

The Washington Education  
Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
June 20, 1983

(202) 547-3011

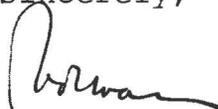
Dear Aileen,

To understate the matter, I was superb. (It was, of course, a very easy house, having been gathered together by Mr. Tom Johnson, Publisher of The Los Angeles Times.)

A copy of my remarks is attached, as is a list of those who attended from the Los Angeles community. I also thought to send along a letter of introduction from my old boss.

All is well.

Sincerely,

  
Norman Manasa  
Director

Aileen Anderson  
c/o James Cicconi  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Supreme Court of the United States  
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF  
THE CHIEF JUSTICE

May 2, 1983

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Some time ago, at least in part as a result of a suggestion from me, the young man formerly on my staff sent you some material on The Washington Education Project, Inc.

I gather from a brief conversation with him recently that some of your staff have been interested in Norman Manasa's program.

I write you now only to indicate that I have followed this program rather closely and regard it as an important development in connection with prison education programs that I have advocated.

The Washington project is purely a volunteer effort on the part of Norman Manasa and I have done everything I could to encourage him and others. The President has given his personal encouragement to it and this is also true with respect to Secretary of Education Terrel Bell and Mr. James Baker, Chief of Staff of the White House.

I recall the pleasant occasion of lunch with you and some of your colleagues when I was in Los Angeles, and I hope to repeat that experience when I am next in your city.

Cordially,



Mr. Tom Johnson  
Publisher  
"Los Angeles Times"  
Times Mirror Square  
Los Angeles, California 90053

RECEIVED  
MAY 6 1983  
PUBLISHER'S OFFICE

June 9, 1983  
Los Angeles Times

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REMARKS BEFORE THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

THURSDAY

JUNE 9, 1983

NOON

BY

Norman Manasa

Director

The Washington Education Project, Inc.

224 Third Street, S.E.

Washington, D.C. 20003

(202) 547-3011

THIS IS A GREAT HONOR FOR ME AND I SHOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING (MRS. ELKE CORLEY, MR. TOM JOHNSON) MR. ABE KOTIN AND HIS STAFF, AND ALL OF YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THIS PROJECT.

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT IS AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM WHICH IS DESIGNED TO INJECT EXPERIENCE INTO THE EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS BY PUTTING THEM TO WORK TEACHING READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS TO THE ILLITERATE POOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE UNDERGRADUATES WITH COURSES IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES THAT BRING TOGETHER THE REALITY AND THEORY OF DISCIPLINES SUCH AS SOCIOLOGY, EDUCATION, ECONOMICS, AND SO FORTH.

UNDERGRADUATES WOULD ENTER THIS PROJECT BY REGISTERING IN 3 CREDIT, PASS/FAIL COURSES AND WOULD TUTOR 6 HOURS PER WEEK IN SELECTED COMMUNITY AGENCIES. IN ADDITION, THEY WOULD MEET EACH WEEK IN A SEMINAR WITH THEIR MONITORING PROFESSOR WHERE THE THEORY OF THE DISCIPLINE IN WHICH THEY ARE REGISTERED (FOR EXAMPLE, SOCIOLOGY) IS EXPLAINED IN LIGHT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY. SINCE THESE ARE ELECTIVE COURSES, ALL UNDERGRADUATES MAY PARTICIPATE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY.

THE UNDERGRADUATES BENEFIT IN FOUR WAYS:

FIRST: THEY OBTAIN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE WHICH GIVES THEM A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMANITIES AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.

SECOND: THEY OBTAIN AN EXPERIENTIAL BACKGROUND WHICH WILL HELP THEM TO MAKE A SENSIBLE CHOICE OF A MAJOR AND A CAREER.

THIRD: THEY OBTAIN WORK EXPERIENCE WHICH WILL HELP THEM TO GET A JOB UPON GRADUATION.

FOURTH: THEY LEARN COMPASSION BY BEING COMPASSIONATE.

BUT THIS PROJECT ALSO PROVIDES THE KIND OF HELP WHICH THE POOR DESPERATELY NEED. ONE MUST BE SKILLED IN READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS IN ORDER TO CREATE WEALTH IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY. WITHOUT THESE SKILLS, THE POOR WILL ALWAYS REMAIN POOR, REGARDLESS OF WHATEVER OTHER SERVICES THEY MAY RECEIVE, AND THEY WILL NOT OBTAIN THESE SKILLS WITHOUT LONG-TERM, RELIABLE TUTORING.

THE UNDERGRADUATES WOULD PROVIDE THIS TUTORING BY WORKING IN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY AGENCIES AS A SUPPLEMENT TO EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT ALREADY ARE IN OPERATION IN THESE AGENCIES. EACH UNDERGRADUATE WOULD TUTOR ON A REGULAR SCHEDULE THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER (FOR EXAMPLE, MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY FROM 9:00 TO 11:00 A.M.) AND WOULD SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT FOR EACH TUTORING SESSION.

ALTHOUGH THESE ARE ELECTIVE COURSES FOR THE COLLEGE STUDENTS -- MAKING THIS A VOLUNTARY PROGRAM -- ONCE THEY ARE ENROLLED, THE ASPECT OF VOLUNTEERISM ENDS AND THEY MUST DO THE 6 HOURS OF TUTORING EACH WEEK. ACADEMIC CREDIT, THEREFORE, SERVES TO GUARANTEE THE ATTENDANCE OF THE UNDERGRADUATES AS WELL AS THE EXPERTISE OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY, AND PERMITS THIS PROJECT TO PROVIDE THE ILLITERATE OF THE COMMUNITY WITH LARGE-SCALE, COMPETENT HELP, AND AT NO COST TO THEM.

TO OFFER ONE EXAMPLE, 6,000 HOURS OF TUTORING WOULD BE PRODUCED EACH SEMESTER IF ONLY 100 UNDERGRADUATES REGISTERED IN THESE COURSES (THAT IS, 100 UNDERGRADUATES x 6 HOURS OF TUTORING PER WEEK x 10 WEEKS IN A SEMESTER).

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT HAS SIX MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS:

FIRST, COLLEGE COURSES THAT MIX EXPERIENCE AND THEORY AT THE SAME TIME (THAT IS TO SAY, THE KIND OF COURSES THIS PROJECT DESCRIBES) OFTEN OFFER UNDERGRADUATES A BETTER EDUCATION THAN CAN BE GOTTEN THROUGH TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM LECTURES. THIS, OF COURSE, IS NOTHING NEW. A MIX OF EXPERIENCE AND THEORY HAS BEEN CONSIDERED TO BE THE HIGHEST FORM OF LEARNING IN WESTERN CULTURE SINCE THE TIME OF GALILEO.

SECOND, THESE COURSES ARE NOT "INTERNSHIPS" FOR A FEW SELECT UNDERGRADUATES BUT ELECTIVE COURSES, MAKING ALL TEN MILLION UNDERGRADUATES IN THE COUNTRY ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE. AS A RESULT, THE NATION'S UNDERGRADUATES (WHO GENERALLY MUST TAKE EIGHT ELECTIVE

COURSES TO GET A DEGREE) MAY REPRESENT THE ONLY MANAGEABLE RESOURCE THAT CAN MATCH THE COUNTRY'S ILLITERACY PROBLEM ON ITS OWN SCALE.

THIRD, WORKING AS TUTORS, UNDERGRADUATES WOULD CREATE VAST AMOUNTS OF NEW WEALTH, WOULD BRING PRACTICAL HELP TO THE ILLITERATE POOR, AND WOULD HELP TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF THE NATION. AND THIS IS A BURDEN THAT, EVEN AS UNDERGRADUATES, THEY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO BEAR.

FOURTH, THIS PROJECT IS NOT DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE POOR WITH ONE MORE SUBSIDY. THIS PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO TRANSFER TO THE ILLITERATE POOR THE POWER TO CREATE WEALTH, BOTH FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THE NATION, IN THE COMING TECHNOLOGICAL AGE. IN A WORD, LITERACY.

FIFTH, SINCE COLLEGES ARE STRUCTURALLY ALIKE, THIS PROJECT COULD BE READILY DEVELOPED AT INSTITUTIONS OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

SIXTH, THIS PROJECT HAS TWO ECONOMIES: ONE THAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE MICROECONOMY AND ONE THAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE MACROECONOMY. THE "MICROECONOMY" IS THAT ECONOMY OF OPERATION WHICH IS AT THE HEART OF THIS PROJECT IN THAT THERE ARE NO CAPITAL EXPENDITURES TO ERECT NEW BUILDINGS OR TO RENT STOREFRONTS; THERE IS NO OUTLAY FOR SPECIAL BOOKS OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS; THE TUTORS ARE NOT PAID -- INDEED, THEY PAY TUITION TO TAKE THE COURSES THAT PERMIT THEM TO DO THE TUTORING.

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO USE THE BUILDINGS THAT ALREADY EXIST (SUCH AS SCHOOLS, JAILS, AND HEAD START CENTERS), AND THE BOOKS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN PURCHASED. IN THIS PROJECT, THE CLASSROOM TEACHER WOULD TELL THE UNDERGRADUATE WHICH OF THE STUDENTS IS TO BE TUTORED, AND IN WHAT SUBJECT AND WITH WHAT BOOK, AND THE TUTORING TAKES PLACE IN THE BACK OF THE CLASSROOM WITH THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN FORCE AND THE CLASSROOM TEACHER RIGHT THERE TO PROVIDE WHATEVER HELP THAT MAY BE NECESSARY. THE TEACHING METHODOLOGY IS THAT WHICH IS ALREADY IN USE IN THE CLASSROOM.

USING THIS APPROACH, THE TUTORS DO NOT REQUIRE "TRAINING" AND ARE PROFOUNDLY EFFECTIVE FROM VIRTUALLY THE FIRST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER. AND THERE IS NOTHING MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THIS TUTORING PROCESS. IT IS DONE AT THE LEVEL OF HELPING THE KIDS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH THEIR HOMEWORK AND IS AN HONORABLE METHOD OF INSTRUCTION AS OLD AS LEARNING ITSELF. EVEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT HAD A TUTOR.

THE "MACROECONOMY" OF THIS PROJECT IS DIRECTLY TIED TO A HISTORICAL CHANGE IN THE NATURE OF WORK ITSELF. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS COUNTRY, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS COULD FIND HONORABLE WORK, EVEN IF THEY WERE BARELY LITERATE, SINCE THEY WERE NEEDED TO LIFT AND MOVE, PLANT AND REAP THE THINGS THE NATION PRODUCED. NOW, WITH THIS WORK BEING DONE BY MACHINES AND ROBOTS, WE HAVE LARGE NUMBERS OF ILLITERATE AMERICANS WHO MAY NOT BE SO MUCH UNEMPLOYED, AS THEY ARE UNEMPLOYABLE. THERE IS NO LONGER ANY CHOICE BUT TO TRAIN THESE PEOPLE IN THE LITERACY THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE CREATION OF WEALTH IN THE MODERN AGE.

TO DO THIS TUTORING, WE HAVE TEN MILLION UNDERGRADUATES WHO CONSTITUTE A VAST, UNTAPPED RESOURCE, WHO CONSUME GREAT AMOUNTS OF PUBLIC SUBSIDY, AND WHO CREATE VIRTUALLY NO WEALTH WHILE THEY ARE IN COLLEGE. THROUGH A PROJECT OF THE SORT DESCRIBED HERE, UNDERGRADUATES WOULD CREATE MASSIVE NEW WEALTH BY TRANSFERING LITERACY TO THE ILLITERATE POOR ALL ACROSS AMERICA.

THE MAIN JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS PROJECT, HOWEVER, IS NOT THAT IT CREATES WEALTH, BUT THAT IT TEACHES UNDERGRADUATES THINGS THEY NEED TO KNOW WHICH CANNOT BE LEARNED IN THE CLASSROOM ALONE. IT IS CONTENDED HERE THAT EXPERIENCE IS THE "SINE QUA NON" OF MUCH OF EDUCATION, AND THAT THIS PROJECT PERMITS UNDERGRADUATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "REALITY" OF THE HUMANITIES AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AS THEY EXIST BEYOND THE CAMPUS WALLS. IT IS THIS EXPERIENCE, TOGETHER WITH THE REFLECTION AND INTERPRETATION PROVIDED IN WEEKLY SEMINARS WITH THE MONITORING PROFESSORS, THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THESE DISCIPLINES HAVE TO TEACH.

ALTHOUGH THE UNDERGRADUATES IN THIS PROJECT DO TUTORING IN COMMUNITY AGENCIES, IT IS THEIR STEADY PARTICIPATION IN JAILS AND GHETTO SCHOOLS OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME THAT LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISCIPLINE IN WHICH THE UNDERGRADUATE HAS REGISTERED. UNDERGRADUATES IN THIS PROJECT DO NOT "SURVEY" COMMUNITY RESIDENTS OR CONDUCT "STUDIES" ABOUT THEM. INSTEAD, THE UNDERGRADUATES ENTER INTO THE LIVES OF THE ILLITERATE POOR THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF FRACTIONS AND SPELLING. IT IS THE TUTORIAL PROCESS, RATHER THAN ARMS-LENGTH RESEARCH, THAT CREATES

MENT AND A COMMON BOND OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
POOR AND THE RICH, THE INFIRM AND THE WELL, THE IMPRISONED AND  
FREE.

IN ADDITION, THIS PROJECT REVERSES THE TRADITIONAL ROLES IN  
TRAINING OF UNDERGRADUATES SINCE IT PLACES THE UNDERGRADUATES IN  
"ACTIVE" ROLE AS LEARNERS, RATHER THAN HAVING THEM FULFILL THE  
"PASSIVE" ROLE OF SITTING IN CLASSROOMS LISTENING TO LECTURES.  
UNDERGRADUATES IN THIS PROJECT OBTAIN KNOWLEDGE THROUGH WHAT THEY  
"DO" IN THE COMMUNITY, TOGETHER WITH WHAT THEY "HEAR" IN THE WEEKLY  
SEMINARS WITH THEIR PROFESSORS. AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE, THE  
TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE COLLEGE FACULTY IS ALSO CHANGED. THEY DO  
NOT TAKE ON THE "ACTIVE" ROLE OF LECTURING TO CLASSES, BUT, INSTEAD,  
TAKE THE POSITION OF ONE WHO "GUIDES" THE UNDERGRADUATES THROUGH THE  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE THESE COURSES PROVIDE.

A WORD MIGHT BE SAID HERE ABOUT THE EDUCATION THAT IS OBTAINED  
BY THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AGENCIES WHO ARE TUTORED THROUGH THIS  
PROJECT:

FIRST: THIS PROJECT PROVIDES COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WITH REGULAR  
AND COMPETENT TRAINING IN THE USE OF LETTERS AND  
NUMBERS, SKILLS THAT THEY MUST HAVE IF THEY ARE TO BE  
EMPLOYABLE IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

SECOND: PEOPLE WHO ARE TUTORED IN THIS PROJECT LEARN THE MOST  
BASIC LESSON OF ALL, WHICH IS THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF  
LEARNING. MOST OF US TAKE THIS FOR GRANTED. TO THE

ILLITERATE POOR, HOWEVER, WHO OFTEN HAVE HAD A DIFFICULT TIME IN SCHOOL, THIS IS THE LESSON THAT MUST BE LEARNED BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE CAN BE MASTERED.

THIRD: THE TUTORS TRANSFER OTHER KINDS OF LESSONS TO THOSE THEY TUTOR, SUCH AS THE VALUES OF PUNCTUALITY, NEATNESS, AND HARD WORK. TO BE EMPLOYABLE, THESE LESSONS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS ANY OTHER.

FOURTH: THE COMMUNITY RESIDENTS LEARN SOMETHING OF THEIR OWN IMPORTANCE AS PEOPLE, WHICH IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE DAY-AFTER-DAY ATTENDANCE OF THE TUTORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY. AFTER ALL, IF THE COMMUNITY PEOPLE WERE NOT IMPORTANT, THE TUTORS SIMPLY WOULDN'T BOTHER TO SHOW UP.

WHEN THIS PROJECT IS IN OPERATION AT A COLLEGE, IT WOULD HAVE FIVE MAIN PARTS:

FIRST: THE PROJECT DIRECTOR -- SINCE THIS IS AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM, THE PROJECT DIRECTOR WOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND WOULD HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OVER-ALL OPERATION OF THE PROJECT. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE PROJECT DIRECTOR WOULD MATCH UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES WHICH HAVE SOME RELATION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S FIELD OF STUDY. THESE MATCHINGS, OF COURSE, WOULD REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE

OFFERING THE COURSES. (THE ACTUAL COURSES USED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, BY THE WAY, WERE 400 AND 500 LEVEL COURSES, CALLED "INDEPENDENT STUDY", "DIRECTED READINGS", AND "SPECIAL TOPICS". THESE COURSES WERE ALREADY IN THE UNIVERSITY BULLETIN AND WERE TAKEN FOR 3 CREDITS AND ON A "PASS/FAIL" BASIS.)

SECOND: THE FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES -- THESE ARE COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS WHO MONITOR THE UNDERGRADUATES AND MEET WITH THEM EACH WEEK IN SEMINARS WHERE THEY PROVIDE THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS SUPERVISION, REVIEW, ADVICE AND EVALUATION. THE FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES ALSO MAKE SITE VISITS AND AWARD ACADEMIC CREDIT. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, STUDENTS WHO DO THE REQUIRED COURSE WORK ARE AWARDED ACADEMIC CREDIT. HOWEVER, THE DECISION TO AWARD CREDIT REMAINS WITH THE COLLEGE FACULTY.

THIRD: THE STUDENT COORDINATORS -- THESE UNDERGRADUATES ALREADY HAVE HAD ONE SEMESTER'S EXPERIENCE IN THE PROJECT AS A REGULAR STUDENT. THEY ARE THEN ASKED BY THE PROJECT DIRECTOR TO ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OPERATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AGENCY. THEY SCHEDULE WORK HOURS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATES AT THAT AGENCY, ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION, KEEP ATTENDANCE RECORDS, AND HELP ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE TUTORING SITUATIONS. IN THE OPERATION OF AN AGENCY, THE STUDENT COORDINATOR DOES MOST OF THE LEGWORK. THE TIME REQUIRED OF A COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBER OR AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE, THEREFORE, IS ABOUT 4 - 6 HOURS PER WEEK. THE STUDENT COORDINATORS

ALSO MEET EACH WEEK WITH THE PROJECT DIRECTOR TO REVIEW MATTERS AT THEIR AGENCY, PARTICULARLY THE ATTENDANCE OF THE UNDERGRADUATES.

FOURTH: THE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES -- THESE ARE STAFF MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE HEAD OF THE COMMUNITY AGENCY WHO HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EFFECTIVE PLACEMENT OF EACH COLLEGE STUDENT WITHIN THE AGENCY.

FIFTH: THE PARTICIPATING COLLEGE STUDENTS -- THOSE WHO ENROLL IN THE COURSE AND CHOOSE, FROM A LIST OF COMMUNITY AGENCIES PROVIDED AT REGISTRATION, WHERE THEY WILL TUTOR FOR THE SEMESTER.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT THAT SHOULD BE MENTIONED:

FIRST, NO ONE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE. INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS WITHIN A UNIVERSITY WOULD VOTE TO OFFER THESE COURSES, WHICH THE UNDERGRADUATES WOULD TAKE AS "ELECTIVES", RATHER THAN AS "REQUIRED" COURSES.

IN THE COMMUNITY AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CLASSROOM TEACHERS WOULD NOT HAVE TUTORS ASSIGNED TO THEM AUTOMATICALLY, BUT WOULD HAVE TO REQUEST THEM FROM THEIR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. IN MIAMI, THE PRINCIPAL WOULD ANNOUNCE AT A FACULTY MEETING THAT TUTORS WERE AVAILABLE, AND THOSE TEACHERS WHO WANTED TUTORS IN THEIR CLASSROOM SIMPLY RAISED THEIR HANDS.

SECOND, THIS PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO DO TUTORING IN THE COMMUNITY, WHICH IS TO SAY THAT THERE ARE MANY THINGS IT DOES NOT DO. AS FAR AS THE COMMUNITY IS CONCERNED, THE UNDERGRADUATES ARE NOT THERE:

- 1) TO HELP PEOPLE GET FOOD STAMPS OR LEGAL SERVICES,
- 2) TO NEGOTIATE LANDLORD-TENANT DISPUTES,
- 3) TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL OR LABOR ORGANIZATION,
- 4) TO "REFORM" THE COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH THE UNDERGRADUATES WORK.

AS FAR AS THE COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES, PARTICULARLY THE SCHOOLS, ARE CONCERNED, THE UNDERGRADUATES IN THIS PROJECT ARE NOT:

- 1) TEACHER ASSISTANTS OR INTERNS,
- 2) THEY ARE NOT THERE TO CORRECT PAPERS, OR TO BE CAFETERIA MONITORS, OR TO DO OFFICE WORK FOR THE PRINCIPAL.

THE UNDERGRADUATES ARE IN THESE AGENCIES TO TRANSFER TO THE ILLITERATE POOR THE POWER TO CREATE WEALTH IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AGE, THAT IS, READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE OCCASIONAL CLASS FIELD TRIP, THE UNDERGRADUATES DO TUTORING AND ONLY TUTORING.

THIRD, IT MUST BE POINTED OUT THAT THIS IS A SIMPLE PROJECT, AND IT WORKS PRECISELY BECAUSE IT IS SIMPLE. IT'S BASIC INGREDIENTS

ARE RELIABLE TUTORS WORKING IN ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY AGENCIES UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER.

BEWARE OF THOSE WHO LOVE TO COMPLICATE THINGS. AFTER I HAD EXPLAINED THE PROJECT TO A GROUP IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY, ... HERE THE WINEBAGO/COMPUTER STORY.

FOURTH, THE PROJECT IS DESIGNED NOT TO WASTE ANYONE'S TIME, PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OR THE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE. THE KEY INGREDIENT HERE IS THE STUDENT COORDINATOR WHO MANAGES A COMMUNITY AGENCY (SUCH AS THE DADE COUNTY STOCKADE), SEEING TO IT THAT THE UNDERGRADUATES AT THAT AGENCY KNOW WHERE TO GO AND WHO TO SEE AND WHAT TO DO. THE COORDINATORS HANDLE SCHEDULING, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNICATIONS. THEY KEEP ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND SET UP THE WEEKLY SEMINARS WITH THE PROFESSORS. ALL THIS IS TO SAY THAT THEY PERFORM THE ESSENTIAL DAY-TO-DAY LEG WORK WHICH NEITHER THE PROFESSORS NOR THE AGENCY STAFFS HAVE TIME FOR.

TO SUMMARIZE, IT IS THE PREMISE OF THIS PROJECT THAT WORKING AS A TUTOR IN A GHETTO SCHOOL, OR IN A JAIL, OR IN A MIGRANT CAMP PROVIDES THE UNDERGRADUATE WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF ECONOMICS, SOCIOLOGY, EDUCATION, MANAGEMENT, PHILOSOPHY AND SO FORTH WHICH IS AT THE HEART OF THESE DISCIPLINES AND WHICH CAN ONLY BE GOTTEN THROUGH THIS SORT OF EXPERIENCE. COMBINED WITH WEEKLY SEMINARS WITH UNIVERSITY FACULTY, THESE COURSES PROVIDE THE UNDERGRADUATES WITH A "GUIDED EXPERIENCE", RATHER THAN RANDOM EXPERIENCE WITHOUT

REFLECTION, OR ENDLESS CLASSROOM THEORY WITHOUT THE TOUCHSTONE OF REALITY. AS AN ECONOMICS PROFESSOR FROM THE MIAMI PROGRAM HAS WRITTEN:

"THIS PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE GAVE THE UNDERGRADUATES INSIGHTS INTO SOCIAL REALITIES WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPART IN A PURE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, AND THIS ALSO MADE THEM THINK MUCH MORE CRITICALLY ABOUT MANY CONCEPTS WHICH THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED ON A PURELY INTELLECTUAL LEVEL. COMING FROM A QUITE ABSTRACT DISCIPLINE LIKE ECONOMICS, I FOUND THIS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING."

IT SHOULD ALSO BE POINTED OUT THAT, SINCE THIS PROJECT TRANSFERS LITERACY TO THE ILLITERATE POOR, IT IS A DIRECT APPLICATION OF THE AXIOM OF THE "GREATER GOOD"; THAT IS TO SAY, THAT IT IS BETTER TO TEACH SOMEONE HOW TO FISH THAN IT IS TO SIMPLY GIVE THEM A FISH.

LAST, THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HERE ACTUALLY WORKS. AN EXPERIMENTAL MODEL RAN FOR FOUR YEARS (1969 - 1973) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, SENDING OVER 1,000 UNDERGRADUATES TO TUTOR IN 14 COMMUNITY AGENCIES.

ABOUT 10 - 15% OF THE UNDERGRADUATES WHO ENROLLED EACH SEMESTER DROPPED OUT WITHIN THE FIRST 3 WEEKS. THOSE WHO REMAINED GENERALLY COMPLETED THE COURSE.

I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO MENTION THAT THIS PROJECT IS PREPARING FOR DEVELOPMENT ON A NATIONAL SCALE. THIS "RED PACKET" HAS TWO OPERATIONAL OUTLINES WHICH HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO 43 NEWSPAPERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH A VIEW TO STARTING THIS PROJECT IN THE CITIES WHERE THESE NEWSPAPERS ARE PUBLISHED.

THE PACKET HAS THREE PARTS:

LETTERS,

TAB I) HOW TO GET THIS PROJECT STARTED,

TAB II) OPERATION

IF I MAY, I'D LIKE TO DISTRIBUTE THESE PACKETS NOW, AND THEN TAKE ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

REFER TO PART II:

A) LIST OF WHAT THE UNDERGRADUATES ARE REQUIRED TO DO,

B) LIST OF COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS,

C) LIST OF COMMUNITY AGENCIES.

ROBERT T. STAFFORD, VT., CHAIRMAN

HOWARD H. BAKER, JR., TENN.      JENNINGS RANDOLPH, W. VA.  
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BAILEY GUARD, STAFF DIRECTOR  
JOHN W. YAGO, JR., MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 15, 1983

Mr. Norman Manasa  
Director  
The Washington Education  
Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mr. Manasa:

Lynn Holmes has advised me of your request for funding under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

I wanted you to know that I have contacted Education officials in support of The Washington Education Project's application. Just as soon as I hear from Education, I will let you know.

Sincerely,



Howard H. Baker, Jr.

HHBJr:jed

PAUL LAXALT  
NEVADA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 18, 1983

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
315 RUSSELL OFFICE BUILDING  
(202) 224-3542

CARSON CITY OFFICE:  
705 NORTH PLAZA STREET  
(702) 883-1930

LAS VEGAS OFFICE:  
300 LAS VEGAS BLVD., SOUTH  
(702) 385-6547

RENO OFFICE:  
300 BOOTH STREET  
(702) 784-5568

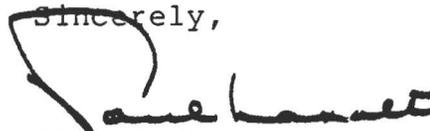
Dear Norman:

This is simply a short note to tell you that Barbara Burgess of my staff has briefed me on your proposal to establish a college student tutoring program to help low-income, disadvantaged students. It appears you have a sound idea; and, certainly, it seems that you have received several fair hearings from officials within the Department of Education.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter which I have written to Secretary Bell of your behalf. I will certainly get back in touch with you as soon as I learn the status of your application.

Again, thank you for bringing your proposal to my attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me again in the future if you should have any additional questions or comments on this or any other matter of mutual concern.

Sincerely,



PAUL LAXALT  
U.S. Senator

PL:zmv

Mr. Norman Manasa, Director  
The Washington Education Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Enclosure

PAUL LAXALT  
NEVADA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 18, 1983

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
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(702) 385-6547

RENO OFFICE:  
300 BOOTH STREET  
(702) 784-5568

Dear Ted:

It has been brought to my attention that Norman Manasa of the Washington Education Project has submitted a grant application for an innovative education proposal. His proposal would utilize college students as tutors for disadvantaged children who have learning problems in school.

I'm impressed by Mr. Manasa's proposal as it requires relatively limited funds while utilizing existing resources, namely college students, to supplement the education experiences of low-income children who need individualized help in school. At the same time this proposal would help our illiterate youth gain proficiency in reading and other skills, it places the college student in a position of assuming a degree of responsibility to society.

In many respects, this is the type of program which would best be initiated by each university or college. In light of budgetary restraints, however, it seems that these institutions are no longer in the position to implement new programs. And because Mr. Manasa's proposal seems to coordinate with, if not supplement, existing Title I programs, it appears this grant request most appropriately falls under the purview of the Federal Department of Education.

I understand Mr. Manasa has had several meetings with top officials within your department; he has testified in various House hearings as well. I think the consideration his proposal has received to date speaks well of its future.

I hope you will give his application your careful consideration. I will look forward to hearing from you on this matter. In advance, let me thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
PAUL LAXALT  
U.S. Senator

PL:zmv

The Honorable Terrel H. Bell  
Secretary of Education  
Department of Education  
Federal Office Building #6  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH, CHAIRMAN

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

GEORGE W. PRITTS, JR., CHIEF COUNSEL  
RENN M. PATCH, STAFF DIRECTOR AND GENERAL COUNSEL  
LAWRENCE C. MOROWITZ, M.D., MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 18, 1983

Mr. Norman Manasa  
The Washington Education  
Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

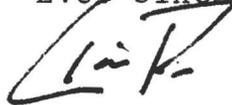
Dear Mr. Manasa:

This is just a brief note to let you know that I have written to Secretary Bell to express my strong personal endorsement of the Washington Education Project.

This is indeed a fine project, and I am very hopeful that the Department of Education will act favorably on it. I will be in touch with you as soon as I receive a reply from Secretary Bell.

Warm regards.

Ever sincerely,



Claiborne Pell

MAJORITY MEMBERS:  
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PETER A. PEYFER, N.Y.  
JOSEPH M. GAYDOS, PA.  
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225-8881

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WENDELL BAILEY, MO.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION  
320 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

January 4, 1983

Dr. Sven Groennings, Director  
Fund for the Improvement of  
Postsecondary Education  
Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Sven:

I am writing to recommend that the Fund favorably consider the preliminary proposals of two colleges in my district and one submitted by the Washington Education Project, Inc. All three proposals have been submitted under the Comprehensive Program for initial review and evaluation by your staff.

The Integrated Curriculum for the Technical Professions, as proposed by Rend Lake College, would permit further development of an integrated technical curriculum for science, mathematics and engineering. The proposal not only responds to a defined need at the College and employer skill requirements in Southern Illinois, but also to a national need for trained individuals in these areas. The curriculum, which would be the focus of the FIPSe grant, is intended to increase the success rate of students in technically-related disciplines and occupations, while providing a rigorous program of study. Emphasis would be placed upon creative problem solving and electronic communication skills.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU-C) has proposed The Emeritus Projects Increased Utilization of Retired Professors as a vehicle for taking advantage of the collective wisdom and experiences of retired professors for the benefit of the university community. SIU-C would develop and implement a model to assist retired faculty in meeting the needs of the University and the community at large. An Emeritus Office would be established, a resource file of interest and expertise created, and retired professors engaged in activities helpful to the students at SIU-C (these would not be duplicative of

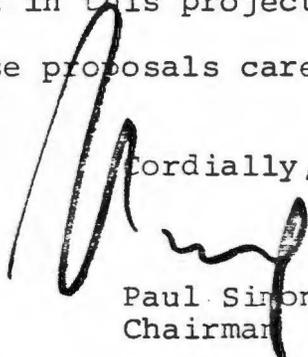
Dr. Sven Groennings  
January 4, 1983  
Page Two

the tasks and/or responsibilities of regular faculty). Facilities and services would be provided to emeritus professors to help them remain current in their field of expertise.

The Washington Education Project, Inc. is an academic program for undergraduate college students which is designed to add an experimental component to the humanities training of college students by putting them to work teaching reading, writing, and mathematics to the illiterate poor. Undergraduates would enter this project by registering in three credit pass/fail courses that bring together the reality and the theory of sociology, education, economics, etc. Since these are elective courses, all undergraduates may participate regardless of their major field of study. The students participating in this program would tutor six hours per week in selected community agencies and would meet once a week with the monitoring professor. The professor would explain the theory of the discipline in which the student is enrolled in light of the student's actual experience in the community. A similar program has been successfully implemented in the Miami/Dade County area and, I understand, that Secretary Bell has expressed his personal interest in this project.

I hope you will review each of these proposals carefully and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Paul Simon  
Chairman

PS/wbd

STEWART B. MCKINNEY  
4th DISTRICT, CONNEXION

106 CHURCH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

COMMITTEES:  
FINANCING, FINANCE AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

TELEPHONE: (202) 223-3541

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
FEDERAL BUILDING  
LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD  
BANGOR, CONNEXION 06021  
TELEPHONE: (203) 879-8870  
500 BURNING STREET  
STAMFORD, CONNEXION 06901  
TELEPHONE: (203) 877-8277  
NEWHALL, CONNEXION  
TELEPHONE: (203) 888-5899

January 17, 1983

Honorable Terrel H. Bell  
Secretary of Education  
Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20202

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my strong support for the Washington Education Project. As you can see from the attached CONGRESSIONAL RECORD statement, I have been a proponent of this meritorious educational supplement since it was brought to my attention by Norman Manasa early in 1982. The long list of supporters of the project - including House Minority Leader Robert Michel, various members of the White House Staff, Mayor Barry, and Washington School Superintendent Floretta McKenzie, is quite noteworthy. After a careful review of the philosophy, mechanics, and low cost of the Washington Education Project, I feel confident that we can add your name to this already impressive list.

As you can readily see, the need for the tutoring programs which would be offered through this project is well documented; as is the necessity for practical training among the area college students in fields extending beyond student teaching. Upon your careful examination of this proposal, I hope that you will see fit to expedite the process by which the Washington Education Project will become a reality. I feel that a well coordinated effort -- combining the resources of the federal government, the City of Washington and private and public institutions of higher education -- to get this initiative off the ground can produce a pilot program which will serve as a valuable model for implementing similar programs around the nation.

I also realize that in these times of budget cutting there is very little support for proposals which involve allocation of "new" funding. However, while I agree that we must control new projects, I feel that this is a clear cut case for justifying an exception. In fact, this program can actually save the taxpayer's money in the long run.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Stewart B. McKinney, M. C.

The Washington Education  
Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
December 27, 1982

(202) 547-3011

Dear Aileen,

There have been several fine developments regarding this project, even since we last spoke and I'll be happy to tell the tale when you return to town. In the meantime, here's the proposal that has been submitted to the Department of Education on behalf of this project, which is now a non-profit corporation.

I hope you had a very fine time with your family over Christmas and send every good wish for the New Year.

Sincerely,



Norman Manasa  
Director

Aileen Anderson  
c/o James Cicconi  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

**THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM  
 FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Preliminary  Final

**This application should be sent to:**  
**No. 84.116A**  
**U.S. Department of Education**  
**Application Control Center**  
**Washington, D.C. 20202**

1. APPLICATION NO.

2. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NO.

**3. LEGAL APPLICANT**

a Legal Applicant Name

The Washington Education Project, Inc.

b Address

224 Third Street, S.E.

Washington, D.C. 20003

c Congressional District(s)

**4. PROJECT DIRECTOR**

Name

Title

Norman P. Manasa Director

Address

224 Third Street, S.E.

Washington, D.C. 20003

City

State

Zip

Telephone: (202) 547-3011

Area Code

Number

**5. FEDERAL FUNDS REQUESTED:**

1st Year Only \$35,000.00

2nd Year (If Applicable) \$90,000.00

3rd Year (If Applicable) \$125,000.00

Total Amount: \$250,000.00

**6. INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION**

Type of Control

Highest Degree Level

Public

2 Year

Private, Non-Profit

4 Year

Private, for Profit

Graduate

Non-Degree Granting

Approx. Total Enrolled (If Applicable) N/A

**7. DURATION OF PROJECT:**

Starting Date August 1, 1983

Ending Date July 31, 1986

Total No. of Months 36

**8. POPULATION DIRECTLY BENEFITING FROM THE PROJECT**

400 undergraduates, 14 college faculty  
 26 Student Coordinators, 800 community  
 residents at 10 agencies.

**9. PROPOSAL TITLE:**

The Washington Education Project, Inc.

**10. BRIEF ABSTRACT OF PROPOSAL:**

This is an academic program which is designed to add an experiential component to the humanities training of college students by putting them to work teaching reading, writing, and mathematics to the illiterate poor. Undergraduates would enter this project by registering in 3 credit, pass/fail courses that bring together the reality and the theory of sociology, education, economics, etc. Since these are elective courses, all undergraduates may participate, regardless of their major field of study. This project is based upon a model that ran in Miami from 1969 - 1973.

**11. CERTIFICATION BY AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL**

The applicant certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the data in this application are true and correct and that the filing of the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant.

Norman P. Manasa

Director

(202) 547-3011

Name

Title

Phone

Signature

Date

December 13, 1982

The Washington Education Project, Inc.  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Norman Manasa  
Director  
(202) 547-3011

PROPOSAL FOR THE  
FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
December 14, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. PROJECT NARRATIVE
- II. BUDGET
- III. ADDENDUM

I. PROJECT NARRATIVE

PURPOSE: This proposal requests funding for three years for The Washington Education Project, Inc. The first year of the grant would be devoted to linking community agencies to one college in order to produce an operational program by the second year. In addition, this proposal requests support for two years for the college that would participate and offer the courses that are described below.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: This is an academic program which is designed to add an experiential component to the humanities training of college students by putting them to work teaching reading, writing, and mathematics to the illiterate poor. Undergraduates would enter this project by registering in 3 credit, pass/fail courses that bring together the reality and the theory of sociology, education, economics, etc. Since these are elective courses, all undergraduates may participate, regardless of their major field of study.

Undergraduates in this project would tutor 6 hours per week in selected community agencies as a supplement to education programs that are already in operation in these agencies. The tutoring is done on a regular schedule throughout the semester and the undergraduates sign in and sign out for each tutoring session. In addition, the undergraduates would meet each week in a seminar with their monitoring professor where the theory of the discipline in which they are registered is explained in light of their experience in the community.

The undergraduates benefit in four ways:

- 1) they obtain real-world experience which gives them a better understanding of the humanities and the social sciences.
- 2) they obtain an experiential background which will help them to make a sensible choice of a major and a career.
- 3) they obtain work experience which will help them to get a job upon graduation.
- 4) they learn compassion by being compassionate, and their obligation as citizens in a democracy.

But this project also would provide the kind of help which the poor desperately need. One must be skilled in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to create wealth in a technological society. Without these skills, the poor will always remain poor, regardless of whatever other services they may receive, and they will not obtain these skills without long-term, reliable tutoring.

Since academic credit guarantees the attendance of the undergraduates as well as the expertise of the university faculty, this project would provide the illiterate of the community with large-scale, competent help at no cost to them.

This project has already worked in Miami (1969-1973) with over 1,000 undergraduates at 14 community agencies. (A list of these agencies is attached.)

The Washington Education Project has six major characteristics:

- 1) College courses that mix experience and theory at the same time (that is to say, the kind of courses this project describes)

often offer undergraduates a better education than can be gotten through the traditional classroom lecture method. This, of course, is nothing new. A mix of experience and theory has been considered the highest form of learning in Western culture since the time of Galileo.

2) These courses are not "internships" for a few select undergraduates but elective courses, making all ten million undergraduates in the country eligible to participate. As a result, the nation's undergraduates (who generally must take eight elective courses to get a degree) may represent the only manageable resource that can match the country's illiteracy problem on its own scale.

3) Working as tutors, undergraduates would create vast amounts of new wealth, would help to heal the wounds of the nation and, by doing so, would help to carry the burden of holding this country together. And this is a burden that, even as undergraduates, they have an obligation to bear.

4) This project is not designed to provide the poor with one more subsidy. This project is designed to transfer to the illiterate poor the power to create wealth, both for themselves and for the nation, in the coming technological age. In a word, literacy.

5) Since colleges are structurally alike, this project could be readily developed at institutions of postsecondary education all across the country.

6) This project has two economies: one that might be called the microeconomy and one that might be called the macroeconomy. The "microeconomy" is that economy of operation which is at the heart of this project in that there are no capital expenditures to erect new buildings or to rent storefronts; there is no outlay for special books or consultants; the tutors are not paid--indeed, they pay tuition to take the courses that permit them to do the tutoring. There is no time wasted arguing over teaching methodologies.

The Washington Education Project uses the buildings that already exist (such as schools, jails, and Head Start centers), the books that have already been purchased, and the teaching methodology that is already in operation. The classroom teacher tells the undergraduate which of the students is to be tutored, and in what subject and with what book, and the learning takes place in the back of the classroom with the learning environment in force and the classroom teacher right there to provide whatever help may be necessary.

Using this approach, the tutors do not require training and are profoundly effective from virtually the first week of the semester. And there is nothing mysterious about this tutoring process. It is done at the level of helping the kids from the neighborhood with their homework and is an honorable method of instruction as old as learning itself.

The "macroeconomy" of this project is directly tied to a historical change in the nature of work itself. Since the beginning of this country, millions of Americans could find honorable work, even if they were barely literate, since they were needed to lift and move, plant and reap the things the nation produced. Now, with this work being

done by machines and robots, we have large numbers of illiterate Americans who may not be so much unemployed, as they are unemployable. There is no longer any choice but to train these people in the literacy that is required for the creation of wealth in the modern age.

To do this tutoring, we have ten million undergraduates who constitute a vast, untapped resource, who consume great amounts of public subsidy, and who create no wealth while they are in college. Under this project, they would create massive new wealth by transferring literacy to the illiterate poor, and the undergraduates themselves would get a better education in the bargain.

The attached Addendum lists:

- a) the requirements for undergraduates who participate in this project,
- b) the community agencies that took part in the Miami model (1969 - 1973), including a report from the principal of a school for emotionally disturbed adolescents,
- c) the university departments that offered these courses,
- d) the organizational components of a project at one college,
- e) letters of support from the Washington, D.C. community,
- f) recent notices in the press.

II. BUDGET

First Year Costs:

The Washington Education Project --  
Salaries and Support \$ 35,000.00

Second Year Costs:

The Washington Education Project --  
Salaries and Support \$ 35,000.00  
One College --  
Faculty Salaries and Support \$ 55,000.00

Third Year Costs:

The Washington Education Project --  
Salaries and Support \$ 35,000.00  
One College --  
Faculty Salaries and Support \$ 90,000.00

Total First Year Cost: \$ 35,000.00

Total Second Year Cost: \$ 90,000.00

Total Third Year Cost: \$125,000.00

TOTAL BUDGET: \$250,000.00

III. ADDENDUM

I. WHAT A STUDENT IN THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT  
IS REQUIRED TO DO

Undergraduates who participate in this project do so by enrolling in a 3 credit, pass/fail, elective course in one of several university departments. In order to receive academic credit, students in the Miami project (1969 - 1973) were required to:

- 1) Tutor 6 hours each week for the semester,
- 2) Attend one seminar with their supervising professor each week,
- 3) Submit a one-page report each two weeks,
- 4) Maintain a private journal of their experiences.
- 5) Submit a final paper at the end of the semester.

ELIGIBILITY

All university students, with the exception of first semester freshmen, were eligible to take these courses several times during their undergraduate career. It did not matter what their major field of study was.

## II. REPRESENTATIVE COMMUNITY AGENCIES

College students in this project do tutoring and they can do it effectively in almost any community setting. Below is a representative list of agencies from the Miami project:

- 1) The After School House -- a community school for young children in the impoverished area of South Miami.
- 2) Boystown -- a home for dependent boys maintained by the Catholic Archdiocese of Miami.
- 3) Carver Junior High School -- an integrated county school for seventh and eighth graders.
- 4) The Dade County Jail -- literacy training in the men's division.
- 5) The Dade County Jail -- literacy training in the women's division.
- 6) The Dade County Stockade -- sentenced prisoners were prepared to take the State High School Equivalency Examination.
- 7) Haven School for the Handicapped -- a private facility for moderately handicapped children and adolescents.
- 8) J.R.E. Lee Community School -- a county school for emotionally disturbed adolescents.
- 9) Montanari Residential Treatment Center and Clinical School -- a private facility for emotionally disturbed adolescents.
- 10) Saint Alban's Day Nursery -- a day care center in the Black community of Coconut Grove.
- 11) South Miami Junior High School -- a newly integrated county school.
- 12) Spectrum House -- a private, residential treatment center for people addicted to hard drugs.
- 13) Tucker Elementary -- a newly integrated county school for grades K-4.
- 14) Dade County Youth Hall -- a detention center for juveniles.

This report was written by Mr. Charles F. Collard, Administrative Supervisor of the J.R.E. Lee Community Center, a Dade County school for emotionally disturbed adolescents. It was written in 1972 or 1973. Please see page 2 of this report.

(SUMMON was the name of the Miami project that ran from 1969-1973.)

## SUMMON PROGRAM

The SUMMON Program has been functioning at J. R. E. Lee Center for more than five semesters. The tutors have been under the supervision of a University Professor, Student Coordinator, and our school's Reading Director.

The tutors work in one-to-one situations with our emotionally disturbed, junior high students. They are remediating those students who are reading on primer to third grade levels. Their two-fold objectives are to establish rapport with strong interpersonal relationships and to remediate the deficit reading skills.

Since all of the tutors are freshmen through juniors and have had no prior teaching experiences, our program is so structured as to allow them freedom for innovative techniques within a framework of accepted educational practices. They are instructed in the use of our reading methods and materials by the Remedial Reading teacher and the University advisor. In addition, the tutors meet in bi-monthly evening sessions to discuss interpersonal and instructional dynamics with our teacher and the advisor.

The tutors work with their students for one forty minute period each school day. They have continued to be extremely conscientious about meeting their schedules. The service that the tutors perform is irreplaceable. They bring a vital freshness and objectivity to our students' situation, which is often lost with "volunteer" organizations. Their help makes possible the individual attention and

page 2, continued

instruction that our students so need.

Because of these factors, our remedial reading students have had reading level gains of one to two years within a three to five month period of tutorage. Since we have a real need for the SUMMON people in providing a more comprehensive and effective program for our students, Lee Center tries to be the first in line when the tutors are assigned at the beginning of a semester.

*Charles F. Cetera*

III. UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS THAT MIGHT PARTICIPATE  
IN THIS PROJECT

University departments that participate in this project would register undergraduates in 3 credit courses, taken as electives and on a pass/fail basis. Participating departments might include:

- \* 1) Sociology
- \* 2) Economics
- \* 3) Speech
- \* 4) Elementary Education
- \* 5) Educational Psychology
- \* 6) Education: Administration and Curriculum
- 7) Psychology
- \* 8) American Studies
- 9) Philosophy
- \* 10) Management
- \* 11) Geography

\* Departments that participated in the Miami project (1969 - 1973).

#### IV. THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS OF A SINGLE COLLEGE PROJECT

At a college, this project would have five parts:

- 1) The Project Director -- a member of the college faculty who holds responsibility for the operation of the project.
- 2) The Faculty Representatives -- college faculty members who meet each week with the undergraduates they are monitoring. In these seminars, they provide the theoretical background for the students' experience in the community, as well as supervision, review, advice and evaluation. They also make site visits and award academic credit.
- 3) The Student Coordinators -- these undergraduates already have had one semester's experience in the project as a regular student. They now assume the responsibility for the operation of an individual community agency. They schedule work hours for the undergraduates at that agency, arrange transportation, keep attendance records, and help establish effective tutoring situations.
- 4) The Agency Representatives -- these are staff members appointed by the head of the community agency who have primary responsibility for the effective placement of each college student within the agency.
- 5) The Participating College Students -- those who enroll in the course and choose, from a list of community agencies provided at registration, where they will tutor for the semester.

(Please Note: In the operation of an agency, the Student Coordinator does most of the legwork. The time required of a college faculty member or Agency Representative, therefore, is about 3 - 6 hours per week.)



THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

MARION BARRY, JR.  
MAYOR

September 21, 1981

Norman Manasa  
Director  
The Washington Education  
Project  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mr. Manasa:

Your proposal to grant academic credit to university students for tutorial activities in public institutions is an intriguing idea. A city such as ours needs a literate citizenry if it is to remain a vibrant place in which to live. People, especially our youth, must be able to read and write if they are to have some control over their own lives and to obtain work that has both meaning and dignity. I encourage programs, such as the Washington Education Project, which might enhance these critical skills in our city's public school students.

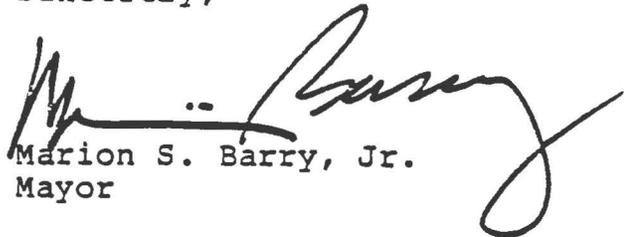
I am hopeful about the participation of humanities undergraduates from local colleges and universities which your project envisions. Working through accredited university courses and under the supervision of their professors, these students would seem to be a pool of potentially excellent tutors providing a vital public service.

As the Mayor, I exercise no control over the operation of the public school system. Policy-making authority and direct supervision of the school system's programs are

vested by law in the Board of Education. I suggest that you work closely with the Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Floretta D. McKenzie, to secure her support for this effort.

You have my good wishes for the success of this project. Please contact my Special Assistant, Patricia E. Miner, if you need any further help in developing your program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marion S. Barry, Jr.", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Marion S. Barry, Jr.  
Mayor



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
PRESIDENTIAL BUILDING  
415 12TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

SUPERINTENDENT

(202) 724-4222

August 25, 1981

Mr. Norman Manasa  
Director  
The Washington Education Project  
224 Third Street, S. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20003

Dear Mr. Manasa:

I write to thank you for your explanation of the Washington Education Project and to encourage the work of this project within the Public Schools of the District of Columbia.

This project seems to be a workable effort since it would draw undergraduates from the local colleges who, as part of their training in the humanities, would tutor children in the city school system. Since these undergraduates would do this essential work for course credit and under the general supervision of university faculty, I believe they would be both reliable and effective. Certainly, the community representatives who participated in the Miami project seem to support this view.

There is no doubt that this sort of intensive tutorial instruction, done in the classroom as a supplement to the work of the teacher, would be of great help to our students. But it is also beyond question that working with District school children for a semester would provide a profound educational experience for the undergraduates themselves.

I would be happy to provide whatever help I could and hope you will keep me advised of your progress.

Sincerely,

Floretta D. McKenzie  
Superintendent of Schools  
Chief State School Officer

FDMcK:jdh

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

ROBERT P. HUNTER, CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR  
RITA ANN PFEIFFER, CHIEF CLERK  
LAWRENCE C. HOROWITZ, M.D., MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

January, 1982

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The Washington Education Project may hold some of the answers to the problems we face as a nation, and I thought you would want to know about it.

This project enrolls undergraduates in three credit humanities courses and sends them to impoverished community agencies to teach the illiterate poor to read and write. For the undergraduates, it is a course that combines experience with classroom theory. They would tutor six hours per week but they would also meet with their monitoring professors in weekly seminars where they would hear the theories which attempt to explain the world beyond the campus walls. Since this is an elective course, it is open to all college students, regardless of their major field of study.

The undergraduates, I believe, need this sort of experience in order to understand the value of their classroom instruction. But there are other things to learn in college and undergraduates need to do this sort of work so that they may learn the obligation that citizenship imposes upon those who live in a free society, and so that they may learn compassion through the act of compassion.

This project also holds great promise for the dispossessed of America. It cannot be denied that literacy is basic to the creation of wealth, particularly in an increasingly technological society where computers are doing so much of the work that had been done manually for many generations. Those who are not skilled in the use of letters and numbers are slowly becoming unable to create wealth in any form and must be cared for by the rest of society. There may have been a time when teaching these people to read, write and compute was considered to be an option. Today, it is a compelling necessity that will not go away.

I believe college students would be quite able and very willing to take up this responsibility. As with any other generation of Americans, they need only be asked to serve and to be given the workable means by which to do so. The Washington Education Project may be the kind of project through which much of this work can be accomplished, and I would be happy for whatever consideration you would be able to give it.

Ever sincerely,



Claiborne Pell

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

September 9, 1981

TELEPHONES:  
MAJORITY—22-1527  
MINORITY—22-1725

Mr. Norman Manasa  
The Washington Education Project  
224 Third Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mr. Manasa:

We were very happy to learn of your work with The Washington Education Project.

As we understand your program, undergraduate students are provided with an opportunity to work with illiterate children and adults as part of their training in the humanities. This basic approach seems to us to uniquely benefit both the postsecondary student and the persons tutored by them. The program provides a very desirable injection of real world experience into the higher education of the participating students.

We wish you success in implementing your program in colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C. area. Please keep us informed of your progress and let us know if we can be of any assistance to you in your worthwhile work.

Cordially,



PAUL SIMON  
Chairman, Subcommittee  
on Postsecondary  
Education



E. THOMAS COLEMAN  
Ranking Minority Member,  
Subcommittee on  
Postsecondary Education

## How to help stamp out illiteracy? Read on!

By Norman Manasa

The answer to the nation's massive illiteracy problem lies within the colleges and universities of America. It is not because they know something special but because they *have* something special—10 million undergraduates who make excellent tutors when provided a sensible structure within which to work.



Norman Manasa

The Washington Education Project is working to develop projects at colleges across the country that will register undergraduates in 3-credit elective courses and send them into community agencies to teach reading, writing and mathematics to the illiterate poor. This national project is based on a model program that ran at the University of Miami from 1969-73, using more than 1,000 undergraduates.

I founded the Miami project in 1969 and started The Washington Education Project in 1977. Like the Miami model, the Washington project is designed to improve the humanities training of undergraduates by providing experience in the community that will supplement their classroom instruction. This, of course, is nothing new. A mix of experience and theory has been considered the highest form of learning in Western culture since the time of Galileo.

The Miami project taught people in jails, inner-city schools, migrant camps and institutions for the emotionally disturbed to read, write and do simple mathematics. It was a remarkably adaptable program that fit into almost any community agency. The undergraduates did tutoring (rather than painting the houses of poor people or throwing Christmas parties for orphans) since tutoring transfers to the illiterate poor the power to create wealth in the technological age. And *that* is what these people need.

From a list provided at registration, the undergraduates chose the community agency in which they wanted to work for the semester. They then registered in a pass/fail elective course that already had been matched with that particular agency. The course might be in economics, sociology, educational psychology, management or in another university department.

The undergraduates were required to tutor six hours per week for the semester on a regular schedule, signing in and out for each session. Academic credit, of course, guaranteed their attendance. They also were required to meet once each week in a seminar with their monitoring professor where their experience in the community was explained in light of the discipline in which

they had registered. To the "theory" of the seminars, the students brought the "experience" of their work in the community and learned from the comparison of one with the other.

The tutoring took place in community agencies that already had an education program in operation. This meant several things:

- The project was inexpensive to run; there were no capital expenditures, no storefronts to rent, no special books to buy.
- There was no time wasted looking for people to be tutored.
- There was no experimentation with methodology. The undergraduates simply used the methods of the classroom teacher.

The undergraduates reported to the agency classroom on a regular schedule where the teacher told them whom to tutor, what book to use and what page to turn to. The tutoring took place in the back of the classroom, and if the undergraduates had any problems, the teacher would be 20 feet away at the front of the classroom to help out.

Under this concept, most of the tutoring is done at the level of helping the kids from the neighborhood with their homework. As a result, the undergraduates do not need to be "trained" in order to be tutors. The undergraduates act as a supplement to educational programs in existing community agencies and are effective from almost the first week of the semester.

The success of the Miami project demonstrates this. In 1972, the principal of a special school for emotionally disturbed adolescents wrote:

"The service that the tutors perform is irreplaceable. They bring a vital freshness and objectivity to our students' situation, which is often lost with 'volunteer' organizations. Their help makes possible the individual attention and instruction that our students so need. Because of these factors, our remedial reading students have had reading level gains of one to two years within a three- to five-month period of tutorage."

It should be emphasized that these are not "internships" for a few select undergraduates but elective courses, making *all 10 million college students eligible to participate*. The nation's undergraduates (who generally must take eight elective courses to get a degree) thus represent the only manageable resource that can match the country's illiteracy problem on its own scale.

Each undergraduate in this project tutors 60 hours per semester (six hours per week x 10 weeks in a semester). If 1 percent of the nation's college students enrolled in these courses, they would produce six million hours of tutoring each semester, and at no cost to the community. The undergraduates, by the way, are not paid; indeed, they pay tuition to take these courses. As a result, the undergraduates themselves provide a financial pool to continue the project after seed monies are terminated.

It goes without saying that people who can't read don't buy newspapers. But it is these same people who will not be able to do the work that will be required in the coming technological era. They not only will be unemployed but *unemployable* (and, perhaps, ungovernable, as well); they will need to be fed and housed and cared for by society for their entire lives. We must teach these people to read. Otherwise, they will create a constant drain upon the economy and exact massive social costs that I do not think the nation can bear. □

*Manasa is director of The Washington Education Project. Publishers interested in seeing his type of literacy program established at a college in their communities may obtain a detailed outline of "How to Get This Project Started" by contacting him at 224 Third St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003; (202) 547-3011.*

## AHEAD:

# A Nation of Illiterates?

**The growing number of Americans who can't read or write properly is generating widespread concern. A major worry: There won't be enough people equipped to handle complex new technology.**

Ben is an 18-year-old New Yorker who dreads using the subway because he can't read the names of stations.

A top Eastern law firm hired a professional writing instructor to work with freshly recruited lawyers because, the firm's founder says, "Many of the new graduates cannot write."

A 21-year-old high-school teacher cannot compose an organized paragraph and has no understanding of grammar or punctuation.

These increasingly typical cases illustrate a potential crisis for America: Growing numbers of functional illiterates who cost the nation many billions of dollars and a grave toll in unfulfilled lives.

Today, a staggering 23 million Americans—1 in 5 adults—lack the reading and writing abilities needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living. An additional 30 million are only marginally capable of being productive workers. Thirteen percent of high-school students graduate with the reading and writing skills of sixth graders. More than one third of adults have not completed high school.

Demographers say the number of illiterates is steadily mounting, swelled by nearly 1 million school dropouts a year and also by immigrants from Latin America and Asia, many unable to read and write in English or their own languages.

These functional illiterates exact a high national price. One estimate places the yearly cost in welfare programs and unemployment compensation due to illiteracy at 6 billion dollars. An additional 237 billion a year in unrealized earnings is forfeited by persons who lack basic learning, according to Literacy Volunteers of America, a private non-profit literacy program based in Syracuse, N.Y. Local school officials fear that the problem could worsen in the wake of Reagan administration proposals to curtail federal efforts to aid schools in teaching basic subjects, including a sharp cut in adult-education funds.

Another disturbing result of illiteracy is pointed out by Barbara Bush, wife of the Vice President and a longtime crusader against illiteracy: "Most people don't know we spend 6.6 billion dollars a year to keep 750,000 illiterates in jail," says Bush. "I'm trying to remind people that there's a direct correlation between crime and illiteracy, between illiteracy and unemployment."

At the same time, businesses are having more and more trouble finding employees properly trained in composing or even understanding written sentences and working with computerized data banks. Labor experts worry that such difficulties could put the U.S. at a disadvantage in competing with other technologically advanced countries.

Paul Copperman, author of *The Literacy Hoax* and a leader in illiteracy research, warns that the economic and technological drag is likely to worsen. The steady decline in academic standards since the early 1960s, he notes, may mean that "we as a society will be compelled to support an increasing percentage of dysfunctional or only marginally functional citizens."

### "A Form of Social Dynamite"

A Youth Literacy Task Force in New York City reported in April that 8 percent of that city's youths between the ages of 14 and 21 are illiterate—a proportion typical of most other urban areas in the United States. Such persons, the report said, "constitute a form of social dynamite" that threatens to explode in joblessness, despair and violence.

In Detroit, a young man describes the anguish of applying for jobs: "I would call companies and ask if the applicants had to fill out forms. If it was required, I would pass up the opportunity. About the only thing I was sure I could spell right was my name."

Among principal reasons cited for the growth of illiteracy:

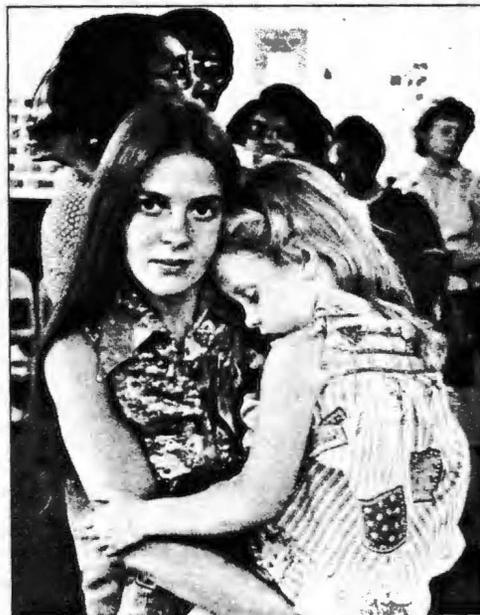
Increased dependence on television; chronic, substandard reading and writing habits of millions of young people in poor neighborhoods, and the failure of many families and schools to cope with the problems.

Scholars say results with the basic building blocks of learning—reading, writing and computing—continue to lag behind expectations. A new study also points to a growing number of young Americans who can decipher printed words but cannot comprehend or think clearly about what they have read, as detailed in the box on page 56.

"What we are creating is a kind of semiliteracy—a breakdown in the way we communicate with one another," says Lois DeBakey, professor of scientific communication at Baylor University College of Medicine and a leading authority on literacy problems. "Our regard for language has become so debased that it is destroying the ability even of educated people to evaluate ideas rationally."

Problems of inadequate literacy pervade the schools and virtually every segment of life—the military, business, government and the professions. Examples:

■ Instructional materials of the armed forces increasingly resemble comic books, with pictures and sim-



**JULIE LEFT SCHOOL.  
HER HUSBAND LEFT HER.  
NOW SHE'S LEFT TO YOU.**

You don't think a headache every week for weeks every month. You don't think it's hard to read the paper. The same information that correct news letters and brochures is there. You don't think you're missing out on the excitement of the night out in Florida. You don't think you're missing out on the excitement of the night out in Florida. You don't think you're missing out on the excitement of the night out in Florida. You don't think you're missing out on the excitement of the night out in Florida.

**ILLITERACY. WE CAN'T AFFORD IT.  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Poster in Florida: A renewed effort to reach the hidden victims of illiteracy in the nation.



A 14-year-old immigrant from Taiwan is tested for proficiency in English by the San Francisco school district.

plified language used to assist recruits who have reading deficiencies. One Army manual has five pages of pictures to show a soldier how to open the hood on a truck.

■ Thousands of U.S. companies felt compelled to set up remedial courses in basic subjects in recent years, according to a Conference Board estimate. An executive with Prudential Insurance Company in Houston explains why: "We feel we have to play a little catch-up with these people, giving them some of the training they missed in 12 years of school." At another company, an illiterate worker was killed because he couldn't read a warning sign.

■ An estimated two thirds of U.S. colleges and universities find it necessary to provide remedial reading and writing courses for students. Nearly half of the freshmen at the University of California at Berkeley, which draws from the top one eighth of high-school graduates, are placed in remedial composition classes.

■ For several years, college-textbook publishers have been diluting their products with increasingly simplified language, bigger pictures and less-complex writing. Publishers say the trend, known in the trade as "dumbing down," resulted because today's undergraduates cannot handle difficult material.

Such poor performance has a strong ripple effect. Newspaper readership, for example, has been declining since the 1950s, with the sharpest drop occurring in the past decade. Only about 55 percent of adults now look at a newspaper every day. Among persons in their 20s, only 40 percent read newspapers. Editors say this was a big factor in the recent closings of major newspapers in Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. In addition, unit sales of books have been flat for nearly a decade.

### How Big a Problem?

Conventional illiteracy—the inability to read or write a simple message in any language—has virtually disappeared in the United States. The Census Bureau defines an illiterate as someone at least 14 years old who has not completed the fifth grade. By that standard, illiteracy afflicts less than 1 percent of the population, making the U.S. one of the most literate nations in the world. But researchers say that standards of literacy used in underdeveloped parts of the world are

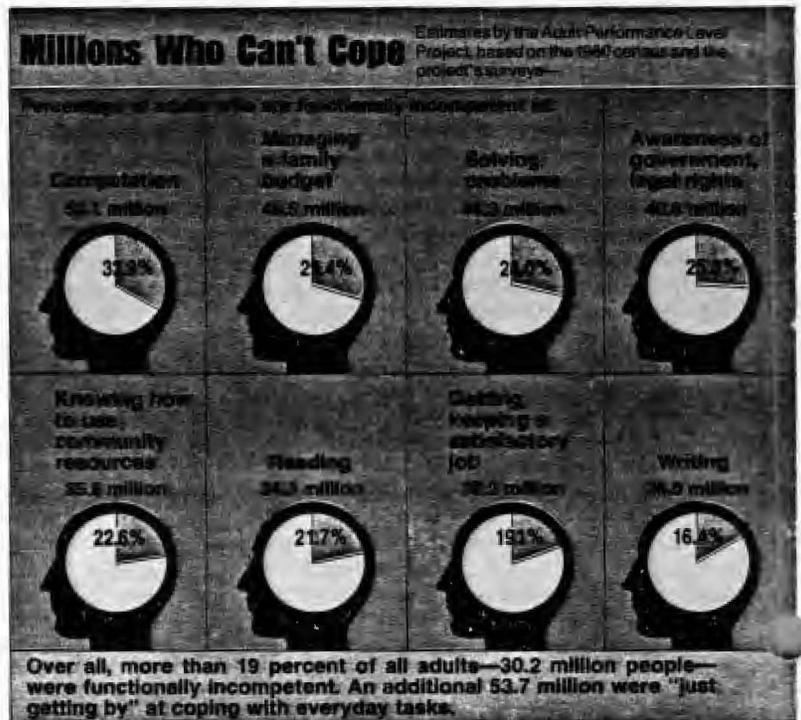
no longer useful in the U.S., because Americans need to be able to apply reading and writing skills to increasingly complex tasks. For that reason, educators use the term *functional literacy* as a gauge of skills needed for an individual to perform productively in society as a citizen, family member, consumer and worker. Asserts Dorothy Shields, director of education for the AFL-CIO: "By the 1990s, anyone who doesn't have at least a 12th-grade reading, writing and calculating level will be absolutely lost."

Recent studies indicate that functional illiteracy is spreading. Examples: A person now needs to read at a sixth-grade level to understand a driver's-license manual, at an eighth-grade level to follow the directions for preparing a TV dinner or to read a federal income-tax form, at a 10th-grade level to interpret the instructions on an aspirin bottle, at a 12th-grade level to understand an insurance policy, and at college level to figure out the meaning of an apartment lease. By those measurements, say experts, more than half the adult population could be considered functionally illiterate, depending on the task.

Larry Mikulecky, a professor at Indiana University's education school, says the number of functional illiterates probably will continue to rise. He explains: "Illiterate high-school graduates are only the tip of an iceberg that includes auto mechanics unable to comprehend repair manuals, bureaucrats unable to follow written policy changes, technicians unable to read and understand safety precautions for oil pipelines or nuclear power plants, and anyone else who has found the literacy demands of a job outstripping his or her abilities."

The most recent major study of illiteracy, the Adult Performance Level Project at the University of Texas, surveyed adults nationwide and found that 20 percent could not interpret a bus schedule, understand a printed explanation of finance charges or address a letter so that it would reach its destination.

The problems of illiteracy are felt most widely among minorities. Fifty-six percent of Hispanics in this country are considered functionally illiterate, as are 44 percent of blacks, compared with 16 percent of whites. Women are



more likely to be illiterate than men, and a higher proportion of illiterates are likely to be residents of rural areas. Poverty usually accompanies illiteracy. Forty percent of adults with incomes under \$5,000 are functionally incompetent, compared with only 8 percent of adults with incomes above \$15,000.

**Trouble on the job.** Persons unequipped with basic skills are at a constant disadvantage in the job market, particularly in a troubled economy. The least educated are the last to be hired and the first to be fired.

Many employers say they simply cannot afford to hire nonreaders. An official of Amtrak in Chicago points to a food-service worker who was on the verge of being disciplined for burning a number of roasts so badly that they had to be thrown away. "It turned out he had not been able to read the recipe and so had not prepared the food at the proper oven temperature," the official says. Amtrak decided the employe had not been willfully neglectful and arranged for him to take remedial reading classes.

More and more "educated" people also are failing to measure up to minimal standards. Academic performance across a wide spectrum has declined to the point where educators frequently refer to "illiteracy" in math, science and languages. A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching warned that "civic illiteracy" threatens the U.S. as "technocrats" increasingly take over public-policy debates, use language most citizens do not understand and "confuse rather than clarify issues."

"In 1979, millions of Americans sat uneasily in front of their television sets as the Three Mile Island crisis unfolded, listening to strange talk about 'rems' and 'cold shutdowns' in what sounded like a foreign language," the report noted. "The truth is, it was a foreign language."

Unless Americans find better ways to educate themselves as citizens, the report concluded, the nation runs the risk of drifting unwittingly into "a new kind of dark age—a time when small cadres of specialists will control knowledge and thus control the decision-making process."

### Why Literacy Is Declining

In a cross-country survey of English teaching in U.S. classrooms, Arn and Charlene Tibbetts reported on a teacher who could not write properly. "At college, I just put commas where I felt they ought to go. I teach sentences by the way they sound to me," she explained.

"No wonder illiteracy is catching," observed the reporters, professors at the University of Illinois and co-authors of the book *What's Happening to American English?* "One can pass it around in society like a virus. That teacher was a carrier and disseminator. From her, students caught the

malignant sentence fragment, the chronic incoherency and the incurable dangling modifier."

Thousands of such teachers are often cited for contributing to the drop in literacy standards. In turn, many educators blame television, social permissiveness and family background for disparities in academic performance. High rates of television viewing from an early age can make students passive in school and can produce a "video literacy" that does not respond well to printed text. Victor Walling, senior strategies analyst at SRI International, a California management-consulting firm, says English prose will increasingly be marked by short sentences, monosyllabic words and streamlined symbols that do not have to be read. "We'll move back toward hieroglyphics, to a combination of oral language heard on the airwaves, written language and pictures on a computer screen," says Walling. "We already see symbols taking the place of words on road signs, restrooms and TV commercials."

But most analyses of the literacy crisis hold that better teaching is the key to overcoming the habits of the TV generation and improving the way Americans communicate and think. Says Dean C. Corrigan, head of Texas A&M University's education school: "Once you get kids in school, you have to provide some quality education. The key to that is good teachers. If we don't do something about that, the illiteracy problem is not going to be solved."

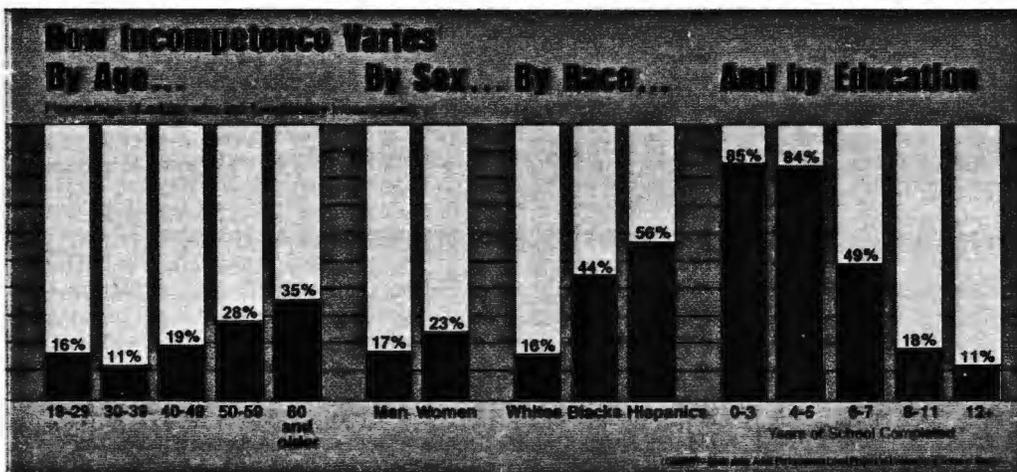
One of the most perplexing problems is that undergraduates who choose teaching careers are often among the least talented academically. Last year, education majors scored an average of 391 on the verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test—33 points below all others taking the test and among the lowest in any academic field.

Baylor University's DeBakey believes there will be little improvement in teacher quality until teaching is restored to a position of esteem and there are considerable increases in salary. "We pay teachers less than meatpackers, less than garbage collectors in many cities," she says. "How do we expect to attract top-quality teachers when they can get a better-paying job in private industry? If our society wants its young people to read and write skillfully, we must elevate literacy to a position of esteem."

**Back to basics.** By the time students reach college, increasing numbers have to take "developmental studies," a euphemism for remedial work. At the University of Missouri at St. Louis, half the freshmen are placed in a remedial course. Forty-two percent of Ohio State's freshmen had to take remedial English or math, at a total cost of between 10 and 12 million dollars. One reason for the trend: About 80 percent of U.S. colleges accept everyone who applies—in effect, an open-enrollment policy. Comments Diane Ravitch, an educational historian at Columbia University:

"What we have is an inexorable push toward lower and lower requirements to remain in college, because the colleges have gotten themselves tied into a pork-barrel approach to education, just to keep the seats filled."

Another reason cited for the drop in literacy is a decline in standards for conversation, personal-letter writing and literature. The outpourings of advertisers, bureaucrats and computer experts are widely faulted for errors and imprecision. One recent national ad,



for example, extolled a restaurant chain with the jingle: "Ain't no reason to go anyplace else." Another new slogan: "Everybody deserves a chance to make it on their own."

Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, says: "We speak increasingly in telegraphic prose and shorthand. Extended conversation is no longer essential. What we have are things like 'getting it together' and 'wow'—words that have no inner content. Occasions when a person speaks in complete sentences are few." Botstein warns that if such truncated speech continues to spread, Americans "could become illiterate in their native tongue."

### Combatting the Problem

The nation's attack on illiteracy is strewn with unsuccessful efforts. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson's Adult Basic Education program promised to end the "inability to get or retain employment" among the poorly educated. In 1971, the federal Right to Read program promised to wipe out illiteracy in a decade. A new directory published by the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Contact Center in Lincoln, Nebr., entitled *Reducing Functional Illiteracy: A National Guide to Facilities and Services*, lists more

## Youth: "An Emphasis on Shallow And Superficial Opinions"

*In one of the most devastating evaluations of American literacy to date, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally supported research organization, reported last year on the verbal and analytical abilities of 106,000 U.S. schoolchildren, ages 9, 13 and 17. Following are excerpts of the report, entitled "Reading, Thinking and Writing":*

"Teenagers read little for their own enjoyment, spend more time watching television than they spend reading, do not read for long periods of time and prefer movies to books. About 10 percent remain unable to read even simple materials. . . .

"Students seem satisfied with their initial interpretations of what they have read and seem genuinely puzzled at requests to explain or defend their points of view.

"Few students could provide more than superficial responses to such tasks, and even the better responses showed little evidence of well developed problem-solving strategies or critical-thinking skills. . . .

"Between 1970 and 1980, both 13 and 17-year-olds became less likely to try to interpret what they read and more likely to simply make unexplained value judgments about it. One way of characterizing the change during the '70s is to say that 17-year-olds' papers became somewhat more like 13-year-olds' papers. The end result is an emphasis on shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoned and disciplined thought. . . .

"Many students believe they will emerge from school into an electronic world that will require little reading and less writing. Nothing could be further from the truth. In a world overloaded with information, both a business and a personal advantage will go to those individuals who can sort the wheat from the chaff, the important information from the trivial. A society in which the habits of disciplined reading, analysis, interpretation and discourse are not sufficiently cultivated has much to fear."

than 2,600 public and private programs in the United States. By the end of the 1970s, federal programs had reached less than 5 percent of the target population of roughly 56 million Americans in need of basic literacy skills, according to a major Ford Foundation study. At the same time, as joblessness rises and federal funding for adult-education programs is scheduled to be cut by half, demand for literacy skills has never been greater.

"Each and every day we are doing what we can, but it seems like a futile battle against overwhelming odds," says Vyvyan Harding, director of Literacy Services of Wisconsin, which provides reading tutors to 2,600 adults a year. "I've never seen so many nonreading adults in my life."

At Houston Community College in Texas, Earlene Leverett, coordinator for the adult-basic-skills program, says people wanting to improve their skills swamped the center after the economy turned down. Now, 350 are enrolled and 120 more are on waiting lists. "There is not a day that passes that people are not trying to get into the program," she says.

No matter what else is done, scholars are becoming convinced that the basic responsibility for reversing the literacy decline lies with the schools. Moreover, there are signs the schools are responding to the challenge.

Example: In California, the board of admissions of the state's huge public higher-education system sent a letter in January to the parents of all eighth graders in the state. It read: "Your son or daughter should be expected to enroll in an English class every semester of every year, and most students should be taking a math class every semester." The reason: State colleges and universities plan to tighten sharply their admissions standards in 1984.

In New York City, a volunteer-tutor program brings 15,000 adults to schools to work with deficient readers. In 1981, citywide reading-test scores rose for the first time in many years. Marnie Steyer, director of the tutor program at Park West High School on the city's West Side, says students are on their own to get to the sessions. "They bring themselves here, and all their classmates know why they are not in class, she says. "They see up in Room 470 with the 'dummies.' That takes guts."

**An innovation.** One of the most inventive ideas has been tried in Florida, where University of Miami students tutored illiterate city pupils and got academic credit for the work. Norman Manasa, founder of the project, is working to set up a similar program in Washington, D.C., and says it can work in any city by drawing on local-college undergraduates. "The students create wealth by transferring literacy to a group that desperately needs it," says Manasa. "At the same time, they experience the magic of teaching someone to read and write. The spinoff effects in the community are all positive, because it helps create wealth rather than consuming it."

Jonathan Kozol, author of *Prisoners of Silence*, a book about adult illiteracy in the U.S., has called for a campaign that would enlist large cadres of volunteers to bring basic skills to all Americans. Kozol concludes: "Until we come to terms with the catastrophe in our own urban ghettos and our rural slums, there does not seem much reason to expect that other nations will, or ought to, seek out our advice."

Even in the world's most advanced nation, illiteracy will remain a blight for the immediate future. But experts point with hope to rising scores on minimum-competency tests in lower grades in many schools, and a renewed desire by educators and parents to remedy the problems. That raises prospects that America's vast educational system eventually will be able to teach all citizens how to fill out a job application, balance a checkbook, write a letter—and, perhaps, much more. □

By STANLEY N. WELLBORN with the magazine's domestic bureaus