplace Literacy

While the GED program was getting underway, the project director was conducting classes in Technical Writing for employees and creating curriculum for classes in the specialty tubing department.

A total of five Technical Writing classes were conducted. The project director taught four of them and the researcher was invited to teach one class. The class was conducted in two sessions, each session lasting two hours. The classes were conducted between shifts; thus, the employees were either finishing an eight-hour shift or beginning an eight-hour shift. Participation was mandatory;
however, employees were paid for their time. Class numbers ranged from ten to twenty; all levels of the company were represented. A manual which the project director had developed was used as a basis of the course. The purpose for the course was to increase organizational skills in writing to enable employees to write standard operating procedures for every job in the plant. All educational levels were present in the classes, from college graduates to those needing GED's.

Establishment of Trust

For any qualitative research project, the issue of establishing trust can be both the most difficult and the most crucial element to the success of the study. For this project, the researcher spent a great deal of time and effort to establish trust.

During the pilot study, it became apparent that the development of trust would require more time than was anticipated. Suspicion about the researcher's motives and just how the researcher "fit in" were high and it took several months for the participants to relax and open up to the researcher.

To facilitate trust, the researcher worked as a teacher part-time during the pilot study. Not only did this increase accessibility to the students, it also identified the researcher as a "team member" and increased trust with
the staff as well. In addition, the researcher spent a
great deal of time counseling a new teacher who had received
no prior training in working with ABE/GED students; this
also heightened trust between the researcher and a potential
interviewee.

By the end of the five-month pilot study, the primary
stakeholders had come to recognize and include the
researcher in meetings and discussions. Students nodded and
spoke and called the researcher by name. The employee
liaison had begun to understand the purpose for being at the
worksite so often. Finally, company personnel had come to
identify the researcher:

Today I arrived at the research site in the van instead
of my Volkswagen. The security guard stopped me, and
when he recognized who I was, he laughed and said, "Go
ahead, Glenda. I didn't recognize you since you weren't
in your little red bug! (PSO #33)

Methods of Data Collection

Data for the pilot study were collected three ways: (a)
interviews, (b) observations of classes, and (c) field notes
from personal experiences in the classroom.

Interviews with the Dean of Adult Education, the
Project Director, the Company's Personnel Director, and the
ABE teacher who was newly hired to work in this program were
conducted. To gain familiarity with case study research
gathering methods, the researcher transcribed as much of the
interviews as possible. These interviews were not taped.
It was determined that, to build trust, the first sessions needed to be more informal and less structured. These transcripts gave the researcher an opportunity to practice and work with Ethnograph to become familiar with the process.

Next, the researcher conducted a series of classroom observations to determine if or how the teachers conducted the classes any differently from traditional classes. The researcher observed in the four different sessions that were available to GED students; in addition, observations of the three workforce literacy classes (Math in the Workplace, Success2000, Job Applications/Resume Writing) were completed. These activities helped to build trust among participants and alleviated their concerns about "who this person was" and "why she was snooping around the program."

Finally, so that the researcher could understand how teaching in this setting might differ from the traditional classroom, the project director suggested that the researcher teach a Technical Writing class, one of the classes designated workplace literacy. This activity also helped the students recognize the researcher and associate her as "one of them." A diary of the researcher's feelings, reactions, frustrations, and ideas was maintained.
Categorizing the Data

The data gathered from the pilot study were compiled, recorded, and categorized into Ethnograph under the heading Pilot Study Observations. Specific examples are cited with the identifying label PSO and line numbers, indicating the place where data may be found. The data were then categorized under four general questions which guided the study. Each question is discussed in this section.

How are student/employees responding to the workplace literacy program?

The students who enrolled and attended the structured literacy classes and/or the adult learning center did so voluntarily. As a whole, the group seemed genuinely pleased to have the opportunity made available to them. When asked about the reasons for participation in the program, respondents had a variety of reactions. The most popular response was for "personal satisfaction" followed by "to obtain a GED." Many of the class members and all of those interviewed also expressed a desire to continue their education. At the adult education center, students were hopeful that college classes would be offered on-site. When asked whether they saw participation as a means for maintaining job security, the respondents were very pragmatic. Several answered that it "would not help them
get a promotion" or that "there is no chance for advancement in my present position." They did, however, agree that participating in the educational program would demonstrate to the company that they (the student/employees) were eager to improve themselves through education, and they were hopeful that their participation would increase job security.

During the five-month pilot study, students voiced dissatisfaction only once. The students who were enrolled in the GED classes at the Adult Education Center were strongly encouraged to participate in the program Success2000. However, they expressed concerns to their instructor who, in turn, spoke to the project director. The administration felt that participating in the Success2000 curriculum would only help the GED students and expected the GED instructor to "require" the GED students to participate. The students were concerned about losing class time which they felt they needed to work on math and reading skills for the exam, and they failed to understand how the curriculum from Success2000 would address their immediate need.

In the workplace literacy classes (Technical Writing), attendance was considered voluntary, but employees were "strongly encouraged" to attend. Most did so willingly; however, the researcher did experience ambivalence about participation from one student:
Today I conducted my first Technical Writing class for the workplace literacy project. There were twelve company employees; in addition, six GED students sat in on the class. All of the participants were polite, participative and responsive to the class activities. Only two men indicated to me at the end of the class that they "didn't want to be there." However, because they had been told to be there by their supervisor and because the class was not "too painful" (their words), they would sit through the class and participate willingly. I did note that their writing skills were lacking and needed some real attention (PSO, 71-83).

Participants in the Technical Writing classes ranged from having college degrees to needing GED's. Their job duties ranged from line foremen to engineers. One observation which the researcher documented in her personal journal indicated that the more education the participant had, the more tolerant of the training the person seemed to be:

I'm not sure how much the engineers felt the class had helped them. They were "model students" and responded in all the right ways, but I don't know how much of that was from conditioning from being in the classroom more than some of the other students, and how much was from truly benefiting from the class. Could it be that the more education a person has or the higher the level of position in the company, the more comfortable the person is with accepting the fact that the training was provided to help the employees. The lower the education level or the lower position in the company, the more likely the person seemed to perceive the training as "just another thing to do" or to believe that the training was not just to help the employee but had strings attached to it (PSO, 99-105, 159-173).

How has the workplace literacy program affected the employees' behavior at work?
During the coding and analysis of the data, a group of behaviors either identified by employee participants or their supervisors became apparent. These behaviors can be further subdivided into two categories: (a) behaviors observed about the employee/student participants; and (b) behaviors directed toward the participants.

Perhaps the most obvious behavior which was exhibited by the participants was increased confidence. Supervisors indicated that the participants appeared more secure in their work, seemed more at ease in dealing with supervisors, and generally exhibited an air of confidence that had not been seen before the project began (PSO #41). Participants confirmed this feeling of greater confidence in their interviews. One student reported that "his confidence in dealing with measurements on the job had increased since he had been brushing up on his math in the center" (PSO #26). This confidence was also exhibited in one participant's willingness to write up a committee report and present it to the company president. Before the Writing Workshop, this participant said she "would never even consider talking to the President about her opinions"; after the workshop, she was "eager to put her committee's suggestions in writing" (PSO #32). The employee liaison confirmed this increased confidence: "She (the participant) brought me a copy of her
letter and shared how much she had learned through the experience" (PSO #33).

Another behavior that was observed from the participants was an increased awareness of community and world events. As one respondent replied, "Now I sit down and watch the news and can understand what they are saying" (PSO #35). Students exhibited heightened awareness of how policy and decision making affect them. For instance, toward the end of the classes, students engaged in lively discussions about Clinton's economic package and how it would affect them.

Finally, students also reported that a third positive behavior was an increase in communication skills and an awareness of the need for better communication skills. One interviewee responded, "Now, I sit down and talk to my wife and kids about what is going on in my life and in theirs. Before, I just expected them to do all the work to communicate. Now I realize I've got to help out" (PSO #38). In addition, the job enhancement classes reinforced the idea that employees must be able to exhibit good communication skills, both in person and in writing.

The other types of employee behaviors were listed by the interviewees; these involved the reactions from other employees to the classes. Some participants shared that they experienced chastisement from their colleagues for
attending the classes. One interviewee was chided by her co-worker who said, "What are you taking that writing class for? Don't you know how to write a letter already?" (PSO #41). The evaluator also commented in the field notes about a conversation among some class members who were being harassed for attending classes. Students reported that co-workers said "I don't see why I need that (workplace literacy classes). It won't get me anywhere on this job!" (PSO #41).

How is the program being perceived by participants and stakeholders?

A critical question both for the company representatives as well as their educational counterparts concerned what the students perceived as strengths of the program. Students were asked several questions about what they enjoyed about the program, what they thought was helpful, and what they liked about the program. The following list of items was generated from the interviews:
(a) Good Teachers, (b) Availability of Teachers, (c) Comfortable Study Area, (d) Relaxed Atmosphere, (e) Cooperation Between School and Work, (f) Individual Attention, (g) Relevant Information, and (h) Self-Paced Instruction.
Students were asked to comment about the support (or lack of) which they received on the job and/or from supervisors. Two responded that their supervisors were very supportive and were willing to let them leave early or turn down overtime if need be to attend class. Others reported that, while released time was not made available for students to attend classes, the ease of having the classes "on site" demonstrated the company's interest and support (PSO #44).

How are educators experiencing the workplace literacy project?

A fourth area that was examined during the pilot study involved how teachers cope, adapt, and succeed in this setting. In order to obtain as many diverse opinions as possible on this topic, all participants--students, teachers, administrators, and business liaisons--were asked to describe how the teachers were conducting the classes. Also, during the participant observation sessions, information about how teachers were coping in this setting was recorded. Finally, the researcher gained firsthand information about teaching in this new setting by conducting a Technical Writing class for the employees and GED students.
Regarding teacher training, the information that was gathered could be categorized into two sections: (a) How to work with the administrative staff; and (b) How to work with the students.

Under the category of working with administrative staff, the data revealed four concerns which repeatedly occurred throughout the field notes, the interviews, and the observations: (a) need for open communications; (b) need for training to work with adults in specialized settings; (c) need to be aware of the political agenda which exists in every business, and (d) need for diplomacy when teaching peers.

Within this particular project, the need for more communication became apparent from the beginning. The ABE teacher in this setting reported to a different individual than the Project Director; as a result, he was frequently misinformed or uninformed about the activities which took place in "his" learning center (PSO #15). This created ambivalence and insecurity for him; that, coupled with the fact that he was a new ABE teacher and new to the system, only compounded the situation. Consequently, to the Project Director and her assistant, the ABE teacher came across as "unyielding, unwilling to change...a dinosaur" and one "who was blatantly attempting to sabotage the success of this project" (PSO #17).
Next, the need for some prior staff development or training became evident in this study. Again, this new ABE teacher made this point when he said, "I didn't know there were books available with sample GED writing topics in them" (PSO #16). In addition, the company liaison indicated that they wanted (to hire someone) who had "a knack for knowing how to teach adults" (PSO #19), implying that the person should come in equipped to deal with the ambiguity that exists in this setting.

Repeatedly, the need for teachers to be aware of the "company politics" was echoed. Both the company liaison and the project director used that very phrase. The ABE teacher indicated how important it was that he "dot all his i's and cross all his t's" (PSO #20). Also, the ABE teacher found himself in a very delicate position when the students came to him and said, "We don't want to go to the seminars if it means we will have to give up study time for our GED. Do we have to go?" (PSO #17). And, meanwhile, the Project Director criticized the ABE teacher for not requiring his students to participate and referred to it as "sabotage" (PSO #21).

Finally, it was reported that teachers must be sensitive to the students' perceptions about the situation. In this instance, the students were often the same age or just a little older than the instructor. As one instructor said, "I work side-by-side with some of these folks, and
suddenly I become their teacher...I have to handle this situation very delicately or I will alienate myself from them and nothing I do in the classroom is going to get through!" (PSO #29).

In addition to dealing with the delicate, administrative issues, teachers must also be prepared to work with a unique group of students in this setting. In this preliminary research, five issues were listed: (a) establish a rapport; (b) vary teaching strategies; (c) be sensitive to student reactions; (d) recognize the stigma associated with workplace literacy; and (e) value the individual.

Administrators expressed a strong need for teachers who establish a common ground, a rapport with the adult students. "When a teacher walks into a classroom, the first thing she needs to do is establish a commonalty, develop a rapport with the group" (PSO 16). The students need to feel a connectedness with the instructor, and it is up to the teacher to develop that rapport.

Besides establishing a rapport, the teacher needs to be knowledgeable about different teaching strategies and be proficient at using them. As one student said, "I enjoy this class because she (the teacher) keeps us hopping. She changes the activities up so you don't have time to get bored. It's too much fun learning" (PSO #25). The ability
to diversify the class time may also help with students who are unwilling to participate; as the company liaison indicated, "...some of them will just sit there and wait for you to pour it in because that's what they've been conditioned to do all these years" (PSO #19).

Third, instructors in this setting should be willing to allow students to voice their concerns. As one said, "I had to be prepared to deal with the ambivalence, belligerence, or downright anger" (PSO #16); by letting students voice their feelings, they are given the opportunity to be honest. This, in turn, will enhance the rapport that was mentioned earlier. By refusing to let students discuss their feelings openly and honestly, they might feel more inclined to just "sit back and do nothing" (PSO #16)

In this setting, the stigma associated with workplace literacy can do a lot to damage a program. As mentioned in the literature, many employers do not include workplace literacy as part of the human resource development and training programs for fear that the stigma of literacy will become associated with the other programs. Other companies, in an attempt to hide workplace literacy classes, mask them as part of their HRD programs and pretend there is no difference from one class to the next. Pretending the classes are all the same is a facade that employees see through easily. As one student said, "They can call it
(Success2000) what they want...I know it's another way to get to my basic skills" (PSO #15). On the other hand, making a big issue of workplace literacy can frighten employees as well. In this instance, the employees wondered at first if the classes "had any strings attached" (PSO #17), implying that the company wouldn't give something for nothing.

Finally, teachers need to value the student for who he is and for his worth as a member of society. As one teacher said, "My students may be illiterate but they are not ignorant" (PSO #24). Teachers should encourage students to recognize their own skills and be proud of them. The project administrator encourages all teachers to visit the students at the job site; this way, students get a sense of pride that they can show the "teacher" something he or she may not know.

Suggested Research Issues for Data Collection

While it was not the intent of the pilot study to gather data for the dissertation, this preliminary study alerted the researcher to several issues which could be examined more closely during the research-gathering process. Those issues include the following items.

1. The ABE teacher was forced to make a decision regarding student goals (studying for a GED) and program goals (requiring participation in Success2000).
2. All participants may not have a clear understanding of what the project is designed to do and for whom.

3. Clear, open communication among all levels of stakeholders is helpful.

4. Teachers would benefit from a knowledge of adult learning styles.

5. Negative connotations about the term "literacy" may exist.

6. Getting to know the company culture may help teachers to adjust to the work setting more easily.

Summary

The pilot study provided an excellent opportunity for the researcher to gain experience with qualitative research methods while simultaneously building a relationship of trust and cooperation between the researcher and the project participants. The participant observations, the interviews, and the researcher's field notes provided a foundation on which data on how teachers cope in a new setting such as a workplace literacy environment could be collected. This pilot study provided support for the qualitative case study approach as being the most productive means of gathering in-depth information about what teachers need to know to work in this context. In addition, it provided the researcher valuable field experience in the qualitative case study
research method. Third, through the pilot study, participants became acquainted with the researcher and, over time, came to accept her as "one of them", thus increasing the level of trust so crucial to case study research. Finally, the pilot study helped to establish the extent of the study: who should be interviewed, how and when the participant observations should be conducted, and which procedures should be used for data collection.
CHAPTER 5

WORKPLACE LITERACY PARTNERSHIP
LONE STAR STEEL AND NORTHEAST TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A case study narrative provides the framework from which the data were collected. It should "take the reader into the case situation, a person's life, a group's life, or a program's life" (Patton, 1980, p. 314). The purpose of this chapter is to describe, in rich detail, the workplace literacy program which was studied. A description of the primary stakeholders involved in the project as well as a description of how the project was implemented is presented.

The Stakeholders

Workplace literacy programs consist of as many diversities as they do similarities. Each program is unique to its particular setting. The program in this study is no exception. A direct result of a partnership established between a once all-powerful steel company, its active union contingency, and a strong adult basic education program at the local community college, this cooperative effort was awarded a National Workplace Literacy Grant to begin November 1992 and to conclude May, 1994. The grant enabled the partnership to establish a workplace literacy project that would provide both adult basic education and skills training to employees.
The Company

To understand more fully the impact of such a grant award, a description of the peculiar dynamics of the area would be helpful. Nestled in the pine trees of East Texas, this steel mill was once the predominant employer of this area until the early 1980's. Then, massive lay-offs by the steel mill affected the entire area reducing the work force from 7000 to 1000. The steel mill underwent major restructuring and personnel changes, and in the 1990's, emerged a smaller, more competitive company than it had been.

Today the company employs less than 1500 people. Management has adopted a total quality philosophy, and the company is expanding to become more competitive in a more global marketplace. The CEO of the company has demonstrated a strong commitment to education of his employees through supporting the workplace literacy project, by speaking on behalf of workplace literacy at the American Association of Adult and Continuing Educators, and by serving as the keynote speaker at the 1994 GED Graduation at the college.

There were several reasons for the company to enter into this partnership. First, employees had been given the responsibility of writing standard operating procedures for each department. This activity proved to be more difficult,
and it was determined that some training in basic writing skills would enhance the employees' ability to communicate more effectively. In fact, the idea for the partnership actually began with the personnel director of the company who, at an overnight conference, shared her concerns with a representative from the college.

Second, management had decided that training would help not only mid-management, white collar employees but also hourly, semi-skilled laborers as well. Prior to this grant, the only employees who had received training were primarily mid- and upper management. The company did have a tuition reimbursement program established, but the primary participants were, again, management. This grant provided the means to address some of the training needs of the laborers in the mill.

Third, the personnel director received many inquiries about employment at the company. Despite the cut-backs and lay-offs of the eighties, the steel company is still one of the primary employers in the area. She believed, based on her personal experience with the many applications she read daily, that the community would benefit from an adult learning center that could be used by employees and community people alike.

Finally, being involved in a training program also helped the company's image both in the community and with
potential customers. The community identified the learning center as a service which the company was providing to the area, and that reinforced the company's support of the area. Also, the company received benefit from having a training program for its employees. In a conversation with a company representative, the questions of how the company would benefit from this training was explained:

Me: ...by documenting that you are having this class, you are able to go back to your potential customers and address their need for a company with job-specific training for workers?
IT#6: That's right. We are meeting that requirement. You see, they have guidelines that they score us by and they want the company to have a quality package (IT#6, 204-213).

The Union

For the company to get the employees to support the workplace literacy program, union support was crucial. Fortunately for the company, gaining support was not difficult. In fact, the president of the local union had expressed an interest in establishing a GED center. He went on to become the first person to receive his GED diploma from the center once it was established.

Basically, the Union provided two things to the project. First, by demonstrating support for the grant, the employees accepted the notion that the activities associated with the project were for their benefit. Support from the
Union meant that this project was not just something that management endorsed. Second, the Steelworkers located a facility, refurbished it, and provided furniture so that the Adult Learning Center could be established in close proximity to the plant.

The College

A third member of this partnership is the community college. Since its establishment in 1985, the college has worked closely with the steel mill to help the community. Ironically, the downsizing of the steel plant coincided with the establishment of the college. Because of the lay-offs, large numbers of dislocated workers who were in need of retraining sought help from the newly formed college; and the company worked closely with the college to develop and implement programs for the area residents.

The opening of the college also provided an opportunity for many who could not otherwise obtain training and education to enhance or increase employability. This National Workplace Literacy Grant is just one example of the many attempts to enhance education levels and improve employability. The college dean saw this as another opportunity for the company and the college to work together to establish a program to provide these services for the employees of this company and an opportunity to provide
basic skills services to both the employees and the community as well. Together, they developed the concept and applied for federal funds. The grant was awarded in Fall, 1992, with startup to begin January 1993 and to run for fifteen months.

The Community

A largely rural, agrarian area, this part of Texas ranks among the highest illiteracy rates and unemployment figures in the state. This area has a current unemployment rate which ranges from 7.3 percent to 19.9 percent as of January, 1994. Within this geographic area, the 1990 U. S. Census indicates that the rate of non-high school completion for the adult population 25 years of age and older ranges from 19.7 percent to 26 percent. Illiteracy rates range from 42 to 49 percent. In fact, high school graduates comprise only 57 percent of the population 25 years of age and older. The nearest metropolitan area is approximately 45 miles away; and the largest major metropolitan area, Dallas, is over 100 miles away. In an application for federal funds, the area is described by Dr. Traylor: "This population is hard working, but low skilled. The three-county area that the community college serves relies on one major steel company to feed satellite industries and merchants" (Traylor, 1994, p. 6).
The Partnership

Several factors aided in the establishment of this project. First, the management of the company got behind the project and offered not only lip service but other support as well, including financial support. Rhys Best, CEO of Lone Star Steel, believed strongly in the concept of workplace education: "Workplace education for our workers has been key to its renewed vigor, and will remain an important management tool. It delivers. It brings out the best in our people, improves our community, and helps our company prosper and compete on a global scale" (Best, 1994, p. 3). Second, the college staff, directed by one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and skillful ABE leaders in state, provided the necessary expertise to make the grant a reality. In addition, the support of the United Steelworkers Local Union, especially the President, gave the project the impetus it needed to be accepted by the workers. Most important, however, was the cohesive relationship among the stakeholders; that relationship provided the foundation for the development of the program.

The Program

Once the program was fully established, two areas were simultaneously created and developed: Workforce Literacy and Workplace Literacy. While the workforce literacy program
would be developed for basic skills, ABE, GED, or ESL preparation for all individuals--employees and their families as well as other community people--the workplace literacy efforts would provide education for the existing employees at the steel mill.

Workforce Literacy

The Adult Education Center was officially opened in January 1993. All of the parties involved regarded the establishment of the Adult Education Center an attractive opportunity for all involved. Company representatives saw the venture as good public relations; it also established a center for future potential training for employees. College administrators also recognized the public relations potential of the Center. The Dean of Adult and Developmental Education saw it as an opportunity to provide education services close enough for many who could not drive to the college. Finally, union representatives saw the center as an opportunity for all employees from production to management.

The Center's opening required the involvement of all three entities. First, the Steelworkers Union provided space by renovating a vacant building near the plant site. The college provided staffing and materials to begin an ABE/GED class, and the company provided financial support
and offered referrals (as individuals came in to apply for jobs, the personnel director would refer them to the Center if they needed a GED).

In January 1993, the Center was opened. An Open House was scheduled with local dignitaries in attendance, complete with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Representatives from Texas Department of Commerce, Ark-Tex Council of Governments, the company, the college, and local community supporters were present. The Center has been and is still being used for ABE/GED students. In addition, classes such as Success 2000 were conducted at the site. Plans are being made to provide basic computer classes and some college classes. The site has also been used to provide other training for company employees.

**Workplace Literacy**

While the workforce literacy classes were being implemented, the project director for the grant began a task analysis inside the plant to determine what classes would benefit the employees. On the basis of input from company personnel, an employee survey, and the director's task analysis, two programs were created: one was a Writing Program to provide basic writing skills review to individuals who were expected to write standard operating procedures; the second was a Skills Training Program,
developed for the specialty tubing department, including statistical process control, basic metrics, micrometer reading, and procedures for filling out a mill order card.

Each of the programs was implemented differently. In the Writing Program, the project director developed the curriculum, wrote a manual, and, with one exception, taught the classes; this was done beginning in October 1992 and continued through the Spring of 1993. Classes were held for two four-hour sessions on consecutive days in the Adult Education Center. Employees were required to attend. To gain experience teaching in this setting, the researcher was permitted to teach one session. Participants ranged in ability and educational background, everything from GED graduates to college graduates with degrees in business and engineering.

Classes for specialty tubing took much longer to get started. The task analysis proved to be a very time-consuming process for one person to complete. Once the project director had conducted the task analysis and determined what needed to be covered for the employees, she hired a computer programmer and curriculum developer to assist her in the development of the Skills Training Program for specialty tubing.

A self-paced, computerized program covering all the basic concepts determined from the task analysis was
completed Fall 1993. This was put onto a system called
Hypergraphics, which allows students to respond to exercises
in class using response pads. The instructor can determine
who, if anyone, is not understanding the concepts while
maintaining anonymity of the students. While creating the
program was a very time-consuming process, it was used
repeatedly both on an individual basis as well as in a group
setting. A company supervisor, when commenting on the
effectiveness of the Hypergraphics system said, "The
companies come in here and look at this package that we, us
and the college, have put together and they are impressed.
I'd say that on a scale of a 1-10, we are probably an A++. They have all been very impressed with the computerized
package we have" (IT#6, 214-221).

The classes in specialty tubing were taught by an
employee of the company. Using the Hypergraphics program,
the supervisor taught two, two-hour classes on Tuesdays and
Thursdays to employees who volunteered to participate but
who were paid for their time in class. The first class was
taught on January 21, 1994, and they were conducted
periodically throughout the spring. A group of four to ten
employees attended each session.

The Workplace Literacy Curriculum

This project distinguished between literacy as a skill
(workforce literacy) and literacy as a task (workplace
literacy). With literacy as a skill, the curriculum development is based largely on ABE/GED skill requirements. The instructions are diagnostic, prescriptive, and often individualized with pre-packaged material geared toward the GED. With literacy as a task, the curriculum is developed from a literacy task analysis. It, too, is frequently diagnostic and prescriptive; instruction is usually competency-based. Assessment is conducted through a criterion-referenced test.

The infusion of ABE/GED instruction into a workplace literacy project may take many forms, depending on a number of variables (including the philosophy, mission, and goals of the institution, needs of the students, perceived needs of the students by others—company administrators, supervisors, educators). A broad spectrum of instruction might be provided ranging from the traditional ABE/GED classroom instruction to a complete emphasis on workplace training, with a variety of versions falling between these two extremes. In this particular project, there were, most often, the two ends of the spectrum represented. In one setting, a GED program was provided with a traditional curriculum using the learning center approach. Participation was voluntary. Students were tested using a standardized test such as the TABE and then, based upon those scores, placed in curriculum appropriate for that
student. The student worked individually with the help of a teacher, aid, or volunteer tutor. The student or the instructor could decide when it was time to take a practice GED test.

In the other setting, a job specific curriculum was developed using the procedure outlined in Bottom Line. In this project, the director developed the curriculum for the two classes; this required her to conduct a task analysis to first determine what needed to be taught. The content was presented in a very traditional method. In one of the two classes, attendance was mandatory; in the other, students were not required to attend but were strongly encouraged. In both cases, students either were given released time from work or were paid for their time in the classroom.

Summary

The grant period ended in May of 1994. ABE and GED classes are still being held at the Adult Education Center, and the Center is used for other types of training from time to time. In addition, the specialty tubing classes are offered to employees as opportunities arise. The college, the company, and the union have joined forces with several small businesses in the area and applied for a three-year grant with the hopes of continuing their efforts and expanding to some other much-needed programs. The following chapter presents the findings from this case study.
CHAPTER 6
THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from this qualitative case study. The findings are presented in six broad categories: (a) a definition of workplace literacy; (b) awareness of company culture; (c) company involvement; (d) the workplace literacy student; (e) the workplace literacy classroom; and (f) the role of the teacher.

A Definition of Workplace Literacy

From the interviews about workplace literacy, many different responses about its use, its function and its purpose were provided. From the coding process, it became evident that participants had differing ideas about what workplace literacy was and what should be included; thus, a category called Definition of Workplace Literacy was developed. Four points about defining workplace literacy became apparent. First, each individual has a unique definition of the term, workplace literacy; second, the term "literacy" carries a baggage of negative connotations for many of the participants; third, workplace literacy is viewed as a self-improvement opportunity; and fourth, workplace literacy should involve contextual learning.
First, even those participating in the project quickly realized that not everyone had the same definition of workplace literacy. "You know, I don't think any of us knew at the beginning what all was involved in the workplace literacy...even what we fully meant by the term" (IT#1, 233-238). And, as one teacher put it, "I don't think I had the right idea coming in. And I think that is what caused a lot of discord" (IT#4, 1105-1108). Some ambiguity even arose over whether the establishment of the GED center was a part of the workplace literacy project. In the personal log (PL Memo 16, March 18, 1994, I discussed the ambivalence I was experiencing as a result of trying to understand this project:

The Project Administrator foresees a program that is two-fold: Workplace Literacy, to serve the job specific needs of employees based on needs assessment and task analysis; and Workforce Literacy, to serve anyone who needs general education for the purpose of improving basic skills. That could include ABE, GED, ESL, or life skills curriculum such as Workforce 2000. Therefore, in the administrator's eyes at least, the GED center and its activities are a part of the Workplace Literacy Project. However, when I questioned others about the opening of the Adult Education Center, I did not hear the center being considered as part of the grant.

Along with the ambiguity over what is included in the term, each stakeholder involved in the project perceived differently what workplace literacy should be able to do and for whom. The company personnel perceived this grant as an opportunity to help employees "to produce more" (IT#1, 68-69). Educators saw it as an opportunity to "teach skills
that have meaning to the students" (IT#2, 26-30). Finally, still another saw it as an opportunity to combine basic skills and work-related skills and teach both to students (PL Memo 50). Those differences in what workplace literacy should be able to do presented some challenges, particularly to the teachers. These challenges and how they were handled are discussed under the Workplace Literacy Student-Student Goals.

Second, many were uncomfortable with the term, workplace literacy. For them, the idea of "literacy" was too closely akin to illiteracy, and many are not willing to be associated with that term. As one interviewee observed: "I have a problem with the word 'literacy.' I don't like it. Most people associate the word with one who can't read a lick. It implies ignorance. We need to cut it out." (IT#7, 123-132). And another said, "[We chose] not to use the word 'literacy' to eliminate confusion because it may in some way be confused with illiteracy, to eliminate confusion because some may hear that and develop an attitude about the program" (IT#1, 27-32). Still, the adult basic education staff persisted in promoting the image of this program as a literacy program. In the Pilot Study Observations; (PSO#4), dated January 23, 1993, I wrote:

The decorations for the Open House done, not by the caterer, but by one of the ABE staff were cake-sized A, B, and C and 1, 2, and 3, decorated and used for centerpieces. Does that not send out a message? This
open house is for local dignitaries from the college, the businesses, the Chamber and the Council of Government. Those letters and numbers as decorations seem to denigrate the very people we are trying to help. Does it also send a message to the public that we perceive our students as inferior, too?

Third, workplace literacy was viewed as a self improvement opportunity. The service was provided and employees were encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunities provided to them. One interviewee said, "The workplace literacy is a self-improvement process...to be able to work more efficiently, to produce more..." (IT#1, 66-69). Yet another teacher echoed that sentiment, "taking the workforce and training them to work on the job. To survive. To do their job well" (IT#6, 303-306). In fact, despite the unique differences in the individual perceptions of workplace literacy, the one common theme that emerged from all participants was the notion that workplace literacy should be a self-improvement opportunity. While differences about the content, the curriculum, and even the method of delivery existed in the program, all saw the program as an opportunity for individuals to help themselves.

Fourth, workplace literacy was viewed as a form of contextual learning (PL Memo 5, PL Memo 21, IT#2, IT#3, IT#5). This idea existed among the administrators of the project, both company and educational. In fact, the project administrator voiced a strong belief that instruction should occur within the environment which students live and work:
When I think of 'workplace literacy', I like to think in terms of the concepts of contextual learning, being able to teach individuals the skills that they need within the environment in which they live or work and I truly feel that if individuals can be taught specific skills that have meaning to them then learning will be better for them, that more learning will take place, that retention will be better...I'm interested in contextual learning and taking a look further at the acquisition of job specific skills and at the same time their being taught basic skills (IT#2, 24–41).

Awareness of the Company Culture

A second category that developed from the data involved awareness of the company culture. Included in this category were the knowledge of the company politics, the importance of the partnership between the stakeholders, the benefits of getting to know the employees, and some techniques for learning about the company.

Early in the study, the project director commented on the importance of understanding the unique company culture of the company involved in the project. Her comment was, "Teachers must research the company—know what the company officials expect. It is also important that the teacher be familiar with the politics of the company. If the teacher is not sensitive to the political climate in which he/she works, then the potential is there to do more harm than good" (PL Memo 12). Based on that conversation, the importance of company politics was posed as an interview question.
Not until the coding process, however, did company politics, company demands, and company expectations fully emerge as issues that should be recognized. Educators found, because of the tenuous position the grant award can place them, that they must perform a balancing act, working between administrators, company officials, and students. As one interviewee said, "It helps to understand some of the sensitive areas...for instance, promotability may not be based on skill, or ability, but on seniority system" (IT#3, 698-700).

In addition to an understanding of the individual company culture, participants expressed a need to be aware of the relationship that exists between the business, the educational institution, and the union. Program administrators, both company and educational, indicated that a strong relationship forms the foundation on which a program such as this is based. "One of the things you want to do is involve company personnel in the overall program process. You want them to be a part of the governance..." (IT#2, 930-933).

In this project, educators indicated that business and education do not always operate in the same way. As the project administrator said, "He asked me if I thought we should invite business reps to come to this meeting. And I said no. This type of meeting will bore them; before I
probably wouldn't have said that, but now I understand the way business people think. Educators have no problem with a planning meeting" (IT#2, 362-371). Likewise, the employee liaison relied on the expertise of her education counterparts to sell the program. But, she warned them about using their jargon when talking to business personnel (IT#1, 860-885).

Participants in this study noted the importance of advisory committees composed of employee, business, and education counterparts (IT#1, 516-526). Several observed that even more contact, more meetings, more communication between educators and company representatives would have made the program even stronger (IT#5, 344-48; IT#6, 227-29; IT#7, 340-43). Failure to include all participants can serve to isolate those who are not included: "I just didn't feel as if I was a part of the decision-making process" (IT#4, 1009-1011).

Finally, educators who were working in this environment had to learn that the company was a powerful force in the partnership. One teacher recognized that, during his interview, whether he got the job hinged on what the employee liaison would say (IT#4, 119-120). And, the project administrator likewise acknowledged this power: "I gave in because it was the company asking" (IT#2, 952-53).
A third aspect of company culture involved the advantage of getting to know the employees. By developing relationships with supervisors, for instance, employees were allowed to participate in classes that otherwise would not have been possible. For example, the employee supervisor who taught the specialty tubing classes acknowledged that, because of his position, he could get the men for classes when an educator could not. "The foreman will let me have the men at times when you might not could" (IT#7, 516-18). Also, having a key contact person at the job site can be invaluable, especially when problems such as scheduling or physical facilities became an issue (IT#5, 306-308; IT#2, 512-513).

Finally, the data revealed some techniques which educators used to get to know the company culture. From the data, two ideas emerged. First, participants recommended that educators get to know the company. This was accomplished by spending time at the job site, observing students in their jobs, asking questions, listening to students' needs, and listening to the needs of other company personnel as well. Second, participants indicated that the teacher must build trust among company personnel. All indicated that this does not happen easily; it takes time, effort, and energy on the part of the educator. Three techniques were presented as ways in which a person might
build trust. First, be there. It seems so simple, but one's presence is crucial. Teachers who came in early, spent time at the coffee pot engaging in small talk, and encouraged students to discuss issues other than the content of the class were perceived to be interested in students (PL Memo 37). Second, employee/students wanted the educators to do what they promised they would do. As one interviewee said, "It only helps our reputation if we do what we say we are going to do" (IT#6, 293-95). For instance, one student expressed satisfaction when the teacher met with her after the class sessions were over to complete a project the students had begun during the class (FNO Memo 49). Finally, teachers learned to get involved in all aspects of the job. Teachers were encouraged to take tours of the plant. In fact, one suggestion involved allowing the students to take the teacher on a tour of his specific job site and to explain his job.

Company Involvement

One of the first issues which the educators had to face in this project was the inclusion of another very important entity, the company. In addition to the students and administrators, educators found that company personnel proved to be another force in this project.

The company demonstrated its support in four ways. First, the company gave students released time to
participate in the workplace literacy classes. Students were not given released time to participate in the workforce literacy classes (ABE, GED); however, the company did demonstrate support for that program in other ways. All educators indicated that released time benefited the program (IT#1, IT#3, IT#4, IT#5, IT#6, IT#7, FNO Memos 24 & 30). Released time demonstrated to the employees the degree of commitment the company had for this project.

Second, the company provided recognition and incentives for employees who participate in the project. Some examples included an awards ceremony for students who completed classes; recognition through company newsletters, bulletin boards, and other networks; and attendance/participation in the GED graduation (IT#4, IT#9). The company officials also demonstrated support by attending the GED graduation; in fact, the company CEO delivered the keynote address at the commencement (FNO Memo 20, PL Memo 36).

Third, the company provided a reimbursement of the testing fee to all employees who completed their high school equivalency (IT#1).

Finally, advisory groups consisting of employees, management, and educators were created to emphasize the need for student participation in the planning of the project (IT#1, IT#2, IT#3, FNO Memo 18, PL Memo 40). The advisory groups also provided a chance for stakeholders to come
together and discuss issues. One company representative stated, "It's (the advisory group) a necessary component. It's kind of fun to hear the kinds of problems that the educators are experiencing, and they have an appreciation for what we are experiencing as problems of educating our workers" (IT#1, 520-526).

The Workplace Literacy Student

A fourth category that emerged from the data involved the workplace literacy student. Four sub-categories involving the workplace literacy student were created: (a) teacher training on the workplace literacy student; (b) the issue of attendance, including attrition, retention, and released time for classes; (c) student goals; and (d) student outcomes.

Teacher Training

All respondents indicated a need for training on dealing with the adult learner, including knowing more about how adults learn, about how to make learning easier and more fun, about how to help students become more self-directed, and about how to encourage students to be lifelong learners (IT#2, 546-547, 575-585, 676-677; IT#3, 146-160; IT#4 231-234, 665-667, 873-876). Even for teachers with training and/or experience in dealing with the adult learner, more training would be encouraged: "...dealing with adult
students; I recognize that some teachers would come into this setting with a lot of this already in place, but still it could always be re-emphasized" (IT#3, 676-681). In addition, an orientation to adult learning theory would benefit teachers. "...there are some good theories in the field and it helps professionals to be aware of them. I don't think we do enough of that" (IT#2, 718-722).

Some participants recognized that the needs of adult students differ from those of children. The project director responded, "Adults have different needs than children; they haven't been students for 12 years right out of high school. They don't know how to play the game. They have a very high anxiety level...They come into the classroom with fears--'I've forgotten everything I've ever heard'; 'I'm the dumbest person in this room'; 'I'm not sure I can learn'; 'I'm not sure I know how to study'-- They come in with those feelings and the most important thing before any learning can occur is to allay those fears" (IT#3, 152-160).

Attendance

A second issue involved the workplace literacy student and attendance. Like most ABE programs, maintaining voluntary attendance among participants in the workforce literacy component was difficult. The workforce literacy
program (ABE, GED) began with over eighty-five students but tapered off to less than half that number after a couple of months (IT#4). However, despite the research to substantiate that attrition is a recurring problem in ABE classes, three of the instructors still felt an overwhelming responsibility for the attrition problem in this particular site (IT#4, IT#5, FNO Memo 18, PL Memo 48). As one teacher said, "I feel like I have done something. I know that there are outside factors...but I can't believe I haven't done anything...maybe I just needed to do something extra" (IT#5 685-694).

All interviewees agreed that providing released time from work was the single best motivation to get people to come and to keep them coming. By offering the training on company time, the employee understood that the training was important and that the company was willing to invest in that employee as a person (IT#6, 385-389). Another factor that promoted attendance involved making participation voluntary rather than mandatory. "It's a voluntary thing. You know, you can't force them. We can make it mandatory, but if they don't want to do it, they won't listen, so you are just wasting your time and theirs" (IT#6, 156-160). The researcher experienced a similar reaction to the writing classes that were mandatory for employees. PL Memo 28 states, "Only two men indicated to me at the beginning of
the second day that they 'didn't want to be there.' However, because they had been told to be there by their supervisor and because the class was not 'too painful' (their words), they would sit through the class and participate willingly. However, I have to wonder how much I helped them since they suffered in silence." The employees may have good intentions, but without some incentive, attendance is difficult: "If you work 40-48 hours per week, you are less inclined to volunteer to do something. I'd be willing to say that 40 out of the 50 would not have come to class if they had not been paid" (IT#6, 372-377).

**Student Goals**

A third issue under this category involved helping students achieve their goals. That can be a problem if the student's goals differ from the institution or company goals for the student. In an SPC class, a student impatiently spoke up: "I thought we came here today to learn how to use the computer. Are we going to get to that today?" (FNO#6, 94-97). Also, as one interviewee observed, "...they want to be involved in the classes. And they want to learn about computers. Many of them expected to come into this 4-hour class and to learn something about the computer..." (IT#6, 262-266). However, basic computer classes were not part of the national workplace literacy curriculum; therefore, it
could not be taught under the auspices of this grant. What the students were taught was a basic job-related skill that required some computer knowledge. Ultimately, the teacher had to decide between helping the student or yielding to the needs of the program. One teacher describes this dilemma, "I feel I am ethically and morally obligated to helping meet that student's goal...but you see we're so pressed for numbers whether it's 5 or 55 and that puts pressure on" (IT#7 140-145).

In another instance, (described in Chapter 4, The Pilot Study) students were encouraged to take time from their GED classes to participate in skills enhancement training (IT#4) even though their needs were focused on getting a GED. (PL Memo # 20).

**Student Outcomes**

Finally, educators provided a list of outcomes for students who were involved in this project and contrasted them to what they had expected as outcomes in the traditional classroom. Seven student goals were mentioned by respondents: develop self-esteem, increase self-confidence, encourage belief in ability, instill company pride, encourage company ownership, build a sense of pride in oneself, and develop computer literacy skills (IT#1, IT#3, IT#4, IT#5, IT#6, IT#8, IT#9). A company
representative indicated that student involvement did much to encourage company ownership: "And student involvement is the more important. If they go back to the workplace and say, 'I'm getting my GED' or 'I'm improving my writing skills so I can do those reports' then that has a bigger impact than anything we can do in management. So student involvement is the key to success" (IT#1, 566-572).

One instructor contrasted how she treats the college student versus the workplace literacy student: "The college student is there to get a degree. I'm not there to spoonfeed them; I'm there to impart knowledge...I'm a lot more lenient in the workplace literacy classroom. The purpose for my being there is to help them increase their skills and to increase their self-esteem" (IT#5, 644-653).

Workplace Literacy Classroom

Another area that evolved from the data involved how the classroom in this setting differed from what the educators perceived as the traditional classroom. When the researcher asked how classes were conducted in this setting, participants described the setting as a comparison and contrast of what is considered the "traditional" and "non-traditional" classroom. The traditional approach involved students all working on the same subject at the same time. The lecture method was the method of instruction for this
traditional approach. The teacher portrayed the role of knowledge disseminator.

In contrast, the non-traditional classroom involved collaborative learning, including brainstorming, questioning, feedback, and participation; one-on-one instruction; and self-directed learning. The instructor served as a facilitator who was there to help, not dictate what must be learned.

There were serious attempts to move away from the traditional approach to education. First, in the workplace literacy classes, a personalized curriculum was developed and presented to the employees. Second, the use of the Hypergraphics program was encouraged in both workplace literacy and workforce literacy classes; this program allowed students to respond to questions anonymously using a response pad so that teachers could receive immediate feedback on what percentage of the class as understanding the concept. Third, teachers in the workforce literacy classes (ABE and GED) were discouraged from using the traditional method; instead, they were urged to rely on one-on-one and small group methods and recruit volunteer tutors to work individually with students.

Still, field note observations indicated that, despite the rhetoric and attention paid to non-traditional methods, teachers still relied on the more traditional approach (FNO
4, 6, 9, 10). However, a concerted effort on the part of the teachers was also observed; teachers were incorporating the Hypergraphics programs into their classes (FNO 5, 6, 11). Also, discussions during the interviews indicated that the teachers were interested in learning more about facilitative and self-directed learning and using more non-traditional methods (IT# 3, 4, 5, 6).

**Student Response to the Non-Traditional Classroom**

Students in the workplace literacy program needed an orientation of how the classroom would be conducted. Teachers in the workplace literacy classroom were intent on making the environment a relaxing place to learn. Students came into this setting with preconceived ideas of how classes had been in the public school setting. As one interviewee indicated, "And when you think about education, the last experience that most of these workers had was in the public school classroom and the teacher was all-powerful, they had no input. But here is a teacher asking you what is it that you need to know" (IT#1, 644-650). The instructors were responsible for creating an atmosphere of acceptance. One teacher stated, "It has to be a non-threatening environment. In workplace literacy, the participants are not graded and it is not even a pass or fail option. [If the student's only connection with
education] is that pass-fail mentality, you've got to make it a comfortable environment to keep them motivated" (IT#5, 595-605).

Role of the Teacher in the Workplace

The bulk of the codes from this research dealt with teachers. The interview questions covered a variety of subjects about workplace literacy programs in general, but the primary emphasis was on instruction. The codes involving teachers identified the role of the teacher as it was perceived by the participants in this workplace literacy project. The information that was gathered from the interviews and the observations was divided into three broad categories: the attitudes, the qualities, and the qualifications of the educators working in this program. A definition, from Webster's Ninth New collegiate Dictionary, provided the distinction between an attitude and quality and determined the content of the first two categories; the third, teacher qualifications, was based upon the types of education and training which this job dictated.

Teacher Attitudes

One way in which teacher performance was examined involved teacher attitudes. An attitude, as defined by Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, is "a mental position, feeling or emotion with regard to a fact or
state." Thus, descriptors that involved feelings or emotions toward this environment were placed in this category. This category was sub-divided into three areas: attitudes involving students, learning, and negative teachers.

First, two attitudes toward students that emerged include the idea that students come first and empathy for the student. A primary philosophy of the project administrator encourages a "students-first" mentality among her staff. She reiterated this sentiment to the stakeholders, including the business representatives. Therefore, educators who worked in this project echoed the idea that students' needs should come first. And, as mentioned earlier, teachers at times had to make a choice between meeting the special needs of a student or conducting the class as outlined by the curriculum. For some, it was a balancing act, as this observation revealed:

Tonight, there were only four students. Rather than stick to the plan which I had for the class, I asked them to share what their needs were. One lady had a need to express herself in a letter to the company CEO; two wanted to practice for the GED writing exam; and the fourth lady needed a job. So, I gave the 2 GED students a practice writing sample, assigned one lady to write a letter requesting an interview with a company, and I helped the other lady brainstorm for her letter to the CEO. Then, as students finished their assigned writings, I discussed each one personally. I didn't stick to the curriculum, but these ladies had specific needs which were related to writing in the workplace, so I catered to them (PL Memo 15).
Second, teachers should exhibit a willingness to learn and an attitude that learning is a continuous process. Another strong philosophy that was vocalized by two stakeholders, the employee liaison and the project director, was the need for the educators in this program to feel that learning should be a lifelong process. One teacher shares her honesty with the class: "[I tell my students] that I don't have all the answers. And, I tell them up front. I explain that learning is a continuous process" (IT#5 756-760. Teachers were encouraged to model an attitude that learning never stops. Also, teachers echoed the idea that the students were capable of teaching the educators. On several occasions, the instructors stopped the class and allowed students to share some knowledge about a particular topic (FNO 6, 10, 12).

Third, when interviewees were asked to respond to what attitudes they hoped to find in educators in the workplace literacy project, the responses frequently became a list of what they did not want as much as what they did expect. The list of "norts" included not negative, not demeaning, not a nurturer, not authoritarian, not a drill sergeant, not threatening, not power hungry, and not territorial. Educators indicated a real concern that teachers not be demeaning or too nurturing. "...you know you can be too
mothering" (IT#1, 768-770). One also explained that she did not hire elementary teachers.

I would ban elementary teachers from workplace literacy programs. You might lose some good ones, but it's not worth taking that chance. People who go in there who are used to wiping snotty noses and to treat people like that, it runs them off in a minute. (IT#3, 385-393)

Another administrator expressed concern that the teachers should not be demeaning or negative to students: "Number 1, the teacher cannot embarrass the adult student...to call attention to a deficiency to the group" (IT#1, 740-742). On the other end of the spectrum, however, teachers were discouraged from being too authoritarian, too threatening, or too much like a drill sergeant:

...authoritarian and traditionally you get those types in the teaching profession...but you don't want the drill sergeant either...and, it does...what you said earlier...it all comes down to having respect for the student. (IT#3, 481-490)

Finally, a third area that was mentioned was the area of control. It was important that teachers not be power hungry or too territorial. In fact, some indicated that one reason for the teacher (in the Pilot Study) being let go was because he refused to cooperate and be a team player (PL Memo 52). One interviewee explained the firing:

...it had nothing with his ability to do a good job; in fact, he did have some good qualities. But, he was so territorial that he would not work with any other program that came in there. He felt threatened by that [Success2000]. Maybe it was my fault...perhaps I should
have explained the program more clearly. We're all a team and we're going to all work together (IT#1, 938-950).

In addition to a discussion of the teacher attitudes, respondents also discussed the ways in which teachers interact with students in the classroom. Those behaviors were categorized into three areas: ways to establish a positive tone for the classroom, ways to instill confidence in students, and ways to build trust among class members. Table 6 lists those behaviors.

**Teacher Qualities**

Quality is defined as "a peculiar and essential character; an inherent feature" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). In adult basic education, often when teachers are considered for positions, it is not uncommon for personality traits, qualities, or people skills to be considered equally important or more important than qualifications, educational background, or in some cases, experience. Similarly, in this program, when teachers were considered, often a discussion of "what it takes" or "who's the right person for the job" hinged upon qualities or characteristics of the person. The project director, when asked why she hired a teacher for the program said, "...she had the skills and the personality that would work..." (IT#3, 641-642). In developing categories of teacher
### Table 6

#### Classroom Behaviors of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to Set Tone For Classroom</th>
<th>Pleasant Voice</th>
<th>Uses Humor</th>
<th>Asks for Student Input</th>
<th>Encourages Freedom of Expression</th>
<th>Energetic Teaching Style</th>
<th>Enthusiastic about Content</th>
<th>Adjusts Classroom Pace to Student Needs</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to Instill Confidence</th>
<th>Does Not Embarrass Students</th>
<th>Recognizes Student Goals</th>
<th>Acknowledges Life Experiences</th>
<th>Learns from Students</th>
<th>Recognizes Student Strengths</th>
<th>De-emphasizes Teacher Accomplishments</th>
<th>Provides Recognition</th>
<th>Provides Positive Reinforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to Build Trust</th>
<th>Does not Intimidate Student</th>
<th>Does not Assume Students Know</th>
<th>Willing to Admit Mistakes</th>
<th>Listens to Students</th>
<th>Treats Adults as Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
qualities, the data lent itself, initially, to two categories: Program Centered and Student Centered.

Qualities listed under Program Centered included dedicated, adaptable, versatile, flexible, creative, and requires little supervision. The need to be flexible and to handle last minute changes in physical facilities, classroom space, even class time occurred many times in this project. Even the project administrator indicated that the most important characteristic for her was to be flexible:
"...being flexible is important because if we aren't going in the right direction to meet those goals and objectives, then I need to be flexible enough to stop, take a real good look at that and try to understand why..." (PL Memo 14)

Flexibility affected the teachers as well. It was not uncommon for the teacher to arrive at the job site only to find that the classroom was in use (FNO#5, 15-17). As one responded, "Flexibility is the key word. If the classroom is not available, I've got to scramble around and get one" (IT#5, 788-791). Likewise, in order to meet the needs of shift employees, Teacher #4 indicated that he would be conducting an SPC class from 11:30 p.m. until 1:30 a.m. for employees on swing and graveyard shifts.

Qualities under Student Centered include helpful, warm, caring, fair, sincere, and enthusiastic. Respondents described these qualities:
But I believe if you can develop a genuine feeling of empathy and be able to convey the information but at the same time not be superior to them, that is the key (IT#4, 592-594).

And as a student responded:

Listen to your pupils and then feed them what they need to know. Lots of times, we get caught up in ourselves...we are so smart...it's my way or no way, and that's wrong. You learn more by [listening] (IT#8, 490-496).

And another interview responded:

Enthusiasm. Uh...sincerity. These are adults here; we're not dealing with children. If the instructor keeps that enthusiasm up, it helps these students (IT#5, 468-473).

Finally, respect was a quality mentioned frequently by participants in this project. One interviewee summarized it thus: "Yeah, I just treat them as I'd want to be treated. They know a lot about their jobs and I can learn from them and I do" (IT#6, 452-455). And, as one student pointed out, it all comes down to respect for the other human being:

Me: Just had a lot of respect for her?
IT9: Yes ma'am
Me: So respect is important?
IT9: I imagine. (IT#9, 320-324)

Teacher Qualifications

To understand what qualifications teachers needed in order to work in this setting, participants were asked to identify what would constitute a "qualified" teacher for
this setting. When asked about teacher qualifications, the project administrators indicated several preferences.

First, experience with working with adults was mentioned most frequently. All administrators wanted to find individuals who recognized that meeting adult students' needs would involve different approaches than meeting children's needs. They all also agreed that finding individuals who had obtained experience and/or training in working with adults, especially in a largely rural area such as this study, is difficult; therefore, the administrators were forced to select the best from what was available in this setting.

Second, individuals who have experience teaching the "basics"—reading, writing, or math—were indicated as a preference for teaching in this program (IT#2, 651-654, IT#3 533-538). The hope was that if the teachers are capable of teaching those subjects then they could modify the approach to accommodate the needs of the adult learner and do equally well in that environment.

Another skill that was mentioned is the ability to develop curriculum. That skill is one not necessarily synonymous with the word "teacher." However, because the workplace curriculum is frequently designed to meet specific needs of a company, or even one population within a company,
the ability to write curriculum was viewed as important. One observation during an interview was confirmed:

Me: So it sounds like to me that if an individual is hired to work in this setting, regardless of his background, educator or business person or what, the ability to discover, develop, and create the curriculum is an integral part of the job that a person finds himself in.
IT#5: Exactly. And the word about flexibility. You have to learn to let the curriculum be flexible, too (IT#5, 945-956).

The skill is not one that all teachers possess, at least according to one respondent, "...most teachers have deficiencies in [writing curriculum] that area" (IT#3, 46-47).

A knowledge of computers and other "high-tech" equipment is another skill that was indicated as very helpful in this setting (IT#2, 724-725). In this program, a computerized system called Hypergraphics had been purchased and the teachers were expected to be able to use it. But, from the project director's point of view, one teacher shunned the technology: "Sure, they're afraid of it (technology). We had one instructor...he was afraid to use it. His attitude carried over to the students. 'I don't know why we have to use this old high-tech stuff anyway.' That's what he said in the classroom" (IT#3, 442-449).

Finally, teachers were expected to be able to work with company representatives. During the development and implementation of this program, business leaders had to be
oriented to the program; that responsibility fell to the teachers. The project administrator states that "you have to go all the way to the top and get them totally sold on the project. That involves very good listening skills on the part of the educators because you have to listen to their concerns and you have to be patient" (IT#2, 386-932). The educators had to remember that the audience was not fellow educators. The employee liaison explains, "...one thing she is very good at is that she does not talk to us as she would with her peers. She comes in to tell us about something, she never falls back on her jargon she would use with her peers" (IT#1, 866-870).

Being able to sell the program was another skill that administrators indicated as helpful: "You need to be confident you are going to be able to deliver in some form but whatever you deliver, it should be the objectives that you and the company decided upon" (IT#2, 397-400).
CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study has been to determine how a specific group of people functioned in a workplace literacy setting. The experiences which individuals faced as they attempted to teach job-specific skills to adults in an environment other than the traditional educational setting were the focus of this study.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the implications of the findings presented in Chapter 6, to draw conclusions, and to make suggestions for future research based on these findings.

Summary of Findings

This study was an attempt to determine how educators responded to developing and implementing a workplace literacy program. Specifically, attention was given to the experiences which the instructors faced during this project. From this study, then, information might be compiled that perhaps could assist other educators in the start-up of similar kinds of programs. From this particular workplace literacy project, six broad categories that dealt with the kinds of information that might be helpful for educators
were created. To summarize the findings, each of the six areas are presented.

A Definition of Workplace Literacy

Based on this study, establishing a clear consensus of the meaning of workplace literacy is helpful. From this study, it became evident that individuals define workplace literacy in different ways. Each individual had his own perception of how workplace literacy should be implemented and what such a program should include. As a result of these different perceptions of the project, a degree of ambiguity over the purpose of the project, who was in charge of whom, and how the instruction should be delivered was apparent. Additionally, in this program, a negative connotation of the word "literacy" surfaced, and that attitude served as a deterrent. Several educators and company personnel expressed strong opinions about the use of the term. Still, adult basic educators persisted with the image by decorating with ABC's and emphasizing "literacy."

Awareness of the Company Culture

A second category of issues that was derived from the study involved an awareness of the company culture. Studies in the literature (Hull, 1992; Gowen, 1992) suggest that company politics and the dynamics of the company culture
play a significant role in the implementation of workplace literacy projects. This study also substantiated that an awareness of the company culture is beneficial. Teachers found, in this study, that the project sometimes required a balancing act satisfying not only the student and the administration but company personnel as well. Also, educators in this project had to learn that their business counterparts needed an orientation about workplace literacy; and, in selling the project to business leaders, educators learned that they had to be direct, straightforward, and positive in what the workplace literacy project could do for the employees and the company. In addition, the participants in the study shared some ways that they felt helped to create an awareness of the company culture. These included establishing and participating in advisory committees, developing relationships with the company supervisors, spending time at the job site, and allowing students to explain their jobs by discussing it with the teachers and even providing guided tours of their work areas.

**Company Involvement**

A third category involved the degree of company involvement in this particular workplace literacy project. Participants in this project emphasized that the degree of
company involvement contributed directly to the measure of success of the program. The degree of company involvement in this project was manifested in the following ways: providing released time to employees; giving recognition and incentives for completion of classes; reimbursing fees to successful GED graduates; and participating in ceremonies and graduations.

The Workplace Literacy Student

A fourth category that was developed involved the workplace literacy student. The interviewees indicated that being in the work environment did create a new setting and that teacher training on the adult learner would be advantageous. Perhaps because of the work setting, teachers were more inclined to speak of the participants as "workers" and not "students." The issue of attendance, however, just as in traditional ABE classes, continued to be a problem; teachers in this program voiced guilt over the attrition and felt somewhat responsible for the students' absences.

One of the most resounding issues that came out of the study was the importance of providing released time to the employees. The company's doing that sent a message to the students that the company truly saw these classes as important; also, the classes were perceived as training rather than "literacy classes."
An equally important message was the need for computer skills to be perceived as a basic skill in our society. Students wanted training on how to use computers and were willing to admit a real need for the training. While some instruction was made available, and the workplace literacy curriculum was presented on the Hypergraphics system which required some training and hands-on experience, the college was not able to provide basic computer skills education through this grant because it is not allowed under the National Workplace Literacy guidelines. The definition of workplace literacy, as the Department of Adult Education defines it, should be broadened to include basic computer literacy skills.

The Workplace Literacy Classroom

The fifth category, Workplace Literacy Classroom, was a comparison and contrast of what was labeled the "traditional" and the "nontraditional" classrooms. Everyone in this study articulated the need for more non-traditional methods of instruction. Efforts to employ more non-traditional methods included developing job-specific, workplace curriculum; incorporating Hypergraphics system into the classroom instruction; and developing more one-on-one and small group classes. Still, while both observations and interviews revealed that teachers relied on their more
traditional methods of conducting classes, the teachers indicated that they both needed and wanted additional information about how to incorporate these methods into their classrooms.

The Role of the Teacher

The final category dealt with how teachers perceived their roles in this particular project. Frequently, in the interviews, a discussion of the "type" of teacher who worked well in this setting resulted. Consequently, the data were presented under the meta-categories of Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Qualities, and Teacher Qualifications.

An examination of the first two sub-categories revealed that, to a large extent, teachers need to be student-centered. All of the attitudes and qualities mentioned under the first two categories point to individuals who are interested in their students. Adjectives such as warm, caring, sincere, empathic all reinforce the philosophy of the individuals who worked in this program: students first.

With regard to qualifications, administrators indicated that experience with teaching adults and/or experience teaching the "basics"—reading, writing, and mathematics—were preferred. In addition, a more selective skill, ability to write curriculum, was discussed by one administrator and some teachers. That skill presents some
new challenges to teachers moving in the field of workplace literacy. Also, a knowledge of modern technology was highlighted as a skill necessary to work in this area.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to observe how teachers are functioning in a workplace literacy setting and to discover whether staff development and training would be helpful to those who are involved in these settings. In this project, the stakeholders came from a myriad of backgrounds: everything from public school teachers, college teachers, ABE teachers, and even company personnel with no teaching experience. It was the intent of the researcher to "peek into" this project, to experience it, and to describe that experience; then, from that study, to make some observations about that experience.

The research questions that guided this study focused on how teachers adapted to the workplace literacy setting; four of the five questions centered on whether teachers were required to have additional skills, orientation, or training in order to be involved in this workplace literacy program. Likewise, the review of the literature dealt with two interrelated areas: an examination of how educators are currently being prepared to work in a new context, the workplace, and what the literature reveals about the need for staff development for workplace literacy programs; and a brief
overview of current practices for staff development and training of adult basic educators in general.

The lack of preparation and training for practitioners in adult basic education programs is documented in the literature. While many of the explanations are easy to rationalize—lack of funding, the marginality of the profession, the absence of professional programs for adult basic educators—one unfortunate truth remains: educators are expected to move into an adult education setting with little or no preparation. Likewise, the problem of part-time, inadequately trained, and underpaid staff members has been recognized by both education and industry (Ford, 1992; Jurmo, 1989; Chall, Heron & Hilferty, 1987). In workplace literacy, if teacher training is mentioned at all, the subject is viewed as an area of concern and one that warrants needed research (Hull, 1993; Foucar-Szocki, 1992; U S Department of Education, 1992; Galagan, 1990; Jurmo, 1989). Staff development and training in these workplace literacy programs is one component that should not be overlooked, ignored, or treated mildly; the difference in a mediocre program and a superior program just might depend on it.

First, just as we do in many of our adult basic education programs, teachers were placed into this workplace literacy setting without any prior training. Despite that
fact, most of them did remarkably well. Still, nothing can be gained by placing under-prepared teachers into these settings. Regardless of how qualified a person may be, how many degrees an individual has, even how experienced a person may be in working with adults, all participants in this project agreed that prior staff development and training would have made it even more successful.

One of the most basic components of that staff development and training would be a discussion of what the workplace literacy project is. It is this researcher's opinion that, in this project, the administrators should have, from the beginning, created opportunities for group discussion on what workplace literacy means in general, how workplace literacy was defined by the stakeholders of this project, and to establish a common understanding of what workplace literacy would be in this particular instance. Just as Knower's diagram (page 20) illustrates, workplace literacy may be defined as anything from GED instruction to participatory, liberatory adult education; knowing and understanding how workplace literacy was defined in this setting would have been helpful.

In addition, in those discussions about workplace literacy in general, adult educators needed to examine very closely the nomenclature associated with the field of adult basic education and not ignore the possible negative
psychological implications that terms, such as "literacy", might present. Ironically, the use of the term "literacy" in lieu of its negative counterpart, "illiteracy", has done little to erase the negative attitudes of ignorance and ineptness associated with the term; in fact, those negative associations seem to have hung on and now apply to what is supposed to be the more positive term, "literacy."

Another point that needs to be considered in the workplace literacy staff development material is the addition of a third component to the education model, the company. The one critical factor that separates the workplace literacy program from other teaching situations is the presence of a third force besides the educator and the student: the company. The degree of involvement of the company can range from complete and total support to nothing more than signing on as a partner in the project. Much of Gowen's (1992) research substantiates the claim that workplace literacy projects are an attempt to force employees to conform to what mainstream employers and educators expect, not benevolent attempts to help students. In this project, educators found that, at times, the goal of the project and the goal of the student were not always the same; and the teacher found himself or herself stuck in the middle, forced to support either the program or the students.
Fourth, like Hull (1993), much of what occurred in this setting, involved the use of traditional methods, despite the rhetoric about adult learning methods, facilitative learning, and self-directed approaches. All participants in this project indicated a desire for training on teaching adults, adult learning methods, and theories of adult learning. Teachers expressed interest in new teaching methods, yet when the time came for classroom instruction, paralyzed with a lack of information about how to incorporate new techniques into their teaching styles, reverted to more traditional methods.

Finally, other studies of adult basic education teachers have revealed that frequently teachers are considered "good" teachers not by credentials, knowledge, or expertise, but by the ability to deal with the adult student in a warm, caring, empathetic way (Mocker, 1974; Spear, 1972). Likewise, much of the discussion on teachers in this study focused more on the ability to relate to the adults than on any particular specialization.

Even more interesting was how the role of teacher was expanded in this particular project to include the ability to develop, write, and incorporate the curriculum into their classes. Administrators were eager to find individuals who could do more than teach the material; they sought educators who could also develop a job-specific curriculum for the
company and its employees. Additional research into how other programs approach the curriculum development issue would be helpful.

Implications for Teacher Training

This study presents some new ideas regarding the role of the teacher in the workplace and how workplace literacy teachers should be prepared to working in this setting. Unfortunately, much of the staff development literature reveals that educators are encouraged to apply pedagogical and andragogical principles without regard to the social context. The work setting creates a unique social context in which teachers are called upon to perform a myriad of tasks. While those tasks may vary from setting to setting, the fundamental philosophy guiding those actions suggests an emphasis on andragogical principles.

This study supports the view that workplace education is not as successful if andragogical principles are ignored. Educators should be encouraged to consider those principles and apply them within the broader social environment of the workplace literacy setting. No longer does it suffice that educators go into a classroom and teach, impervious to the setting, the students, or the social climate. In the workplace education program, teachers work in a broader social context. Unlike the traditional pedagogical setting, the social environment in
this setting plays a major role in the interaction between educators and other stakeholders in the project. In this setting, teachers cannot ignore the social, political, and even economic, constructs of a particular setting and they must be prepared to provide an opportunity for learning to occur. In this setting, they are not merely teachers; they become a part of that social environment.

Traditionally, staff development and teacher training programs have focused on the content and methodology of teaching. However, in the workplace, such a narrow focus will no longer suffice. Educators must be prepared for a much broader role than has historically been considered. In this study, teachers came from a variety of backgrounds with varying years of experience, and all indicated that the role of the educator in this setting involved much more than the traditional classroom experience. The workplace setting provides a dynamic, changing environment and educators should be provided with the opportunity to be prepared for this expanded role.

With the formation of partnerships between education and business through the workplace literacy initiative, the role of the adult basic education teacher has changed; it has broadened to include skills which have not traditionally been required of ABE/GED part-time instructors. Adult basic education teachers need to be better prepared for this new
setting and for the changes it might present. This study has provided insights into specifically how that role has changed. First, the role has broadened to include skills of teachers which traditional adult education programs do not require. Second, it has broadened to include a third entity, the company. Finally, it has broadened to include more non-traditional methods of instruction, of delivery, and of evaluation.

First, the role of the adult basic education teacher has broadened to include skills which traditional adult education programs do not require. Perhaps the most significant of those skills is the ability to formulate job-specific curriculum. Workplace literacy programs, by definition, dictate that a task analysis to determine job specific basic skills requirements be performed; then, from that task analysis educators complete the following: design the program, set the goals for the employees, assess available resources, work with partners, build the curriculum, and evaluate the program. Companies are demanding tailor-made, individualized curriculum for their specific job sites, and educators are expected to be able to develop that curriculum.

Second, the role of the adult education teacher has broadened to include a third entity: the company. While the addition of a third force brings many benefits--more
students, additional financial support, physical facilities, and even technical support--that inclusion can also bring some unexpected challenges. Perhaps the most significant challenge is the realization that the teacher is no longer just an employee of the educational system; he or she may also report to or respond to company officials as well. In some instances, the adult educator acts as a liaison between the educational institution and the company. The responsibility to "sell the program" may fall to the teachers whose presence on a daily basis serves as the one connection between the employee/students and the educational and company representatives who established the program. In this study, that fact created ambiguity for some teachers. Also, teachers may become caught up in the politics of an institution and find that teaching becomes more of a tightrope walk between the expectations of company personnel and the needs or goals of the students. On more than one occasion, teachers expressed frustrations that they had to choose between the needs of their students and the goals of the company in this project.

Finally, the role of the teacher has broadened to include more non-traditional methods of instruction, of delivery, and of evaluation. Some of the literature indicates that the traditional approach to education has no place in the work setting; rather, a more non-traditional
approach is encouraged, one in which the teacher is a facilitator and the students are encouraged to provide input about the content and the way that content is presented. Teachers may be expected to embrace new teaching methods in lieu of the traditional lecture approach. In addition, unlike the adult basic education classroom, in workplace literacy the pay-off for students, and ultimately the teachers, may not be the completion of a GED or the mastery of a standardized examination; instead, those goals may be much more nebulous. In this particular situation, for example, the company wanted two things: employees to be able to write standard operating procedures more clearly; and employees to understand statistical process control more fully. Goals such as these are much less tangible and do not lend themselves to standardized content mastery. And, ultimately, an evaluation of how effective the teacher has been may stem from whether the job supervisors see improvement from the employees in their job duties.

This study is only the first step toward the development of teacher training materials for practitioners in workplace literacy programs. Future studies of educators in workplace literacy programs should continue to focus on the role of the educator in this setting. This study has provided qualitative insights about how educators function in a new setting, the workplace. With funding designated to
support workplace literacy projects that couple education and industry, the partnerships of adult basic education and private sector are likely to continue. Before educators are expected to move into this new setting, they should be provided with information to help prepare them.

**Development of a Teacher's Training Manual**

During this study, participants were frequently asked whether they thought a training manual would aid teachers who are beginning a workplace literacy program. All participants eagerly agreed, and several bemoaned the fact that very little is available in the way of training for projects like this. One responded, "The training I've seen so far besides the conferences is minimal...The training for teachers is not prolific...Workplace literacy is a hot topic right now and training needs to be developed, but it's still too early" (IT#5, 847-867). And the project director, when asked whether a manual for this area would be helpful responded, "Yes, if it weren't so steeped in jargon that teachers wouldn't read it" (IT#3, 711-713).

**Teacher Training Approaches**

Currently, information about workplace literacy programs can be obtained by two primary means: workshops and conferences and on-the-job training. Educators learn what works--and what does not--from personal experiences on the
job. Then, those experiences are shared at local, regional, and state conferences; through those conferences, teachers gain ideas to take back into the work setting. This approach has proved to be the primary means of staff development and training for educators in the workplace literacy field. While it is a very effective approach, the field of workplace literacy and the professionals who are working in this area deserve more.

Implementation of training for educators in workplace literacy could involve a variety of activities, many of them apart from the traditional approach to traditional training. For workplace literacy projects, one respondent emphasized the need for ongoing orientation. "I think orientation, and I don't mean one little orientation, a shot in the arm, and say, 'Okay, this is what we're going to do here.' I think a strong, ongoing orientation program is essential...maybe the administrator has to become an instructional leader. Get out there, work with them, get their opinions" (IT#2, 433-441).

A strong mentoring program would be another approach to training teachers. Having a strong orientation program initially may not be sufficient; to strengthen the program, an ongoing relationship between administrators and teachers is important. "What we did not do, we did not follow up on that in the classroom. I feel training goes beyond what we
did. We should have followed up with the instructor, actually in the classroom observing them, assisting them, answering their questions" (IT#2, 671-678).

Establishing a mentoring relationship between educators and company personnel would also add strength to the program. "It's best, I think to observe. And then, find someone you can ask...someone you can develop a relationship with...someone who will help you" (IT#1, 842-845).

Recommendations for Future Research

The literature indicates that staff development and training for individuals in workplace literacy projects should encompass a larger part of the grant proposals submitted for National Workplace Literacy projects. While that promotes the importance of staff development for adult educators, continued research into the needs of teachers working in the field is imperative. Future research should continue to examine how teachers are experiencing the workplace literacy setting, what methods are being used and which are more successful, and what issues the educators are facing. Additional qualitative studies of other workplace literacy projects could provide information about these and other issues.

From this particular study, a logical next step would be to develop a teacher training manual for educators in
workplace literacy programs and to field test the manual with practitioners in existing programs.

Another suggestion for future research might be to replicate this study in another workplace literacy project. Further studies of this new social environment in which educators are functioning would benefit the field.

In addition, future researchers should consider the use of the term "literacy" and its implications with regard to the field of workplace training. Currently, ambiguity exists about the definition of the term "literacy" and what should be considered as "workplace literacy" both in the field and in the literature. Also, negative connotations of the term suggest that the issue could be more than just a question of semantics. With the continued partnership of business and education in the training of employees, the field would benefit from more informed studies about the use of the term "literacy" and how it will fit into the workplace setting.

The field of workplace education is the latest trend in adult basic education and adult literacy education. Educators must be prepared to meet the changes which programs like workplace education will provide. As Foucar-Szocki and Mitchell (1993) indicate, "Literacy educators must recognize that the changes that are just beginning will affect all of our systems and organizations. We can choose
to respond to coming changes by continuing business as usual...and fail. Or, we can choose wisely, seize the opportunity, and evolve into something even better" (p. 25).
REFERENCES


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Jones, E. V. (1991). *What adult basic education staff development can learn from K-12 staff development programs*, Unpublished research, George Mason University.


education teachers and volunteer instructors.


APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

The following questions are categorized under the six broad research questions. The letters to the left of the question indicate to whom the question would be directed. The following legend identifies those letters:

A  =  All
PD  =  Project Director
I  =  Instructor
CL  =  Company Liaison
SE  =  Student/Employee

I.  How is the workplace literacy project implemented into the work setting?

A  1. What does the phrase "workplace literacy" mean?
A  2. What are your responsibilities as (director, teacher student, business liaison) in this project?
A  3. Describe the logistics of providing the workplace literacy project to employees.
A  4. How does this project benefit the company?
A  5. How does this project benefit you?
A 6. What crucial elements does the company have to provide in order to make this project successful?

A 7. What does the student/employee have to provide to make this project a success?

A 8. What does the teacher/educational provider have to provide to make this project a success?

II. How are teachers conducting the workplace literacy classes?

PD/I 1. How is student progress measured/monitored?

PD/I 2. Who determines what should be taught in the classroom and how is this determined?

PD/I 3. Who develops the curriculum for the classes?

PD/I 4. How much of the curriculum is standardized text?

PD/I 5. How do you introduce a topic to the class?

PD/I 6. How do you organize the class?

PD/I 7. What materials do you use in the class?

PD/I 8. What unique skills, qualifications, traits do you bring to this program?

PD/I 9. What advice would you give to a young, inexperienced teacher who expressed an interest to work in a program such as this about the kinds of training or background would be of most benefit?

I 10. How do you make the subject interesting to the student?
11. What are the major problems or issues that you have encountered while teaching this class?

12. Have you had drop-outs or failures in your class? Why?

13. Have you had successes? Who? Why are these considered successes to you?

III. What skills are required of teachers in the workplace literacy project?

1. How are teachers selected to work in this project?

2. What specific traits, qualities do you look for when filling instructor positions?

3. Do you have any students who show feelings of inadequacy or insecurity? What did you do to help that student?

4. Have you had a student who did not learn the material as quickly as the others? What did you do to help that student?

IV. What kind of training is provided to teachers assigned to work in the workplace literacy project?

1. Is additional training or staff development provided for teachers hired to work in this program? If so, in what areas?
PD/CL 2. Are teachers visited by project administrators? If so, how many visits has each teacher had?

PD/CL 3. In what way do teachers contribute to the curriculum? Can you give some examples of cases of teacher contribution?

V. How do students view the role of the teacher in the workplace literacy project?

SE 1. What is it that gets people to participate?

SE 2. How can the company increase participation by employees in the project?

SE 3. How does the company encourage you to participate?

SE 4. Why are you coming to the workplace literacy project?

SE 5. How do classes in the workplace literacy project differ from what you experienced in school?

SE 6. Do you like the books and materials which are used in the classroom? How could it be made better?

SE 7. What do you like best about coming to class?

SE 8. What could the teacher do differently?
9. What kinds of classroom activities do you prefer? For instance, do you prefer independent study, group activities, or traditional instruction in the classroom?

VI. What are the expectations of the company representatives for the teachers working in the workplace literacy project?

1. What special educational needs do your employees have?

2. How do you encourage the student/employee to participate?

3. In an ideal situation, how would you expect teachers to be trained to work in a project such as this?

4. How important is knowledge of how to work with adults for teachers who work in this project?

5. Should teachers be allowed or encouraged to visit the work sites so that they may more fully understand what the company/employee needs are?
APPENDIX B

Schedule of Formal Observations

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<th>1st Date</th>
<th>2nd Date</th>
<th>3rd Date</th>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>June 2</td>
</tr>
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<td>GED Class</td>
<td>February 1</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>April 5/7</td>
<td>April 26/28</td>
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<td>Reading; Statistical</td>
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<tr>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>May 30</td>
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## Schedule of Interviews

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<tr>
<td>Workplace Literacy Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terminated ABE Instructor</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ABE Instructor</td>
<td>June 2</td>
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<td>Employee Trainer</td>
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<td>College Instructor</td>
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<td>Employee Liaison</td>
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<td>Project Administrator</td>
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APPENDIX C

Field Notes from Observations
Dates and Coded Key

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>GED Class</td>
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APPENDIX D

Sample Script to Explain Interview Process
(An Example of the script used to explain the interview process to the interviewees.)

Researcher: Hello. I want to thank you for consenting to do this interview with me. As you know, I am conducting research on this Workplace Literacy Project. As we talk, I will be recording our conversation. Next, I will transcribe the interview and enter it into a computer program called Ethnograph. Once I have completed the transcriptions, I will send you a copy. Please read through the copy and check for accuracy and anonymity. If there are points we need to discuss further, we will get back together at a future date. Do you have any questions? (Allow time for questions.) Okay, let's get started.
APPENDIX E

Sample Cover Letter sent to Interviewees

Date

Dear (Interview Participant Name):

Enclosed is a copy of the transcribed interview which we conducted on (date). Please read through the transcription very carefully and check for anonymity and accuracy. If we need to get together again after we have had time to study the transcript, we can do so. Thank you for your help in this endeavor.

Sincerely,


Glenda Ballard
APPENDIX F

The following are selected excerpts from interviews to demonstrate the data collection process for this study. Random samples are included to insure anonymity of the participants.
Me: First of all, what does the phrase "workplace literacy" mean to you?  

EL#1: Well, it means to me that we're going to see some improvement, that we're going to determine where there is a need, and we going to strive for improvement and in our programs at LSS, we've introduced those programs not using the word "literacy", uh, to eliminate confusion because it may in some way be confused with illiteracy, uh to eliminate confusion because some may hear that and develop an attitude about the program.

Me: Do you have another euphemism that you use for it?

EL#1: We say "self improvement" and uh, in the project...the federal grant, we will be careful to tell them (the employees) that there was a lot of competition for the grant, and we were awarded the grant, and so we will try to make it exciting for them. They were a select group. We tell them that we are a pilot project and that they were selected for this project.
EL#1: The workplace literacy is a self-improvement process...to be able to work more efficiently, to produce more....

Me: In a sense, would it be fair to say that any of us could benefit from a workplace literacy program?

EL#1: Oh, I think so. Very definitely. Product flow For people in another
EL#1: You know, back on the definition of workplace literacy...I don't think any of us knew at the beginning what all was involved in the workplace literacy...even what we fully meant by workplace literacy. There was an awful lot of effort in the beginning to educate upper management of the need for this program...about the importance of this...and its importance to the bottom line. How is it going to affect the bottom line. We didn't know for sure. But these people that we were talking about serving...they are the ones that could make the biggest impact on that bottom line. You know, you could hire more engineers, you could hire more professional people, but that's not where your strength is in your organization. The people that produce the output are the ones that are going to affect production...they are the one that will make or break you. I mean, now we are competing in an international market...no longer is it just a domestic thing. We have international competition, and that has imposed new requirements in order to be able to compete in that international market. These are the people that we need to educate. We're doing that through these means when otherwise we might not.
Me: Do you feel that the committee concept is one of the major elements to make a project like this a success?

EL#1: Absolutely. It is a necessary component. It's kind of fun to hear the kinds of problems that the educators are experiencing, and they have an appreciation for what we are experiencing as problems of educating our workers.
she can. A relationship has been established. We didn't get there by not respecting there. It was a long process. When I first started going to the advisory meetings, it was a formality....

Me: PR purposes, mainly?

EL#1: Uh huh. By being involved on this level, however, it got me into it on a deeper level. As a result of my involvement, I think I influenced one of the courses they teach at the college...for instance, the business English that they taught. They took out a course and added one in business communications. We found that the graduates did not have the skills necessary to write reports...so we began to look for a change. But from the advisory committee, we learned that we need that same kind of cohesive relationship developed for Specialty Tubing Department and ABE. And student involvement is the more important. If they go back to the workplace and say, "I'm getting my GED" or "I'm improving my writing skills so I can do those reports" then that has a bigger impact than anything we can do in management. So student involvement is Key to the success.
well. Recognition is really important in adult learning. And when you think about education, the last experience that most of these workers had was in the public school classroom and teacher was all-powerful, they had not input. But here is a teacher asking you what is it that you need to know. So, this is a switch in adult education. The teacher is asking the students how they can help make the job better. They don't know what the answers are so you have to extract the information from them. That is a very important part...teacher-student relationship. For example, she watched and asked them about how important that you measure accurately and then relates that to a math concept. They (the workers) thought they knew what they were doing but they were cutting lengths wrong because they did not know the measurements.

Me: What about when we did the writing classes? What kind of feedback have you gotten on the instructors?

EL#1: One thing...it was a bad approach from management but everyone had to do these standard operating procedures and they were known as SOPs and it came to be known as SOBs.

Me: (laughter) Surprise, surprise, surprise.

EL#1: Yeah, well people just didn't know where to start...the directions were not good and the instructor came in to make that a segment. She started very simply, writing in general and then she moved to specific SOP writing and people brought their specific questions to the class. I mean, before the class, we would write these SOPs and send it up the ladder and get it shot down and sent back saying this isn't right. So, the class gave the people the know-how and the confidence to do the task.
Me: How important is it that the teachers coming in get to know what is popularly called today, the "corporate culture"? or the company politics or whatever.

EL#1: It's very important. It's best, I think, to observe. And then, find somebody you can ask...someone you can develop a relationship with who will help you. That's part of (name withheld--dean) success. She knew when to act and when to be still because I told her. And I wouldn't have told her anything if I hadn't known her, if I hadn't trusted her. Just like we said with the teacher. and to turn adult education,...we've just now known about it. It's been going on a long time, but why are we just now paying attention to it?

Me: To adult education, you're saying?

EL#1: To adult education...in the workplace. Of people coming in and talking about literacy skills. It's new to us and I know it's new to other companies because they've come to us....One thing I want to say about teachers...one thing that she is very good at is that she does not talk to us as she would with her peers. She comes in to tell us about something, she never fell back on her jargon she would use with her peers. The other day, the project coordinator and I were visiting with the representatives of these other two smaller companies who are in on the three year grant; and she said something about SCANS. When we got back here, I said, "They don't know anything about SCANS." They didn't ask her because they didn't want to appear ignorant, but they didn't have the foggiest notion what she was talking about. You've got to be able to sell yourself, but don't fall back on your jargon to do that.
EL#1: Well, I think the main thing that got...it had nothing to do with his ability to do a good job; in fact, he did have some good qualities. But, he was so territorial that he would not work with any other program that came in there. He killed, or tried to, the Success 2000. He felt threatened by that. Maybe it was my fault...perhaps I should have explained the program more clearly. We're all a team and we're going to all work together. His lack of cooperation....

Me: and Understanding?

EL#1: Yeah, he felt that some way it was going to take away. He really felt that the scheduling was too long, but instead of bringing those issues to me or somebody else, he tried to sabotage the program.
second meeting. Okay, first of all what does the phrase "workplace literacy" mean to you.

PA#1: When I think of the term "workplace literacy", I like to think in terms of the concepts of contextual learning, uh, being able to teach individuals the skills that they need within the environment in which they live or work and I truly feel that if individuals can be taught specific skills that have meaning to them then learning will be better for them, that more learning will take place, that retention will be better. So, workplace literacy for me is that I'm interested in contextual learning and taking a look further at the acquisition of job specific skills and at the same time their being taught basic skills.

Me: Are those basic skills taught within the context of the ....

PA#1: Uh, huh, the basic skills are taught within the context of the job.
Me: Before I get away, you said something about the employees need more information like, you used the example stronger work ethic. So, you're saying that prior to getting involved in workplace literacy, that that was something you weren't that aware of?

PA#1: Yeah, I'm not that aware of that. I have always thought in terms of basic skills. But a number of employers say to us that they want their employees to get their GED. That says to me that the GED is a valuable credential for their workers to have and that MAYBE and this is an assumption on my part, that this will help them become better workers. That speaks well of that particular credential and we have worked a long time to help a number of individuals to acquire that credential. Now, I see where we can go beyond that and we can expand our field and say what we can do to help individuals beyond the GED.

Me: Well, you've already touched on this a little bit, but how does this project benefit the company that is involved. Can we enumerate a list of the benefits this project has had for the company?

PA#1: Uh, one I think we have helped them to develop a keener awareness of the importance of education and training for individuals. Many companies put out millions and millions of dollars on training but it has always been on the managerial and supervisory level, but I think that we have helped them to become more aware of the need to train their workers at the lower level. These are the individuals they are depending on for quality, for productivity...it begins with the workers at the very bottom of the scale. So, I think we have helped our company rather than move from top to bottom they see the importance of bottom to top. Uh, I think we have helped the company see the need to involve the community. I think there
was some awareness there, but it has been increased. Uh, I think we have helped them focus more on quality rather than just productivity. Again, I think that is an attitudinal type of thing. Workers taking pride in what they are doing...taking ownership of what they are doing, and again that takes us beyond the basic skills and takes us to the work ethic of personal skills.

Me: Okay, how has this project helped you, the institution. Anything you haven't mentioned already?

PA#1: Uh, it has helped me because I have a better understanding of the business world and their culture and it is different. It has helped me gain an appreciation for their culture that I did not have before. To give you an example, I was trying to set up a meeting with someone this morning and we were talking writing a grant proposal and in this proposal it suggests you partnership with a local business and this person said, we should have a meeting to see if we want to even pursue it. He asked me if I thought we should invite business reps to come to this meeting. And I said, No, I don't think so. This type of meeting will bore them; before I probably wouldn't have said that, but now I understand the way business types think a little better. Educators have no problem with a planning meeting, but I felt that we should move to the point that we were ready to go for the grant and then invite the business to become involved. That's how business works. And, that is one way we are different. We (educators) could spend a whole day trying to define one word, so I think that helped me.

Me: What does the company have to provide to make a project like this a success?

PA#1: Number one, top level support. I feel you have to go all the way to the top and get them totally sold on the
project. That involves very good listening skills on the part of the educators because you have to listen to their concerns and you have to be patient. Many companies still see things in terms of dollar signs and if this is going to be an investment, they want to know what the return is. And you need to make sure you are confident you are going to be able to deliver in some form but whatever you deliver, it should be the objectives which you and the company decided upon. Being able to work on the supervisors; get their support; involve them in the planning. Last but not least, the workers must be involved...and the instructors. That's another thing about my perspective...I don't think my perspective has necessarily changed, but it has broadened. I think as I've moved through this, I have learned more and more. I truly believe it is through the support groups. What I mean is that through the support groups the individuals support each other and support the project. You want them to take ownership for the program and also the instructors. I don't think you should even consider starting the program until you have the instructors. I think they need to be involved from the beginning. I think it is a sad mistake...I've learned this from personal experience for the administrator to sit at his or her desk, come up with all these grandiose plans, and go out and say, "This is the plan, you make it work." 

Me: In the event you can't have the instructor a part of the initial process, how do you involve him?

PA#1: I think orientation. And I don't mean one little orientation, a shot in the arm, and say, "Okay, this is what we're going to do here." I think a strong orientation program, maybe some way to...maybe the administrator has to become an instructional leader. Get out there, work with them, get their opinions. Again, I can't overemphasize the importance of
flexibility because if it is not
working the way you propose it then
you need to be flexible to go in and
change it. You know, the teachers
have so much to offer. We can lose
sight of the project, but the teachers
are the ones who are out there in the
trenches. They are out their with the
students; they're hearing the
comments. They're the ones who can
tell us what we need to know. They
need all the support they can get.
Ongoing orientation...
Me: Instead of just going in there and assuming we know the answers...as educators we know best.

PA#1: No, again that goes back to the workers. A lot of this comes from things I have read in the literature, but a lot...what I've read in the literature has supported what I have seen in the field as well.

Me: Yeah, that was a question I had while ago. When you were giving your definition of workplace literacy, is that something you gathered from the literature, from your own experience, or both?

PA#1: Yes, a combination. I think it stems from my own philosophy of education in general. The key is meaning...learning having meaning. I believe so strongly in the contextual
PA#1: Okay, what we wanted to do was to use teachers who were out there in the field who we could (pause, laughter) when I think in terms of the word "train", I think of training going beyond a one or two day orientation, but individuals we could work with who we could get to apply some of the concepts... not apply, adapt... to their own traditional methods. And, we wanted to get individuals we already had employed.

Me: Why did you choose to use those that were already there?

PA#1: Because we felt that they already knew the students, which is very important. They already had some teaching experience in adult education, and they were familiar with the characteristics of the adult learner. Uh, I guess those are the primary reasons.
Me: Okay, consider this question not only from the workplace literacy perspective but from your own background in ABE as well. What specific traits do you look for when you hire instructors?

PA#1: What do I look for? The ABE teacher is one who is charismatic, high energy, uh, someone who requires little or no supervision, individuals who are...when I say charismatic, I mean individuals who are warm, genuine, caring for their students. I also, although it isn't at the very top of my list, I think teachers should know their subject matter, be able to teach the content well. I really would like to have someone with some teaching background.
Me: So is there any one academic area or subject area that you prefer over another when hiring teachers?

PA#1: Well, we always try to find good teachers in those basic areas...reading, writing, and math. You may have a good math teacher who is limited in English, but that teacher should try to do everything necessary to help his students get help in that area. If he can't do it, bring someone in who can.

Me: Is there any kind of additional training provided to those who would be working in this area?

PA#1: You mean the current year? What I did, I had a series of meetings with the teachers for a while. In those meetings, I spent a lot of time introducing concepts to them, ways they could adapt to what they were already doing. What we did not do, we did not follow up on that in the classroom. I feel training goes beyond what we did. We should have followed up with the instructor, actually in the classroom observing them, assisting them, answering their questions. Or, if we did do that, we did not do it properly. We went in and said, "Hey, you are not doing that right." and "This is the way you should do it." Well, who's to say we are even right? One thing that I think would be helpful for teachers in this setting...I think we need to spend more time on learning theories, teaching learning theories. I don't think we spend enough time on those.
Me: So, what I hear you saying that one of the things you've learned from this past year is that is one thing you will do differently in future program.

PA#1: Yes, and also going back to learning theories, because I truly believe that we do what we believe. You may not recognize very early that there is a theory out there. But, I believe there are some good theories in the field and it helps professionals to be aware of them. And, I don't think we do enough of that. Another area that might be helpful...Is computer assisted instruction. I for example don't feel that I would make a good writing instructor, but with a good computer assisted program, I could help my students and I think I know enough about teaching itself that I could help them along. A good example of this is a teacher we have. I have seen her really grow in teaching writing skills to her students.

Me: If you had to identify some successes, looking back over this past 15 months, what would you identify?

PA#1: I think the partnership that we have with the company. Despite some problems that we have had, I think that partnership is still strong. Uh, the curriculum--I think we've developed a lot of good curriculum materials. I think those are the two major areas.

Me: You mentioned in spite of the problems. What kinds of problems did you encounter.

PA#1: I think implementing the curriculum...uh, staff development and all of those important ingredients are important not only in a workplace literacy program but any kind of training program. Uh, when you are working with another entity, I think the partnership between the entity and the provider and the recipient of the services...I think there has a to be a
very strong relationship there. Uh, in workplace literacy there is a strong emphasis on curriculum development...I think we did well in that area; then the actual implementation of the curriculum; I think we failed in that area. I don't think all tasks (unsure of word here) have been properly implemented and I think one of the reasons why is because we have not had a very good staff development, training the teachers and helping them to adapt to what we were supposed to do.

Me: Was there a false assumption, well maybe not false, but was there an assumption in the beginning that teachers would be able just to go in and adapt on their own?

PA#1: Yes, that's true. I guess we thought that teachers should be able
Gowen's book. Has company politics been an issue in this grant?

PA#1: Nodded affirmative

Me: Has it really?

PA#1: I won't say a big part. I'll say a small part. Because there is also that underlying feeling or need to always keep the company happy. There are some advantages and disadvantages to anything you do. One of the things that you want to do is involve company personnel in the overall program process. You want them to be a part of the governance and so sometimes they may perceive things in a way that you may not necessarily agree with but in order to keep them happy because you know they are a key player you'll go along with them--uh and it shouldn't be that way. And knowing that it can and does happen, you need to work on communication with company personnel. So, I think there were some company politics. They also saw something that they didn't quite understand...we don't like this, you need to make a change here...to keep the company happy, you go in and make that change. Instead, ideally what I would do is when they brought a concern to us, I should have said, "Well, let's analyze this." I didn't...I gave in because it was the company asking.

Me: And how important is it that the teachers be aware of this...of the company politics.

PA#1: It's extremely important. They should be aware of the company politics. Because in a project like this, this person is reporting to this person and so on. And, it's very important that we look good to our supervisors. And companies don't like "problems." Problems cost dollars. Again, that goes back to understanding business. And I'm not saying that we always go along with that because I think it is just as important that business understands how we operate
just as we understand how they operate. And, in the beginning those kinds of issues need to be put on the table. That in education we operate in this way. How does that differ with your procedures. But, the bottom line is we all want to get good results. And the process...again process vs. product...the process the way we go about doing things may be different from the company. In a company, they are going to get rid of a problem as quickly as they can whereas in education we don't react as quickly. we take time and look at the other options.
PC#1: No, no a TEA grant. Yes, I did
help to write this grant, but that was
an earlier one. In fact, this was
perfect for me and I was perfect for
it, because had done a lot of
curriculum development, textbook
writing over the years and curriculum
development....most teachers have
deficiencies in that area; for me,
that's my strong area. That's what I
do. So, in the workplace, I fit
perfectly in this field. I have
worked as a trainer in industry; I
trained for E-Systems years ago.
not just any teacher would be able to
walk in and conduct that class and
meet the needs of those employees...

PC#1: Right.

Me: Because of the learner?? Why? I
know what you're saying and that is
what I am reaching for, but what makes
it different?

PC#1: Because the rapport with the
adults is so important. Adults have
different needs than children; they
haven't been students for 12 years
right out of high school; they don't
know how to play the game. They have
a very high anxiety level. They come
into the classroom with certain fears:
number one, uh, I've forgotten
everything I've ever learned. I'm the
dumbest person in this room. I'm not
sure I can learn. I'm not sure I know
how to study. So, they come in with
those feelings and the most important
ing thing to me before any learning can
occur is to allay those fears. And,
Me: Yeah, I've already seen that. This student may not know SPC, but by Golly, he knows about a lot of things that the instructor may not.

PC#1: That's right. And, I think that's where programs can get into trouble with sending teachers in there who are traditional teachers, or particularly...I would ban elementary teachers from workplace literacy programs...I mean ban them across the board. You might lose some good ones, but it's not worth taking that chance. People who go in there who are used to wiping snotty noses and to treat people like that, it runs them off in a minute. To talk down to them and that's what comes across, you're talking down to them. You're treating them like "You're ignorant and I'm the teacher" and the classroom teacher who is used to the structure of the classroom..the elementary teacher..particularly has a certain mindset that just does not fit in the workplace setting. I was surprised to hear the external evaluator to say he doesn't allow the lecture method at all in their classrooms. Now, I think that's going a little too far, because there are times when you have information to give out, the lecture system works. I understand the philosophy they are working under, the idea that these people did not learn that way the first time, but that is not necessarily true. They're saying that the reason they are in the basic skills class is because they didn't learn it in the traditional setting and that was a lecture method. But, that's not always true because, not with my definition of literacy, that is expanded to include a wide variety of people and not all traditional low-skilled people. And even those lower skilled people, what I believe is using any resource possible to get a point across. In the high school classroom, if I had to stand on my head and make a fool of myself to make a point, that's what I'd do. Whatever is necessary to make sure learning is taking place--and learning is not
taking place if the brain is shut down -is what I'd do. And, in a workplace setting, that's why I am so crazy about this Hypergraphics thing because it enhances that participation. It works well with adults.

Me: Have there been instances where teachers have been reticent to use that system?

PC#1: Sure, they're afraid of it. The students will pick up...we know what happened with a certain instructor...he was afraid to use it. His attitude carried over to the students. "I don't know why we have to use this old high-tech stuff anyway." That's what he said in the classroom. Uh the students, "Yeah, yeah." They were swept right along with it. Now one thing that didn't happen that I think could have happened is I don't think those students became afraid of it and carried out his fear because for one thing all they had responsibility was the response pads; he had to make it all work. He was afraid of it, but they had a lesser responsibility.

Me: So, for many teachers, it may be having to overcome some perceptions, or misconceptions in order to adapt to this situation we are describing here.

PC#1: The teachers?

Me: Yes.

PC#1: But you know that is true of teaching in general. And, the qualities of a teacher...

Me: Which is one of my questions. Let's go ahead and talk about that.

PC#1: I said I would ax all elementary teachers. I also would ax...if I had to hire a bunch of teachers like the external evaluator did for instance...authoritarians. Authority and traditionally you get those types in the teaching professions. And that doesn't work well. You don't want the nurturer to
the point of "honey, sugar, darlin'". 486
but you don't want the drill sergeant 487
either. And, it does...what you said 488
earlier...it all comes down to having 489
respect for the student who knows 490
something about what he's doing, who 491
has lived and knows something from 492
living as an adult...it's completely 493
different from teaching kids. Adults 494
don't...I mean they can draw from 495
those experiences. 496

Me: What else? What other qualities 498
would you look for? 499

PC#1: A big, big thing is being 501
dynamic, enthusiastic, have an 502
ownership of a teaching style...the 503
style I prefer is one that's lively, 504
energetic, enthusiastic. If you don't 505
have enthusiasm about the content, how 506
can you convey that material. You 507
have to not only love people, you have 508
to love the area you are in. The 509
teachers must be themselves students; 510
they must love learning to, uh, help 511
others learn. 512
Me: Is there any one content area that would be more helpful than another?

PC#1: Well, math people are helpful for that subject area, certainly. And left-brained, what the research says is that most teachers are left-brained and use left-brain techniques.

Me: Is that right? I didn't know that.
Uh, what kind of training would be necessary to help or if you hired new teachers, what would you impose on them?

PC#1: Uh, well, actually when I saw the employee instructor... his training was related to the Hypergraphics and he was in on the curriculum development. The other teacher... she had the skills and the personality that would work...

Me: What are her skills and personality that you identified would work?

PC#1: Her relationship with people, the way she responds to her work, her professionalism, her prior background with adults, the way she conducted herself in the interview... all of those things... and a little bit of obsessive compulsive.

Me: Okay.
PC#1: Yes, I would include...you know we have included a staff development/training component in that proposal we sent in.

Me: Have you really?

PC#1: Yes, remind me to get you a copy of that. The politics of the workplace, dealing with the adult students; I recognize that some teachers would come into the setting with a lot of this already in place, but still it would need to be re-emphasized. A lot of stuff about the workplace culture that needs to be addressed, and then to make sure they understand that these are adults...

Me: We talked about politics once before, last year, in fact. What would you tell teacher about the politics?

PC#1: Well, for one thing, the teacher might find herself caught between the employee and management, or even the union or management. Certainly, if there is a union involved, the teacher needs to be aware of that. It helps to understand some of the sensitive areas...for instance, promotability is not based on skill, or ability, but on seniority system. Uh, if someone has never been involved with unions, training would be helpful.

Me: Could you see a generic sort of manual being created that covers areas for consideration which teachers might use as a handbook. Would that be something you could foresee being helpful?

PC#1: Yes, if it didn't come from an education department, so steeped in jargon that teachers wouldn't read it. That's one thing you find about teachers...it's very surprising. English teachers, for instance, don't
ME: Hold onto that for just a minute. Who hired you?

TI#1: Okay, my first contact was the ABE director and uh he and I talked. Then, he said I'd like for you to talk to my supervisor on such and such day and I did. (The Dean). The director was also present. The dean interviewed me quite well and then she asked me if I would be willing to meet with the employee liaison at Lone Star Steel. and Uh so I did. That interview was set up and about a week later I went down and met with her and gosh we talked for about 2 hours. and, uh I guess it all hinged on what the employee liaison was going to say, and at the end of 2 hours, it was evident that I would be a good selection. Anyway, we immediately went to work on getting the center to open. It opened on January 12. I think uh we had an organizational meeting on January 4 on the plant site. And the week following the January 4 was very busy.
ME: Do you suppose that's from conditioning? From past experience in public school?

TI#: Oh, I think so. Yes. They usually these people were those who did not have a lot of self-confidence. But as time went on, I tried to wean them away from giving assignments and uh getting them to where they were directing their own learning.

ME: What elements do you think the company needed to provide in order to make the project successful?
expressed an interest in working in a program like this what kind of advice would you give them in terms of training or background?

TI#1: Well, I think number 1 is to be able to have a lot of empathy for that learner. Uh, try to put yourself in their shoes. Uh, of course you've got to have knowledge in your subject matter too, because if they've got confidence in you as a teacher uh, then that's exactly what you want. If you get up there and make some basic bloopers they might think, "Hey, this guy doesn't know any more than I do" then you may be sabotaged. But I believe if you can develop a genuine feeling of empathy and be able to convey it but at the same time not be superior to them. Now, I will say this. I had a basic literacy student. But he knew cars and I had this old pickup and he and I would talk about cars and trucks. He knew a heck of a lot more about cars than I did; on the other hand, I knew a heck of a lot more in the classroom than he did but we both recognized that. I gave him a chance... I did it on purpose a lot... I let him have a chance to show what he knew you know. And, I learned a lot of things from those people. And I think that they appreciated the fact that I treated them like equals. The two employees (who were men as old as I am) knew a lot of things I didn't.
ME: You mentioned attrition earlier, if you had to name a failure, would that be it.

TI#1: Long pause, Yeah.

ME: In retrospect, do you have any ideas of anything you could have done differently?

TI#1: Oh, we had sent out fliers from time to time saying we miss them. Maybe we should have done more. I talked to (the teacher) about it; she said she didn't know if it would have helped. She shared she has had the same problem.
ME: Well, why don't you go ahead to be that you were no longer employed in that position.

TI#1: Okay, well this attendance versus enrollment discrepancy was really bothering me a lot. I mean it was bothering me bad. And the director was concerned about it and I don't blame him. Seemed like we had done all we could do. I couldn't think of anything else. And we had all of our books out. And I was in the process of trying to get the books back in so we could turn around and get more students. But until we got the books, I didn't want to get students in and not be able to work with them with the appropriate materials because we would just be repeating the same mistake. Uh, so I knew the director was concerned. He was coming over once a week or so, usually in the evening. One morning...
ME: I did 2 different observations. And in both sessions, I came up with the same idea and also the lack of training on your part. By training, I don't mean how to teach. I'm talking about how to be a part of this program that you were being introduced to. I'm not sure what else I'll find, but those two certainly have become evident.

T#1: Absolutely. I just didn't feel like I was a part of the decision making process. Another thing, one morning I walked in and there was this lady. She came up and...this was after you had been there...I came down here to help you all for a while. I didn't know here...anything about her. She works over at the college.
TI#1: Well, I don't know. It seems like my idea of that program (Workplace Literacy) coming in was not the right idea I should have had. And I think that is what caused a lot of the discord.

ME: A lot of your problem?

TI#1: Uh, yeah. I understood that the program. I thought that her program and the GED program would be parallel from each other and that was fine. But then, I found out...it seemed like no I was supposed to influence the GED people to participate fully in that other program and uh...
them and I've talked with them and, 306
uh, we've changed the hours. Now, I 307
go three times a day on Tuesday- 308
Thursday...we just started that and 309
with that change I've gotten four 310
back, and I've got their phone numbers 311
and see if I can help. I want them to 312
feel comfortable to say if there 313
something they don't like they can say 314
so. I mean, it's free education, so I 315
want them to take advantage of it. 316

Me: I hear a lot of things going on 318
there. Number one, flexibility is 319
critical to the success of this 320
program. 321
that...and part of the hospital's partnership was to give them released time...

Me: Sounds like that is really important to give them released time.

TI#2: Well, I think so, because if employees see that the hospital is doing this for us. A lot of the employees have baby-sitting issues, getting home to cook dinner, or whatever. So, we emphasized. Maybe what we need to do is the administrators from the college and the hospital people need to sit down and discuss how important this is and one of the requirements of this program was to provide released time.
Me: What does the teacher have to provide to a project like this in order to make it successful?

TI#2: Enthusiasm. Uh, sincerity. These are adults here; we're not dealing with children. That's important. If the instructor keeps that enthusiasm up, it helps the students. The teacher needs to be able to incorporate the curriculum into the students' lives, so the students can associate the material with something from their own experience. It takes a lot of creative thinking. As an instructor, we don't get to know the students prior to going into the classroom. So, what I'll do is as I get to know them, I'll come back to the center and jot down notes to myself about each student. You've got different learning styles, different ethnic backgrounds, lots of variable to deal with at once.
Me: So, you would even make a distinction instead of public schools (k-12), you distinguish the traditional student, the 18-21 year old college student, from the nontraditional student because of the maturity level?

TI#2: Maturity level, yes. And also, it is a different environment. It has to be a non-threatening environment. In workplace literacy, the participants are not graded and uh you know it is not even a pass or fail. And if you're fresh out of college, you are fresh out of that pass-fail mentality and your mindset is like that. You've got to make it a comfortable environment for these people to keep them coming and keep them motivated. Some of my participants at the hospital will come and say, "I don't want to flunk this course. I don't want Ms.____ to flunk me because I'm late." And I explain to them, "There is no flunking, no pass or fail."

Me: So it is even difficult for your students to overcome this obstacle of grades and passing?

TI#2: Yes, because the last time they were in this situation, it was just that.

Me: It occurs to me as you're talking about this. Does this non-traditional environment have any impact on what you teach or how you teach? Any differences in what you do at the work site vs. what you are doing in your speech class at the college?

TI#2: Well, I do use the holistic approach in my workplace classes.

Me: Okay, could you explain that a little bit?

TI#2: Uh, using the association to the topic for instance. I had my students make a "To Do" list and then I have them get together in teams and I give them a real-life situation and ask
them to work through a solution and show them how it might also relate to home as well as work. I do share a lot more information in the WPL classes. The students at the campus are there to get a degree. I'm not there to spoonfeed them; I'm there to impart knowledge, to help them get throughout the course. I don't give them the answers. I am a lot more lenient of workplace literacy. The whole point of my being there is to help them increase their skills and to increase their self-esteem. It's not as controlled an environment as the regular classroom. Their reasons for being there are different.
saying...that it isn't just talk. 750

TI#2: Right. And like I say, these 752
adults will present situations that 753
younger students will not. You've got 754
to also be prepared, and I'm sure you 755
know this, Glenda, that you don't know 756
all the answers. And what I have 757
found is that, I tell them up front. 758
I explain that the learning process is 759
a continuous process. And, some 760
teachers pretend to know the answer 761
regardless. 762

Me: And adults appreciate the 764
honesty. 765

TI#2: I do that in all of my classes 767
workplace or otherwise. 768
darken the room for overheads or whatever.

TI#2: Laughter. Yes, it was.

Me: So I hear you saying, be flexible?

TI#2: Flexibility is the key word. Like I said, at the hospital if the classroom is not available I've got to scramble around and get one.
Me: We talked about inexperienced teachers. What kinds of training might help other teachers in this situation?

TI#2: Well, the training I've seen so far, Glenda, besides the conferences, is minimal. My training came from my background, you know, working in industry for a time and working as an adjunct instructor teaching adults. Since here, the training has been the conferences. The training for teachers is not prolific.

Me: At the national conference, I sat in the sessions and I heard participants discuss their own programs and the uniqueness and then others comparing it to what they were doing.

TI#2: And that's the training right now. Workplace literacy is just a hot topic right now and training needs to be developed but it's still too early.
Me: So it sounds like to me that if an individual is hired to work in this setting, regardless of his background, educator or business person or what, the ability to discover, develop, and create the curriculum is an integral part of the job that a person finds himself in.

TI#2: Exactly. And the word about flexibility. You have to learn to let the curriculum be flexible, too?

Me: Have you gotten in the classroom and discovered, "Hey, look, they don't want this"?

TI#2: Uh, huh. And just lay that to the side and go with what they wanted to discuss. As long as it falls within the guidelines. And you have to be on your toes. In the discussion, something will come out and I know that they can associate more easily with that idea so I take it and go with it.
Me: How many have you trained and how many are you aiming for?

TI#3: Well, we have done about fifty and we will do as many as we can get to do it. It's a voluntary thing. You know, you can't force them. We can make it mandatory, but if they don't want to do it, they won't listen, so you are just wasting your time and theirs.
Me: I am jumping around here, but are you saying that by documenting that you are having this class, you are able to go back to your customers and address their need for a company with job-specific training for workers.

TI#3: That's right. We are meeting that requirement. You see, they have guidelines that they score us by and they want the company to have a quality package. Now, I will say this. The companies come in here and look at this package that we, us and the college, have put together and they are impressed. I'd say that one a scale of a 1-10, we are probably an A++. They have all been very impressed with the computerized package we have.

Me: So the creation of the manual and the computerized program for Hypergraphics has been very well received.

TI#3: That's exactly right.
held and they want to be involved in the classes. I'll tell you they want to learn about computers...many of them expected to come into this four hour class and to be able to use the computer. And some of them were frustrated when they couldn't.

Me: Yeah, I heard that one time I observed. One guy wanted to get his hands on the computer...and I think that would be the best way to do that.

TI#3: That's right...there's not replacement for hands-on. And peer tutoring...I'll tell you what has worked good. We have some who have learned how to do a mill order card on the computer and I have given them the lee-way to tutor some of the others. And you know the guys will go to one of them before they will come to me. They play around with it and build a competency level with the computer that wasn't there before. I think if we could offer some keyboarding classes, that would help. And the college is working on that. I think it's real important that if we tell them something then we follow-up. That only helps our reputation if we do what we say we are going to do.
Me: this is off the track a little, but have you heard the words "workplace literacy" in connection with what you are doing here?

TI#3: Silence for a moment. I'll tell you...my definition of workplace literacy...taking the workforce and training them to work on the job. To survive. To do their job well. Is that workplace literacy?

Me: Are you asking me? I don't know. I've run into a lot of ambiguity about what workplace literacy is. There seems to be a negative connotation with the term.

TI#3: I can see that. I mean that implies ignorance or not knowing how to do the job...what is computer literacy? No knowledge about the computer. I can see how that would be viewed as negative.
minds are not here anyway. And if
you work 40-48 hours per week, you
know you are less inclined to
volunteer to do something. I'd be
willing to say that 40 out of the 50
would not have come if they had not
been paid. Now, that's my guess, for
what it's worth.

Me: What about if you train them on
the company time? Is that possible?

TI#3: Well, yeah, but and that says
something to the employee: It says
that you are willing to invest in him
as a person. And it says that the
training is important enough to offer
it on company time. But, if that
machine is idle for too long, then it
starts costing money, and the men are
sensitive to that. You know, we'll
shut down and have a meeting, thirty
minutes or an hour, but you'll begin
to see the men look at their watches.
They know that those machines not
running means money, and they get
nervous about that. It's good to
train in groups. They learn from
each other. Another down side...we
don't have a facility to hold say 50
men for a training program. We can
get maybe 15-20 men here in this
conference room and that's stretching
it.
Me: I think one thing I've seen is the respect you give to the men in the class.

TI#3: Yeah, I treat them like I'd want to be treated. They know a lot about their jobs and I can learn from them and I do.
Me: What do you think about the term "workplace literacy"?

TI#4: What do I think about it? Well, I have a problem with the word "literacy." I don't like it. Most people associate the word with one who can't read a lick. It implies ignorance. We need to cut it out. I mean I've had high school graduates who can't read, but they have that diploma and that piece of paper is what matters.

Me: You mentioned earlier about the students not wanting the classes offered through Success 2000. What if the company's goal for the student is different than the student's goal?

TI#4: I feel I am ethically and morally obligated to helping meet that student's goal. You know what I'm saying? But, you see we're so pressed for numbers whether it's 5 or 55 and that puts pressure on. But you know, why didn't the company push the program more? Give them some incentives to come over here?

Me: Yes that thought occurred to me. But then, I thought, "I wonder if they thought they had to." You know, maybe they think that providing the service is enough.
to the questions. Listen to your pupils and then feed them what they need to know. Lots of time we get caught up in ourselves...we are so smart, It's my way or no way, and that's wrong. You learn more by tuning in to broadcasting. But for a new one I know they'll be nervous and
ME: Just had a lot of respect for her? 320
EI#1: Yes mam. 321
ME: So respect is important? 322
EI#1: I imagine. 323
ME: What else? What other teachers do you remember. What I'm pulling 324


Vita

Glenda Haywood Ballard's career spans seventeen years of education in all areas from elementary education through college level teaching. She has taught in an elementary summer youth program; the high school English classroom; an adult basic education learning center, including ABE, GED, and English as a Second Language; the community college classroom, teaching freshman composition, developmental reading, writing, and math classes, as well as orientation and study skills enhancement; and at the university setting, teaching advanced composition to college juniors and seniors. In addition, she has provided countless staff development and training programs to teachers both on a local and statewide level.

Glenda received her Bachelor of Science degree with a double major in student personnel and guidance and English in 1977 from East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas. In 1979, she earned her Master of Science degree in student personnel and guidance from the same university. She was certified both as a classroom teacher and public school counselor by the State of Texas. She completed post-graduate work at East Texas State University and East Texas State University--Texarkana. She earned a Certificate in Advanced Graduate Studies in Adult and Continuing Education
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Glenda was born in Paris, Lamar County, Texas, on May 26, 1955. She was married to Jack L. Ballard on June 2, 1979. They have two children: Marlena, age 10, and Jordan, age 7.

[Signature]

Glenda Haywood Ballard