



ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
FOR WOMEN:

A Model  
for Policy Development

by  
Dorothy MacKeracher,  
et al.

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## FORWARD

In late December a group of C.C.L.O.W. members agreed to work together to learn about the process of developing policy. We worked from December through to early April, and our collective efforts produced this report.

We feel that the work we have done is of interest to all those concerned with learning opportunities for women. We chose to work on issues related to the disadvantages experienced by functionally illiterate or undereducated women; but in many cases, the policies we developed could just as easily be applied to all women desirous of furthering their education.

The report we are submitting for your consideration is long and tends to be overwhelming at first glance. It should be read one part at a time and not all at once. For your convenience we have also provided:

1. A summary listing of the ten issues we discussed, each relating to the main topic of the undereducated woman, and of the policy recommendations which arise from each issue. We believe that these policies are important for C.C.L.O.W. to consider as a basis for future activities. The recommendations are tentative and require further discussion and refinement. We invite you to actively enter into this process. Explicit background material on each issue is to be found in the main body of the report.
2. An outline of the process we used to guide our activities in developing the policies. This process could be used by any group seeking to develop its own policy in this or any other area of concern. We invite you to try it for yourself. We also invite you to check conditions relating to undereducated women in your own area and to compare them to the "national average".
3. Some of the background material we gathered and thought would be of interest to others. This material is presented in five appendices at the end of the report.

We hope you will find time to read the report in detail, and thereby come to the same understanding we came to about the difficulties involved in being an undereducated woman in today's society.

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## Summary of Issues and Recommendations

### Issue I : Public policy

Public policy statements and formal legislation do not explicitly provide for basic education as the right of every adult living in Canada. The policies and legislation which do exist are: (a) permissive rather than obligatory and (b) implicit rather than explicit. The result is that adult basic education services are generally provided as voluntary services, as social welfare services, as remedial services, rather than as an integrated part of other adult education services.

### Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. believes that every woman has the right to an education which will enable her to participate effectively in society, to develop her full potential as a human being, to strengthen her sense of self-worth, and to contribute in positive ways to her community and family groups.

C.C.L.O.W. believes that those women who, by virtue of their lack of fundamental education of language skills, can be described as educationally disadvantaged, are a top priority in determining the development of educational resources.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop recommendations for legislative change: at the national level for the purpose of dealing with federal policies and at the provincial level for the purpose of dealing with provincial and municipal policies.

C.C.L.O.W. will work cooperatively with other special interest groups in developing recommendations for integrated policy in the field of adult basic education. Such groups might include: the Movement for Canadian Literacy; Teachers of English as a Second Language; and the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

### Issue II : Public and personal goals

The goals, values and purposes of adult basic education programs and services are often unclear, incongruent and only implied through programming and funding decisions. Those goals held by service-providers are often quite dissimilar to those held by participants. Goals and values for women are often different from those for men and this results in inequities within the system.

### Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will support policies and programs in adult basic education services for women which are designed to enhance all alternative goals and provide a wide variety of choices in process and content.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to various levels of government related to the clarification and integration of coherent goals for

adult basic education programs for women.

C.C.L.O.W. will encourage and support service-providers in developing and articulating specific goals for adult basic education programs for women.

Issue III : Financial support and individual participants

Women who require adult basic education programs often have great difficulty finding financial assistance to support them while in such programs. This assistance might take the form of a direct grant, loan, or bursary or of an indirect service such as child care or transportation.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will monitor the process by which financial assistance is provided to women for adult basic education services.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations based on a comprehensive program to provide financial assistance on the basis of educational need to the various levels of government.

C.C.L.O.W. will maintain an up-to-date data file on financial subsidy programs for women planning to attend adult basic education programs at the provincial level.

C.C.L.O.W. will support financial assistance programs to women requiring adult basic education services in addition to supporting an extension of learning programs in this area.

Issue IV : Funding and service-providers

Funds provided to those who deliver adult basic education programs are generally provided on an ad hoc, limited, short-term basis which is peripheral to the major adult education services; rather than as committed funding for a lengthy period of time or as an integrated aspect of all adult education services. This means that: (a) adult basic education services are always in danger of being cut-back in times requiring economic restraint; (b) that service-providers who are really committed to the value of adult basic education may be required to spend far too much time and energy obtaining secured funding for even one year ahead; and (c) adult basic education services have a tendency to become voluntary, "good-will", peripheral services of the provider or to be staffed largely with volunteer personnel.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to the various levels of government regarding the establishment of funding to adult basic education programs on a basis of educational need and long-term development and

planning.

C.C.L.O.W. will encourage educational bodies to develop comprehensive and integrated plans for funding adult and adult basic education services.

C.C.L.O.W. believes that the provision of adult basic education services should be an obligatory function of educational service- providers based on local need and literacy rates, but an optional activity for undereducated women.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to the various levels of government regarding the development of cost-sharing programs to provide learning opportunities and support services for undereducated women.

#### Issue V : Information dissemination

The availability of information, its form and eventual dissemination about all aspects of adults' basic education is inadequate, often not understandable or usable by the undereducated woman. Free access to information is not a right in Canada.

#### Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W., at the local level, will develop and maintain an information file for the use of educators and those counseling women about adult basic education services.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to the appropriate public bodies with regard to funding local counselling, information and referral services.

#### Issue VI: Physical facilities

Adult basic education programs are often provided in inadequate surroundings with second-hand furniture and resources. The physical environment appears to be a low priority in the budgeting for these programs.

#### Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to the various service-providers in regard to the provision of capital funding for facilities and resources for adult basic education programs.

#### Issue VII: Resource material

Resource material used in adult basic education programs does not reflect the needs and life experiences of a Canadian woman. The material more often reflects: the values of other countries, predominantly the United States; middle

class values and life styles; and stereotyped sexist attitudes about women.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will form a working relationship with other groups interested in educational publishing to assist in and encourage the development and publication of learning resources designed especially for Canadian women for use in adult basic education programs.

Issue VIII: Training for service-providers

Many service-providers, particularly teachers and administrators who are directly responsible for adult basic education programs, have received little or no training in adult education techniques. Often, their lack of awareness of the development and learning principles related specifically to adults and of how best to apply these in a wide variety of situations means that their efforts and good intentions miss the mark and the learner is not helped and often hindered.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will support and encourage the development of training opportunities for teachers and administrators in adult basic education programs.

Issue IX : Attitudes of learners and service-providers

The attitudes of adult basic education learners and potential learners about themselves and learning, and the attitudes of some service-providers about adult basic education learners and the services they require, are often mutually reinforcing and negative.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will work toward increasing the awareness of those who provide adult basic education services to women about the attitudes and organizational structures and processes which create barriers to undereducated women wishing to enter such programs.

Issue X: Outreach and support services

There are two critical stages to the successful learning experience for a woman. These are: (a) the point at which the woman is seeking information about and admission to a learning program and the educational institution is reaching out to make its programs accessible to that woman; and (b) the point at which the woman enters the learning program itself as a fully registered learner. The first requires an interface between the woman and the personnel, structures and practices of the educational administration. It involves the outreach functions of the institution and the effectiveness of the functions will



affect both accessibility and barriers to learning opportunities. The second requires an interface between the woman, the teacher and other students, and between the woman and her perceptions of herself as a functioning person in the world in general and in the learning situation in particular. It involves the support functions of the institution and the effectiveness of these functions will affect the success or failure of individual women.

Recommendations:

C.C.L.O.W. will support and encourage educational institutions to develop better outreach and support functions for women in adult basic education services.

C.C.L.O.W. will develop and make recommendations to specific educational institutions about the barriers created by their outreach services for undereducated women and about deficiencies in the support functions provided in conjunction with adult basic education programs.

## Summer of process used by sub-committee

### December (one meeting)

We decided to learn about policy formation by going through the process of developing policy as part of a group learning activity.

We agreed to work as a committee with Dorothy MacKeracher acting as a consultant for the process and for the research and writing. At this time we agreed that all members should contribute actively as participants and learners.

We agreed to work according to a specific plan of action on a policy area to be decided on by the committee.

Our preliminary discussion tended to wander in ever-widening circles, none of which led anywhere or seemed appropriate to the learning process we wished to experience. Most were too complicated for the time we had to complete the project.

### January (two meetings)

We agreed to focus on specific concerns related to various types of undereducated women. We agreed to this concern (a) to reduce the discussion and confine it to one topic and (b) to provide a reasonably manageable topic.

Next we generated as many concerns, ideas, and issues as we could about adult basic education (a.b.e.) for women by brainstorming our answers to a series of questions. Almost any set of questions would have been acceptable as long as they focused on the topic under discussion. The questions we answered were:

- what does a.b.e. include?
- what does a.b.e. not include?
- what do we know about a.b.e.?
- what opinions do we hold?
- what are some things we don't know about a.b.e.?
- what does the literature say about a.b.e.?

Some of the ideas generated in response to the fourth question were ...

- used as a cooling-out period
- partly to discourage women
- one of several ways to enter occupational skill training
- but not the only way
- courses have a value in themselves
- value is partly in certificate function
- brings money into CAAT's
- a way to compensate for declining enrolments

- a way to re-cycle unemployed teachers
- used as a badge of respectability
- as a credential for measuring intelligence
- used as a way to control entrance to jobs
- is not the same as traditional K - 13 system
- disconnected from other forms of learning and education
- content often irrelevant to women's needs and experiences

These ideas were then clustered into those which seemed to go together to yield a second list of consolidated and extended ideas. As this second list developed we added more ideas to our original list. This second list included such statements as...

- the rights and responsibilities of individuals and of societal agencies are not clearly defined
- there is no cohesive planning or policy related to a.b.e. programs within the various levels of government
- a.b.e. is not perceived as a right
- Canada has no overall policy or tradition related to education for the development of an informed electorate
- different levels of government sponsor different types of a.b.c programs
- a.b.e. programs for women are not valued as an economic necessity
- a.b.e. programs are valued for social control and political education
- a.b.e. programs are often described as "terminal"
- participants may use a.b.e. programs to certify their intelligence, competence and respectability as well as to obtain a job
- goals society holds for a.b.e. programs are implied through their practices.

We then went back through the second list and numbered, with the same number, all those which seemed similar or related to the same issue. When all the statements with the same number were relisted together we found we had distinguished twelve major areas of concern. These were ...

1. Public policy or lack of it
2. Financial support to the learner
3. Funding to the service-provider
4. Goals of a.b.e. programs
5. Attitudes
6. Information
7. Outreach and support services
8. Physical facilities
9. Resource material
10. A.b.e. learning processes
11. Teacher training
12. Profile of a.b.e. participants

This list was eventually reordered; topic 11 was dropped; and topic 12 became part of the preliminary definition of the problem.

During these steps of the process all of us were highly enthusiastic and participated extensively. This stage takes considerable time if it is to be adequately completed.

### February (two meetings)

For each topic area we developed a list of questions we wanted to have answered; the types and sources of information which might answer those questions; where the information might be found; and which committee member would be responsible for gathering which information. eg. for topic 1, we used library material from Unesco, OECD, Manpower, and several provinces; for topic 5, one member taped conversations with three women in BTSD programs; for topic 9, we plundered the resource files of everyone we knew.

This material was assembled and discussed. Some information was raw data which had to be converted into percentages; some was print material, some was in the form of an oral report of a personal conversation. Everything was used somewhere.

During this step, the energy level of committee members declined considerably. Several reasons for this are possible

1. The time of year
2. We allowed more time than was necessary and everyone got involved in other projects. This stage actually takes less time than at first appears necessary.
3. We have a tendency to not want to carry out this type of activity. One hidden implication is that we really don't want to have our most cherished opinions confused by facts.
4. Taking a hard look at reality is sometimes very depressing.

### March (one meeting plus one aborted)

The background material was assembled by Dorothy and reduced (or expanded) to the basic facts. Most of these were general in focus rather than relating directly to women. Therefore we developed some ways to understand how the basic facts related to women and about the problems arising from this relationship.

This step requires extensive discussion. In some cases the implications arising from the facts are not clear. For example, the data relating to functionally illiterate

women registered in vocational programs (Appendix A).

The discussions also indicated some major holes in our information. This was retrieved as the spaces were discovered.

#### April (one meeting)

We developed recommendations which seemed to be appropriate given the background material and our over-riding concern for improving the learning opportunities of undereducated women.

The overall process we used follows a gestalt model for problem-solving or learning. The theoretical stages of this model are...

1. Exploration of the whole problem
2. Discriminate whole problem into its component parts
3. Focus on each component part
  - gather information relevant to each part
  - extend awareness and understanding of each part
4. Look for relationships and patterns
  - among parts
  - between parts and the whole
  - develop generalized inferences about these patterns
5. Re-assemble the whole problem using new awareness, understanding and inferences
6. Develop tentative plans to resolve problem
7. Carry out plans and repeat process

This model is cyclical and hierarchical in that, while we could have returned to a previous step if that had seemed appropriate, skipping one step would have produced an unsatisfactory outcome. This step-by-step solution to problems tends to frustrate action-oriented individuals but is really one of the few ways that a group of people can come to a satisfactory agreement on what the problem really is, and how best to solve it as a group. We invite you to try with your own group.

## Defining the Problem

The undereducated adult in Canada is a phenomenon which has always existed, the result of many different factors. With the advent of free, compulsory (to age 14) elementary and secondary education, it was assumed that the undereducated adult would soon vanish and that Canadian society would be blessed with universal literacy. This thinking ignored the following:

- many new immigrants to Canada are undereducated in their own countries.
- many immigrants come from countries in which compulsory education extends only to grade 5.
- many older adults received a substandard education before compulsory education was extended to its present level.
- many adults dropped out of school after age 14 without any real grasp of the fundamental skills.
- many adults complete secondary school without having obtained a practical working form of the fundamental skills.
- adults who do not use their fundamental skills regularly, tend to become less proficient over time.

Women are particularly prone to be affected by the first and the last two of these factors. It should also be noted, in passing, that three out of four illiterate adults were born in Canada.

The undereducated woman is at a far greater disadvantage in relation to current learning opportunities than either the educated woman or the undereducated man. An educated woman will have as obstacles to entry into learning opportunities:

- finding financial support.
- finding appropriate support services. eg. child care and transportation.
- finding appropriate learning opportunities. Since we can assume that admission criteria will not be a major problem, this selection can be made from among all available programs.
- overcoming stereotypic attitudes about what a woman should be learning and how a woman should be using her time, money and energy.
- overcoming her (potential) image of herself as inadequate to operate in the larger society or in post-secondary educational institutions.
- dealing with conflicting roles, time pressures, guilt and family feelings.

An undereducated man will have as obstacles to entry into learning opportunities:

- finding financial support
- finding appropriate learning opportunities from among a restricted number; restricted as to type and admission criteria
- overcoming stereotypic attitudes about undereducated persons

- overcoming his (potential) image of himself as an inadequate learner.

An undereducated woman will have as obstacles to entry into learning opportunities all items on both previous lists plus:

- all support services must last twice as long as those required for an educated woman. That is, financial assistance, child care and transportation subsidies must last for the period of time spent acquiring the fundamental skills and/or credentials, plus the period of time in further learning programs. Therefore, her support needs will cost at least twice as much as those required by her educated sister.
- support services for undereducated women are more expensive than those for undereducated men since the former may require both child care and transportation, while the latter probably only require transportation.
- the prevailing stereotypic attitudes toward women engaging in activities outside the home; toward women as "secondary" or "marginal" members of the labour force who don't deserve further training because of their low level of real contribution; and toward undereducated adults as being failures, will work together to place the undereducated woman at the lowest priority levels in terms of service provision and financial assistance.

In this paper we have taken the position that undereducated women are at a special disadvantage vis-à-vis the educational system; and that CLOW needs to pay special attention to the needs and problems of this group and to develop policy in this area.

## Defining the Terms

An undereducated woman can be undereducated in a number of ways: she can have no reading or writing skills; be a poor reader or speller; be unable to add or subtract; be unable to speak fluent French or English; be unable to carry out the tasks we normally associate with citizenship, with the home and family, and with the work place. In general, we have taken the term "educated" to mean to be able to communicate and compute with some degree of skill as established by the unique demands of the society in which a woman lives, to be able to perform these skills without assistance from other persons, and to be able to carry out the tasks associated with citizenship and community participation.

Any definition of "literate" or "educated" should also imply a method for assessing both individuals and the general society in those terms. There are three basic ways for doing this:

1. By defining literacy (or illiteracy) as being equivalent to a certain grade level or completed years of schooling. In Canada, the various governments officially define "basic illiterates" as persons with less than five years of schooling. The Canadian Association for Adult Education and the Movement for Canadian Literacy strongly suggest that truly "functional literacy" is not reached until completion of grade 8 and that a "functional illiterate" should be thought of as any person with less than grade 9 in schooling, (i.e. grade 8 or less). As society becomes more and more technological in nature and we have more and more to communicate about, even this level will become inadequate. In fact, for all practical purposes, "employment literacy" requires a minimum of grade 10, with grade 12 preferred.

This method yields a "literacy rate" which is expressed as a percentage of the adult population 15 years of age and over and two "illiteracy" rates, one for basic illiteracy and one for functional illiteracy. Note that the functional illiteracy rate often includes those who are basic illiterates and care should be exercised in reading statistical material. Note also that this method does not take into account, those skills and abilities acquired outside the formal educational system or through life experiences.

2. By defining specific behavioral objectives which an adult must be able to perform to be classed as literate. For example, the Louis Harris Survey of U.S. Citizens selected as behavioral objectives which would indicate literacy: reading and replying to classified advertisements for employment and housing; reading and completion of various application forms such as for a driver's license, for unemployment insurance, for public assistance, for census purposes, etc.; and following printed instructions for making a long distance telephone call.

This method requires lengthily testing and a sampling process both of which are prone to error. It generally yields a literacy rate equal to or



slightly above that obtained through the first method.

3. By defining general functions or normative behavior which an adult must be able to perform with some degree of competence and independence in order to be successful in various basic roles. For example, the U.S. Office of Education defines literacy as "the ability to hold a decent job, to support self and family, and to lead a life of dignity and pride".

This method is open to a wide variety of interpretations both by adults about themselves and by authorities about adults in general. It is used to yield almost any literacy rate which seems appropriate to the situation and which meets the needs of the group doing the defining.

For the purposes of this paper we have had to rely solely on census data. Literacy rates reported, therefore, are of the first type. Information of the second type is not generally available in Canada. We are currently getting data on the literacy levels of secondary school graduates entering post-secondary institutions, but this is a special definition of "literacy" and should not be viewed as a generalizable rate. This data does tell us something about the general success of the elementary-secondary education system, which could be utilized in arguing in favor of learning opportunities for undereducated adults.

We have chosen to use the term "adult basic education" as a term covering a wide variety of learning opportunities, all of which provide some type of basic skills to adults who wish to learn them. By this definition, adult basic education programs include such learning opportunities as:

- basic literacy programs
- adult day schools
- academic upgrading
- right to read programs
- English or French as a second language programs
- Manpower training which is preparatory to occupational skill training such as BTSD, BJRT, WAP, etc.
- life skills programs; among others

We have chosen to use the term "service-provider" to include any governmental bodies and agencies, educational institutions and agencies, social agencies, administrators, teachers, tutors, etc., who are involved in delivering the service to the adult learner. Where this term requires refinement, we have specified the actual service-provider.

## Parameters of the Problem

Attached to this paper (see Appendix A) is a series of statistical tables and graphs, each with an explanatory comment, which outlines the extent of functional illiteracy in Canada and some of the basic characteristics of undereducated women. The data are all taken from Census of Canada figures. Where possible we have included that from both 1971 and 1976. In those cases where the 1976 data are missing, the material is not yet available or the relevant questions were not asked on the census form.

In summary, the tables yield the following generalized facts:

- men are, in general, more likely to be functionally illiterate than women
- urban women are more likely to be functionally illiterate than urban men; while rural women are less likely to be functionally illiterate than rural men.
- the rate of functional illiteracy is higher in rural areas than in urban areas.
- The rate of functional illiteracy increases as age increases.
- 75% of women who are basic illiterates and 65% of those who are functional illiterates are 45 years and over in age. This still leaves 104 000 women who are basic illiterates and 620 000 women who are functional illiterates all of whom are under 45 years of age (101 000 and 646 000 respectively for men under 45 years of age).
- none of these figures takes into account the current graduates from secondary schools who, at least in the judgment of their post-secondary instructors, are incapable of functional reading, writing and computing.
- the rate of functional illiteracy has declined in the past decade, but the rate at which this decline is occurring appears to be slowing.
- among the immigrant population, women are more likely to be both basic and functional illiterates than men.
- the rate of functional illiteracy is highest in Newfoundland and New Brunswick and lowest in Alberta and British Columbia
- those who are functionally illiterate are less likely to be attending school full-time than those who are literate.
- illiterate women are less likely to be attending school than illiterate men.
- women in general are less likely to be attending school full-time than men, but they are increasingly more likely to be attending part-time. Figures for part-time attendance of those who are functional illiterates is not available.

- labour force participation rates for women increase with increased schooling levels. Unemployment rates are inconsistent, but mostly show a decrease with increases in schooling.
- women earn, on the average, less than half of what men earn. Illiterate women earn less than half of what illiterate men earn and about 80% of what the average woman earns.
- women earn less than men in every occupational group. Illiterate women earn less than illiterate men in every occupational group.
- women who work full-time earn approximately the same amount as men who work part-time except for those women who work more than 48 weeks (11 months). These full-time women earn more than part-time men.
- women who work part-time earn about 40% of what full-time women earn; men who work part-time earn about 33% of what full-time men earn.
- Women tend to cluster in two major occupational groups: service and clerical occupations. There is no corresponding occupational "ghetto" for men.
- illiterate women tend to cluster in two major occupational groups: service and assembling occupations. Illiterate men tend to cluster in three major occupational groups: service, agricultural and construction occupations.
- three-quarters of women who are registered in vocational courses are taking one of four courses: typing & shorthand; nursing; teaching; and hairdressing.
- three-quarters of men who are registered in vocational courses are taking one of ten courses: auto mechanics; electrical equipment repair; tool & die-making; technological; welding; radio, T.V. & electronic equipment repair; accounting & auditing; drafting; carpentry; and the pipe trades.
- for illiterate women, there are 5 courses in which more than 10% of registered women have grade 8 or less schooling: hairdressing; garment making & repair; power sewing; merchandising; and commercial cooking.
- for illiterate men, there are 15 courses in which more than 10% of registered men have grade 8 or less schooling.
- 66% of female earners and 31% of male earners can be counted in the low income group (i.e. in 1971 less than \$4 000).
- 80% of female earners with grade 8 or less schooling and 40% of male

male earners with grade 8 or less schooling were in the low income group

- increased schooling does not provide as great an economic benefit for women as it provides for men.
- average family income for female-headed families was only 56% as high as the income for all families.
- the proportion of families with low income declines as schooling level of the head increases. However, for female-headed families, the likelihood of the family having a low income is greater than it is for all families at all schooling levels.
- as the schooling level of a woman increases, the birth rate decreases.

Other sources tiled the following general information about functionally literate adults:

"A number of recent studies have related health standards to a selection of social classifiers (age, sex, education, etc.). For nations in the Western Hemisphere, improved life-expectancy has depended far less on medical advances than on the rise in the literacy rate. A recent U. S. study suggests that education is a better investment than medical science for reducing mortality...

"It is one of those sociological ironies that the middle and upper income; groups benefit most from medicare programs. Being on the average better educated and better informed, they are equipped to take full advantage of such social services...

"There is little doubt that public responsibility and participation increases with the amount of schooling Both the crime rate and the incidence of violent crime decreases as the amount of schooling increases There is a positive correlation between level of concern for the environment and the amount of schooling." (1)

Factors which tend to cluster with low levels of formal schooling are: (2)

- diminished ability to communicate with others
- increase use of governmental social services "
- decreased participation in parent-school activities

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(1.) J. S. Kirkaldy and D. M. Black, "Social reporting and educational planning: A feasibility study". Prepared for the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario (COPSE). (Toronto: Ontario Government Bookstore, 1972) p.112

(2.) D. L. Boggs and others, "Ohio citizens eligible for Adult Basic Education". Paper presented to the Adult Education Research Conference, San Antonio, Texas, 1978. Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE), Planning Division, Who knows? Report of the Canada Newstart Program. (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973).

- diminished self-confidence
- diminished feelings of job security
- increased reliance on government transfer payments as major income
- lower involvement in community activities
- diminished ability to recall what was read or heard
- low evaluation of own ability
- increased likelihood of being employed in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations or blue collar occupations

A recent report to the Correctional Service of Canada on female offenders shows that of those surveyed: (1)

- 64% would benefit from life skills programs
- 49% had requested vocational training programs
- 81% had requested permission to study in other educational programs: of these, 8% required basic education; 63% required secondary education; and 29% required post-secondary education.

These figures are roughly equivalent to those women under 25 years in the total population. However, women in the various correctional institutions are different in that they are not free to attend learning opportunities of

A recent report from Saskatchewan states that the average educational attainment level for adults in Northern Saskatchewan, a population which is composed largely of native people, was grade 3; that the drop-out rate from school was 50% by grade 8 and 96% by grade 12.

One further comment must be made about women and illiteracy. At the 1975 International Symposium on Literacy, Paulo Friere stated that: according to its particular structure, society shapes education in relation to the ends and interests of those in power. We tend to perceive education and learning opportunities for women as a process which will serve our needs and which will assist society to reach ideal goals; rather than perceiving it as an activity which is shaped by, reflects and perpetuates the realities of social, political and economic activities. Those who are most vulnerable to this process of shaping are those who are least advantage in terms of education and fundamental skills; and of this group, women are the most vulnerable. The reasons for this are to be found in the basic attitudes of society toward women and their "proper place" and in the fact that education of the lack of it, are major contributors to how a woman participates in her society.

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(1.) Report of the Joint Committee to Study Alternatives for the Housing of the Federal Female Offender, Policy and Planning Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, Ottawa, 1978.

There is a persistent and well-established relationship between literacy levels and.

- the birth rate ... decreases with an increase in the literacy rate of women
- the average number of children per family... decreases with an increase in the literacy rate of women
- the age of women at the time of first marriage ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate of women
- participation of women in the labour force ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate of women
- participation in and demand for social services ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate
- participation in and demand for educational services ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate
- participation in and demand for medical services ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate
- need for financial assistance from the government ... decreases with an increase in the literacy rate
- mortality rates ... decrease with an increase in the literacy rates
- demand for higher wages and equal wages ... increases with an increase in the literacy rate of women
- pool of unskilled labour ... decreases with an increase in the literacy rate
- minimum education required for employment ... increases with the literacy rate

There are clearly both benefits and set-backs when literacy rates increase. Since these changing conditions exist together, it is reasonable to assume that as one condition is viewed as a "problem" other variables which are more manageable will be altered to solve the problem. One of the more manageable variables is the literacy rate.

In a society in which we define low birth rates, low mortality rates and small families as socially desirable and economically necessary (eg. India) we would expect to find the various service-providers engaged in intensive literacy campaigns, particularly with women. At the point where increased literacy rates create pressure on the economic, social, educational and medical services which cannot be accommodated, we might expect to see a reduction in literacy

programs for all adults, and especially for women.

We might also see such things as:

- a shift in emphasis in adult basic education programs away from those designed to enhance employability and participation of the women in community activities outside the home and toward those designed to enhance family and child maintenance in community activities related to work inside the home.
- increasing incentives (social, educational, medical and/or economic) to women to encourage staying home to bear and rear children and increasing disincentives (social, education, medical and/or economic) to discourage women from entering the labour force.

It follows that in times of economic restraint, demands for increased adult basic education programs for women which lead to occupational training and employment are not likely to be heard. However, other demands might. And once a woman has learned to communicate and compute and carry out the tasks of citizenship, she has also increased her knowledge, ability and willingness to participate in all activities within her community.

## Issue I: Public policy

Public policy statements and formal legislation do not explicitly provide for basic education as the right of every adult living in Canada. The policies and legislation which do exist are: (a) permissive rather than obligatory and (b) implicit rather than explicit. The result is that adult basic education services are generally provided as voluntary services, as social welfare services, as remedial services, rather than as an integrated part of other adult education services.

### Background

1. The United Nations, through its International Bill of Human Rights, of which Canada was a signing party, has declared that:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of Peace. (Article 26)

2. The United States government, through Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1966 ("Adult Education Act"), and renewed in 1978, has consistently sought:

... to expand educational opportunity and encourage the establishment of programs of adult public education that will enable all adults to continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school and make available the means to secure training that will enable them to become more employable, productive, and responsible citizens. (Section 302)

The term "adult basic education" means adult education for adults whose inability to speak, read, or write the English language constituted a substantial impairment to their ability to get or retain employment commensurate with their real ability, which is designed to help eliminate such inability and raise the level of education of such individuals with a view to making them less likely to become dependent on others, to improving their ability to benefit from occupational training and otherwise increasing their opportunities for more productive and profitable employment, and to making them better able to meet their adult responsibilities. (Section 303)



The Adult Education Act provides funds for those states which develop plans for the establishment or expansion of adult basic education programs to be carried out by local educational agencies for the development of special projects for educating persons of limited English-speaking ability; for the establishment and operation of a clearinghouse on adult education; for the provision of adult basic education programs for elderly persons, Indians and refugees; for training teachers and tutors; for developing resource material; for research; and so on.

In 1974, Title VII of this Act outlined a National Reading Improvement Program and established a Right to Read Office which assumed the administration of funding and programming.

In 1978, Title XIII of this Act expanded, extended and revised the existing delivery system and broadened the outreach of the program. The emphasis of the program is now defined as providing adult basic education for those adults who are least educated and most in need of assistance; to those who lack the skills and knowledge needed to function minimally in day-to-day living (i.e. employment-related goals have been de-emphasized.). Funds are provided by the U.S. Congress to state-administered programs and services are delivered by local education agencies and public or private non-profit agencies, organizations and institutions.

3. European countries generally provide for adult basic education services through permissive legislation. One exception to this is Norway which recently passed legislation which places adult education and basic formal schooling on an equal footing. The underlying principle states that the school system is responsible for providing the same education to adults as it provides to youngsters. All education corresponding to normal juvenile education is financed through public funds. The official policy for subsidization gives priority to the groups with the greatest need. "If this would not be the case, participation in Adult Education could easily become a mere reflection of the economic power relations and the social stratification in society" (1.) The law on Adult Education provides for alternate provisions at all levels of school education (i.e. alternate to the regular child-oriented provision). Such provision is available for all adults who have not had such training and is considered equal in merit to the regular provision.

4. In Canada, the federal-provincial division of authority stipulates that education is a provincial matter. Officially there is no federal presence in the area of educational policy and the federal government behaves as if there were none. The OECD Report on Educational Policy in Canada described this as a "do-one-

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(1.) European Bureau of Adult Education, Adult education legislation in ten countries of Europe, "Notes and studies, Supplement 1976" (Amersfoort, The Netherlands: European Bureau of Adult Education, 1976), p. 87.

thing-as-if-it-were-something-else" attitude (1.) This report goes on to state that "In Canada today, as in all modern states, education is a right of each citizen, due to each citizen regardless of his place of residence, (2); but nowhere is this right specified.

A considerable number of federal policies do relate indirectly or implicitly to educational matters, and to the basic education of various groups of adults. The major portion of this indirect activity is the responsibility of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) which provides funds for three types of basic education, all related to eventual employment and economic stability: academic upgrading for those whose educational level is not high enough for entry to occupational training programs; work adjustment or life skills for those who have trouble holding a job; and language training for immigrants who need English or French to find and retain employment.

The Adult Occupational Training Act, passed in 1967 and since modified, funds the provinces which then provide educational programs to assist adults to gain the skills necessary to obtain employment or to improve their present economic capability. It rapidly became evident that many adults required basic education and language skills before they could take advantage of this occupational training. Therefore, Basic Training for Skill Development (BTSD) programs were developed to provide the basic education and Language Training programs were developed for those requiring language skills. A number of innovative programs were begun which enjoyed varied degrees of success. These included: Newstart; BLADE (Basic Literacy for Adult Development); EOW (Employment for Women); BEST (Basic Employment Skills Training); BJRT (Basic Job Readiness Training); INTO (Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations; among others. These were in addition to the basic academic upgrading at three levels: Level I for grades 1 - 6; Level II for grades 7 - 10; and Level III for grades 11 and 12; and to basic English/French Language Training. All these programs developed in response to needs rather than as an outcome of stated policy or legislation. In 1970, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Manpower, Dr. W. R. Dymond, stated that equity and stability as an objective of the department were secondary to the primary objective of facilitating economic growth. (3) In the years following 1970, the Department moved toward making equity and stability a major focus. By 1975, about 50% of all training funds were being used to assist adults at or below the poverty line, and 33% of all institutional training funds were going into BTSD programs, a proportion which was viewed as excessive in terms of the original

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(1). Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Reviews of national policies for education: Canada. (Paris: OECD, 1976), p. 89

(2). Ibid., p. 90

(3). The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, Report on Canada Manpower, An examination of the Manpower Division of the Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1975. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1976); p. 5

intent of the AOT Act.(1)

In 1976, the Manpower Division of the CEIC conducted an extensive internal review of all training programs and decided that the economic return on BTSD funds did not justify the expense.(2) Therefore, such funds have been frozen and will eventually be reduced and possibly eliminated. At the same time Manpower training funds have been shifted away from institutional training programs and into industrial training programs/and away from the eastern regions of high unemployment and toward the western regions of high economic growth. In combination with recent changes in Manpower training allowances and unemployment insurance benefits, it would appear that we can no longer look to Manpower to provide funds for adult basic education programs, particularly not to women who require extensive upgrading to reach the level required for their occupational goal. Manpower training allowances will be provided only to those requiring level II in upgrading and to those requiring level III in special circumstances; and to immigrants who have entered Canada as independent or nominated immigrants (i.e. this excludes those who enter as dependent immigrants or dependent spouses).

The CEIC sees the need for academic upgrading as a failure on the part of the provincial educational systems. The Senate Report suggests that "the persistence of this need on the present scale indicates that the division of federal and provincial responsibility for adult literacy programs should be re-examined" and goes on to recommend that "this situation be re-assessed and remedial action taken if necessary".(3) Nothing further appears to have happened to this recommendation.

Most provinces do not have explicit policies which are concerned with adult basic education in any comprehensive manner. Several acknowledge the special needs of Indian and Eskimo adults; and those with high concentrations of immigrant adults tend to fund ESL or FSL programs to some degree. Even the OECD Report could only discuss adult basic education and literacy in relation to native peoples and manpower programs.

British Columbia is presently working to correct this lack of policy. The Report of the Committee on Continuing and Community Education of 1978 identified adult basic education as an area of highest educational priority (and this in the province with the lowest overall rate of functional illiteracy). A recent discussion paper from the Ministry of Education states that:

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(1). Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Manpower Training Branch, "The Canada Manpower Training Program: A policy review, 1977". (Ottawa: CEIC, Manpower Training Branch, 1977), p.

(2). Senate Committee on National Finance, op. cit., pp. 81 and 82

(3).Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of British Columbia, Committee on Adult Basic Education, Discussion Paper 01/79, "Report of the Committee on Adult Basic Education". (Victoria, B.C.: Information Services, 1979).

Adult basic education as it presently exists in British Columbia is characterized by an ad hoc approach which resulted in uncertainty, insecurity, and inefficiency in the deployment and use of resources ... The principal recommendation of (this committee), therefore, is:

1. That Adult Basic Education be regarded as an integrated system which can aid in the amelioration of provincial problems in such areas as unemployment and social welfare.
2. That the definition and scope of Adult Basic Education be kept under review by the Ministry of Education so that changes in society are reflected in changed directions and emphasis for Adult Basic Education.
3. That the role of the Ministry of Education and other ministries with respect to Adult Basic Education be defined and reviewed periodically.
4. That the role of the institutional providers of Adult Basic Education be defined in relation to the Ministry of Education, in relation to each other, and in relation to other program activities in the institution.

If the British Columbia government adopts these policies, and that appears quite likely, this will be a first in Canada.

Québec is also in the process of developing policy for "analphabétisme et alphabétisme". A recent report by this title outlines the extent of the problem within the province. A seminar held in late 1978 on the topic of adult literacy was told by the Assistant Director General of the Adult Education Branch of the Ministry of Education (MEQ), Mr. R. Diamant, that: (1)

The question of universal literacy is one of the live issues at the MEQ, where work is going on at this very moment in an effort to define a policy of intervention for the benefit of underprivileged sectors... it seems to us, therefore, entirely logical to make literacy a priority issue at all levels, and to consider the unlettered among Québec's population a special clientèle deserving our urgent attention. In defining a policy of positive discrimination in favor of the disadvantaged sectors of our society, and particularly of the illiterate, we must see to it that universal literacy becomes an operational objective, a reality and no mere slogan.

Other provinces tend to provide funds for adult basic education programs through permissive legislation ("local school boards may provide services to adults" rather than "shall provide.. "); through funds to special demonstration projects on a limited time basis (with no promise for follow-up funding); through social-welfare programs (often aimed at reducing welfare rolls or changing unacceptable social

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( 1). Statement by Mr. R. Diamant, Assistant Director General, Adult Education Branch, Ministry of Education as reported in MEQNews, January 1979, p. 4

behaviour such as child abuse); through funding to libraries; through funding to voluntary organizations; and so on.

Municipal governments tend to operate on the same principles as the provinces, providing funds for adult basic education programs as a necessary part of other social or economic goals. The commitment of municipal governments tends to reflect the current elected representatives attitudes rather than any explicit policy. Most policies which do exist are both permissive and highly discretionary. Funds may be provided for certain educational activities but it is up to local governments to elect to make use of these funds. Further, access to programs and financial assistance tends to be the outcome of direct contact with a knowledgeable welfare worker who is aware of the educational possibilities available at this level and who sees her clients as being able to benefit from such programs.

Large metropolitan municipalities such as Metro Toronto tend to support adult basic education services through funding special projects implemented by boards of education, the Department of Social Services, local ethnic organizations, community colleges (funded through Manpower), and library boards. All these programs operate independently of each other and with minimal contact. Small urban areas such as Kingston, Ontario have had some success in developing co-operative programs in which all these agencies contribute in kind to the main program which supports both paid staff and volunteer tutors. Rural areas tend to receive adult basic education services through a strong community or continuing education division of a local educational institution. Examples of this can be found in the volunteer literacy tutoring program at Parkland Community College.

A final note on the subject comes from an article on illiteracy in Canada written by Dr. J. C. Cairns of the University of Guelph: (1)

The most extraordinary aspect of the Canadian illiteracy situation is not that it exists, since somewhat similar situations are found in most advanced industrialized societies, but that so little is being done about it ...

Most other literacy programs in Canada are provided by voluntary organizations such as Frontier College; by private agencies such as the Craig Reading Clinic (Orillia, Ontario) or through programs which are funded jointly by all three levels of government and by private donations such as the Focus on Change program of the Metro Toronto YWCA.

### Basic problems

1. Most governmental bodies and elected representatives appear to be unaware of the extent of the need for adult basic education services; of the difficulties created by the lack of fundamental skills which are presumed to have been acquired during elementary school education; and of how these difficulties are reflected in the need to provide a wide range of compensatory governmental services.

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(1). J. C. Cairns, "Adult functional illiteracy in Canada", Convergence, X:1, January 1977, pp. 43 - 51.

2. Those policies which do affect adult basic education services appear to be the result of a remedial approach to the situation rather than the result of a strong positive learning approach. The remedial approach assumes that adults requiring these services are failures who need to be rehabilitated rather than as adults who need to learn something.
3. Such policies as do exist tend to be permissive and/or implicit rather than obligatory and/or explicit. As a result adult basic education services are not integrated and have developed piecemeal over time.
4. Such policies as do exist do not indicate that adult basic education services are considered to be an integral part of all adult education services. Rather they appear to be a dysfunctional segment, belonging to neither the elementary-secondary system nor to the post-secondary system.
5. Such policies as do exist do not indicate who is to accept responsibility for the provision of such services: whether it is an individual or societal responsibility; a federal, provincial or municipal responsibility; or a private or public responsibility.
6. Such policies as do exist tend to assign blame to the individual illiterate as a failure rather than to the educational system.
7. There is little or no integration of policies at the federal, provincial and municipal levels or between levels.
8. This type of unintegrated, unspecified, permissive system tends to place women at a greater disadvantage, since the only unifying aspect of the entire field is the need of adult basic education services for economic purposes. Since women are already discriminated against in the economic system, it stands to reason that they will also be discriminated against in an educational system designed to support the economic system.

### Recommendations to CLOW

This committee recommends that the following policies be adopted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CLOW believes that every woman has the right to an education which will enable her to participate effectively in society, to develop her full potential as a human being, to strengthen her sense of self-worth, and to contribute in positive ways to her community and family groups.

CLOW believes that those women who, by virtue of their lack of fundamental

education or language skills, can be described as educationally disadvantaged are a top priority in determining the development of educational opportunities and the distribution of available educational resources.

CLOW will develop recommendations for legislative change: at the national level for the purpose of dealing with federal policies and at the provincial level for the purpose of dealing with provincial and municipal policies.

CLOW will work co-operatively with other special interest groups in developing recommendations for integrated policy in the field of adult basic education. Such groups might include: the Movement for Canadian Literacy; Teachers of English as a Second Language; and the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

Your additions or suggestions...

## Issue II: Public and personal goals

The goals, values and purposes of adult basic education programs and services are often unclear, incongruent and only implied through programming and funding decisions. Those goals held by service-providers are often quite dissimilar to those held by participants. Goals and values for women are often different from those for men and this results in inequities within the system.

### Background

In the available literature there appears to be a series of goals and purposes which are common to adult basic education programs in many countries. The order in which these are viewed as priorities is generally different for the service-providers and the participants. The order in which they are listed does not reflect any particular set of priorities.

1. Adult basic education programs are to provide remedial skills to those destined for occupational training programs; to improve the employment potential of participants; to enable them to reach the educational level for entry to an occupation; to enable them to improve their current status; or to provide them with greater job security (i.e. against potential lay-off because of inability to communicate or compute or lack of credentials). From the governmental view-point this goal tends to be expressed as: to increase the pool of trained workers; to cope with unemployment; or to provide an alternative to unemployment.

This goal is the major priority of many service-providers (40% of all governments surveyed in one Unesco study); but is regarded as a relatively low priority by participants in adult basic education programs (the range is from 14% to 35% in various studies) (1). The only groups of participants which consistently views this as a top priority are those in programs leading directly to occupational training programs (eg. BTSD, BJRT, etc.).

In terms of outcomes, this goal enjoys mixed success. If the participant begins at grade 7 of higher and only requires grade 10, she will probably be successful. If the participant is already employed and is looking for job security, she will probably be successful. To offset these gains, if the numbers of illiterate adults drops drastically, the available supply of undereducated, cheap, unskilled labour, a standard component of our current economic system, will be reduced and

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(1). See for example: J. Chabaud, The education and advancement of women. (Paris: Unesco, 1970)

D. L. Boggs and others, "Ohio citizens eligible for adult basic education". Paper presented to the Adult Education Research Conference, San Antonio, Texas, 1978.

E. Anderson and E. Woeller, "An adult basic education program in a community setting" in Teaching adult basic education: A program of videotapes and written material for teachers and administrators. A project sponsored by the Industrial Training Branch of the Province of Ontario; the Canada Department of Manpower and Immigration; the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; and the Ontario Education Communications Authority, undated.



is drastically increased, employers will simply raise the educational qualifications necessary for lower level jobs as a means for weeding out the least acceptable employees. This will guarantee failure of this particular goal. In fact, any educational goal which is dependent on employment or economic conditions is bound to fail.

2. The goal of adult basic education programs is to credential participants. This is generally expressed as "providing an opportunity to complete one's education" Such goals are generally viewed as a priority by participants more often than by service-providers. In terms of outcomes, this goal has illusory success. The credentials obtained through academic upgrading, no matter how we describe them or promote them, are never precisely equivalent to those obtained through the regular elementary-secondary system. The credentials obtained through BTSD programs, when they lead directly to occupational training programs, are valid for those programs but may not be acceptable in other post-secondary programs.
3. Adult basic education programs assist participants to solve immediate functional or instrumental goals (eg. obtaining a driver's license; improving communication between parents and the child's school). This is listed as an important priority for many basic literacy and ESL participants. They tend to express this goal in personal terms such as.... "I want to be able to do what others do" or "my children are ashamed of me when I can't understand their teacher". These are highly individualistic needs and are not viewed as a priority by the service-provider. In terms of outcomes, this goal is very often successful and generally leads to further participation for long-range or expressive goals. Such immediate goals are of relatively low importance to academic upgrading participants since the nature of their participation requires some notion of a long-range goal (i.e. finishing my schooling, getting a job).
4. Adult basic education programs are to help participants improve their ability to contribute to society. The service-provider generally views this as contribution through employment and economic participation for both men and women; and as political participation for men but domestic and child welfare participation for women However, women tend to interpret this goal in terms of improving their own lot in life by improving the conditions in which they live and work. Defining contributions to a society in two different ways sets up conflicts in the goals of the programs which also appear in the processes and resources used.

In one Unesco study, (1) 27% of the countries surveyed viewed literacy programs for women as providing an advantage to the family and to child care; while only 12% of the women in these same countries viewed this goal as a priority for them.

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(1). J. Chabaud, The education and advancement of women, (Paris: Unesco, 1970) ,p.109

The goal implies societal judgments of what constitutes "good participation" and out of these implies judgments comes the process and content of the programs themselves. Programs which do not conform to these judgments and learners who deviate from these norms will not belong tolerated. The outcome is that adult basic education programs tend to form the basis of political education which conforms to the politics of the controlling group in the society. Education of adults which leads to conformity is equally unacceptable since individuals view their own situation as unique and as not necessarily requiring conforming behaviour.

The Declaration of Peresopolis, drawn up by the International Symposium for Literacy and addressed to the member nations of Unesco, states that: (1)

(The Symposium)... considered literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development ... Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right....

Literacy work, like education in general, is a political act. It is not neutral, for the act of revealing social reality in order to transform it, or of concealing it in order to preserve it, is political...

Experience has shown that literacy can bring about the alienation of the individual by integrating him in an order established without his consent...

Literacy is effective to the extent that the people to whom it is addressed, in particular women and the least privileged groups..., feel the need for it in order to meet their most essential requirements, in particular the need to take part in the decisions of the community to which they belong.

Literacy is therefore inseparable from participation, which is at once its purpose and its condition. The illiterate should not be the object but the subject of the process whereby he becomes literate...

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(1). Final Report. International Symposium for Literacy, Peresopolis, Iran, September 1975, "The Declaration of Peresopolis", pp. 35 - 38. Available from the International Co-ordination Secretariat for Literacy, Paris.

A further comment comes from Dr. R. Lawless, professor of Anthropology at the University of Florida who claims that: (1)

Literacy was originally a closely guarded secret of the ruling elite used as a mechanism for exploiting the people. Its current function is not dissimilar. Nations may spend a considerable portion of their budgets on literacy campaigns, not to introduce their citizens to the great literature of the world (they spend next to nothing on libraries) but to more efficiently plug their citizens into the nationalistic propaganda network.

These statements raise the possibility that every adult basic education program, whether or not it has explicit goals related to socially-acceptable participation in society, may be sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Such programs cannot operate effectively without some awareness that this type of goal is implied in all processes, all content, all decisions and all policies.

5. Adult basic education programs help participants improve their self-image, their self-confidence and to "better themselves". These are all expressive or personal growth and development goals. Such goals are listed as a priority by participants and by teachers, but are rarely recognized by government policy. In terms of outcomes, this goal is generally successful. One major difficulty is that the process of becoming literate is the main contributor to this outcome. If participants are dealt with as if they were persons of worth, they learn to feel like persons of worth and their confidence and self-image improve at the same time. If they also learn literacy skills, their confidence and self-image improve still further. The outcome, therefore, is a result of both direct and indirect activities and policies and is difficult to measure accurately.
6. Adult basic education programs are to assist participants to improve their interpersonal skills and relationships by helping them feel less vulnerable and anxious about being exposed as illiterate, and thereby reducing their need for defensive behavior. Again, this is an indirect expressive goal which is mentioned by teachers and participants but rarely by administrators.
7. Adult basic education programs help provide successful learning experiences which will lead to a positive feeling toward education. This is the third stated objective of the Adult Day School in Toronto (2). It sounds incongruent, as if the objective is to increase the number of clientele available for further educational programs. This may not be a bad thing, but as a goal with unclear

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(1). Robert Lawless, "Letters to the Forum", World Education Reports, April 1977.

(2). E. Anderson and E. Woeller, "An adult basic education program in a community setting" in Teaching adult basic education: A program of videotapes and written materials for teachers and administrators, a project sponsored by the Industrial Training Branch of the Province of Ontario; the Canada Department of Manpower and Immigration; the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Ontario Education Communications Authority. PP. 22 - 32.

intent, its success is likely to be just as unclear. It may be good to develop a positive feeling toward education among participants who are the parents of children attending school. which is probably what the board of education had in mind.

It should be pointed out in passing, that this goal is expressed as a result of the fact that in industrialized nations, illiterates tend to be adults with the experience of school failure behind them, rather than simply adults who have not had enough schooling. This experience in failure usually leaves such adults outside the mainstream of society and feeling hopeless, helpless and angry.

It is also somewhat refreshing to find an educational institution which is not afraid to make an explicit statement about its own goals in these programs. Every institution has a stake in the outcomes of the programs it offers. An explicit statement to this effect makes the process easier to cope with on the part of participants and monitor on the part of the service-deliverer.

8. Adult basic education programs are to improve skills in communicating in the dominant language of the society and to improve skills in basic computing. This goal is mentioned by surprisingly few people. Perhaps participants and service-providers take it as a given which does not need to be expressed in explicit terms. In terms of outcomes, this goal probably is successful. although perhaps never to the ideal level hoped for by the service-providers and participants.

In Canada, the various educational systems developed to deliver adult basic education are invariably designed in such a way as to imply two basic sets of goals: (1) to improve the economic system or at least to increase employability by improving the individual who is undereducated and (2) to improve the social welfare system by reducing economic dependence on it and by improving the public social behavior of individuals. In both cases the improvement is sought in the individual and the goals are tied to the economic system. Since the educational service is tied directly to the economic systems, women are subject to the same sorts of discrimination in both systems. This discrimination will take the form of: the place of women is as an economic dependent, staying home to bear and rear children and thereby contributing to the overall growth of the economy.

It is also clear that some women espouse both types of goals as well as a third one which relates to personal growth and self-improvement. Therefore, adult basic education programs for women should emphasize all these goals and should allow a woman to make her own choice from within a range of viable alternatives. Some adult basic education programs need to be directly linked to Manpower programs, but others need to provide for family and child maintenance goals and for personal goals.

Whenever a conflict arises about the distribution of educational resources to

support adult basic education programs, those with goals for women supporting family and child maintenance will receive top priority. Money which could be spent on educational programs tends to go into such activities as public relations campaigns to explain the child bonus to women; advertising campaigns to reduce mental retardation in children by informing the mother she is to blame if she doesn't get prenatal care; and so on.

In the United States, current adult basic education policy expresses a set of goals which suggest that this type of education is for the purposes of developing an informed electorate and citizens capable of contributing to the social and political, as well as the economic, systems of society. An educational delivery system designed on these goals would provide more equitable opportunities, treatment and policies for women.

### Basic problems

1. The goals of adult basic are often unclear, unarticulated, conflicting and incongruent.
2. When the major emphasis is placed on employment and economic related goals, adult basic education programs for women display the same attitudes which discriminate against women as are to be found in the economic and employment systems.
3. When the major emphasis is placed on participation in the social and political aspects of society adult basic education programs for women tend to focus on family maintenance and child care.
4. When a variety of adult basic education programs are provided which allow for a variety of goals, adult basic education programs for women are more equitable, provide easier access and are more likely to be perceived as successful. This is particularly true if the programs are designed to produce an informed electorate, a woman capable of participating in all aspects of social activity.
5. In times of economic restraint, funds which might go into improved adult basic education programs for women are likely to be diverted into other types of "educational" campaigns designed to encourage women to stay home and take care of their children.
6. There is often a discrepancy between the explicit goals of an adult basic education program and those implicit in the practices of those programs.

## Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW will support policies and programs in adult basic education services for women which are designed to enhance all alternative goals and provide a wide variety of choices in process and content.

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations to various levels of government related to the clarification and integration of coherent goals for adult basic education programs for women.

CCLOW will encourage and support service-providers in developing and articulating specific goals for adult basic education programs for women.

Your additions or suggestions .....

### Issue III: Financial support and individual participants

Women who require adult basic education programs often have great difficulty finding financial assistance to support them while in such programs. This assistance might take the form of a direct grant, loan or bursary or of an indirect service such as child care or transportation.

#### Background

Documenting this issue required that we look both at what is not available and at what is available. Each province is different and our immediate sources of information were largely from Ontario. Therefore, we limited our investigation to that province. Even with this limitation we found conflicting information. However, to the best of our current knowledge, the situation in Ontario is:

a.) What is available is:

- Manpower allowances for those who have been admitted to BTSD or Language programs and who are eligible for support according to the rules and allowance scale of the CEIC.
- Ontario Study Grant Plan is provided for those who are attending adult basic education programs attached to community colleges or universities. The rules for OSAP are relatively generous and provide for day care expenses
- the Ontario Student Loan Plan is available for part-time students or students enrolled in short courses not covered by the Ontario Study Grant Plan. These loans are repayable on fairly good terms. The loans must be used to attend a publicly funded college or university in Ontario.
- the Ontario Special Bursary Plan provides non-repayable funds to those who have little or no post-secondary education and whose financial circumstances are poor. Funds are available only for part-time study which is defined as 60% or less of a normal course load. The conditions of the plan include that persons be receiving social assistance, be unemployed or have a low income family. Course work must be for the purposes of earning a degree, diploma or certificate, or for upgrading programs in a community college.
- transportation and child care subsidies are available if the woman is receiving social assistance and is registered in a class requiring 25 hours or more of class and study time per week or makes a round trip to attend classes of more than 30 miles. However, the woman must accept whatever child care services are assigned to her. For these subsidies, financial need for the purposes of working have a higher priority than financial need for the purposes of attending school.
- municipal funds for rehabilitation (if the municipality decides to provide

these - the policy of the province is permissive rather than obligatory). Generally these funds are available for only one member of a family and can be applied only to programs not funded by Manpower.

- some bursaries are available through non-governmental agencies but these are invariably for assistance to women in adult basic education programs in post-secondary institutions. We were informed that women attending school at a lower level do not require assistance.
- free tuition is generally available through boards of education and local community agencies. Community colleges and universities charge tuition fees to non-Manpower students (which would then be covered by OSAP or various private bursaries).
- child care services are provided as part of selected programs provided by some boards of education and by the ESL programs of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation.
- some programs provide all services (eg. the Toronto YWCA's Focus on Change) but these are limited in number, area served and type of participant.

b.) What is not available is:

- financial assistance to women who are not on welfare or family benefits, who prefer to work to support their family, but whose wages are insufficient to keep the family at or above the poverty line and who are unable to attend adult basic education programs at a community college or university because of accessibility constraints such as distance, scheduling, tuition, transportation, etc.
- support services for adult basic education services offered in the evening
- widely available support services for programs offered through local boards of education and community agencies.

c.) Additional problems:

- those who are on unemployment insurance benefits are not supposed to be attending school full-time unless they are approved Manpower students. They are supposed to be out looking for work full-time and live under constant threat of having their benefits disallowed, of having to pay back benefits obtained "under false pretenses", and of having to leave school long enough to work at an unskilled job to requalify for unemployment insurance benefits. Such restrictive rules result in wide-spread "survival" behavior (i.e. rule-bending by both students and teachers).



- the time, energy and skill required to find what information we were able to report above discouraged even this committee. In addition the rules and regulations involved in applying for money are very confusing. What must this process be like for an undereducated woman?
- there are no criteria to define educational need which could easily be translated into financial need. The Canada Assistance Plan has developed a system for defining social and child care needs, which in combination with economic need determines how much and what type of assistance a family or woman will receive.

### Basic problems

1. Information on the subject of financial assistance for women wishing to attend adult basic education programs is hard to find, conflicting and very confusing. In each province we require a core of up-to-date information which would be easily accessible to all women and all groups which counsel women. We refer you to a booklet (see Appendix B) which was recently produced by the Women's Action Group in Ontario, entitled Taking What's Ours. This is a good starting point for general information (at least in the Ontario region), but more detailed information needs to be made available through provincial and municipal sources.
2. Financial assistance, either direct or indirect, is not readily available for women requiring adult basic education programs. When it is available, the administrvia required to obtain it necessitates skills and knowledge which the potential user may not have, and more time, money and energy than such women have at their disposal.
3. There are no criteria for educational which which could be translated into financial assistance; priority for admissions, service provision, and distribution of resources. Such criteria would be useful in making the most difficult decisions involved in the division of available resources.
4. The rules for obtaining financial assistance or for documenting financial need are so complex and change so rapidly, that by the time a woman has completed the required forms, the rules have often changed yet again.

### Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW will monitor the process by which financial assistance is provided to women for adult basic education services.

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations based on a comprehensive

program to provide financial assistance on the basis of educational need to the various levels of government.

CLOW will maintain an up-to-date data file on financial subsidy programs for women planning to attend adult basic education programs at the provincial level.

CLOW will support financial assistance programs to women requiring adult basic education services in addition to supporting an extension of learning programs in this area.

Your additions or suggestions . . . .

## Issue IV: Funding and service-providers

Funds provided to those who deliver adult basic education programs are generally provided on an ad hoc, limited, short-term basis which is peripheral to the major adult education services; rather than as committed funding for a lengthy period of time or as an integrated aspect of all adult education services. This means that: (a) adult basic education services are always in danger of being cut-back in times requiring economic restraint; (b) that service-providers who are really committed to the value of adult basic education may be required to spend far too much time and energy obtaining secured funding for even one year ahead; and (c) adult basic education services have a tendency to become voluntary, "good-will", peripheral services of the provider or to be staffed largely with volunteer personnel.

### Background

While there are some notable exceptions, legislative bodies, governmental agencies and major educational institutions and systems do not view adult basic education as an economic necessity, at least not an economic necessity which is their responsibility. Such services are generally viewed as necessary because of the failure of the individual who has already received one chance; or as necessary because undereducated adults are more likely than persons at other educational levels to become dependent on governments for social, financial and medical assistance at the same time as they are unable to make any substantial monetary contributions to these services through taxes.

In addition the financial return to the service-provider (i.e. to governments in terms of tax dollars or reduction in welfare rolls, or to educational institutions in terms of cost recovery), is viewed as too low to justify the expense. Actually, only the immediate returns may be too low. As educational level increases, educational participation also increases. Therefore, services designed to increase an adult's educational level will eventually result in increased participation as a paying consumer of educational services.

The costs of maintaining social, welfare and medical systems are rarely viewed as having any connection to under education among adults. One study by a women's group which provides a BJRT and group counseling program to mothers on welfare, estimates that if just two women go off family benefits and into full-time employment in one year, the savings in unpaid family benefits over the next twelve years would more than cover the province's share of the program costs for one year. (1).

It appears that once the federal or provincial government has divided up its financial pie into major ministerial segments, each of these ministries: must then balance out its own concerns rather than co-operating to find a balance between ministries. In fact, the competition and territorial imperative between ministries

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(1). From a study made by Rita Mifflin for the Focus on Change Program, a program for sole-support mothers operated by the Metro Toronto Y.W.C.A., March 1976.

received by any LEA was very small: the administrators appeared to give it a significance out of proportion to the actual amount. The reasons for this appeared to be:

- a. that ALRA demonstrated a government commitment to literacy;
- b. that the ALRA fund showed that Government was not, as so often, adding to the local authorities' duties without recognizing the need for finance;
- c. that the ALRA fund was assured and ear-marked allocation, secure against the moves toward (economic restraint) ..." (1)

In Canada, it seems likely that any similar move on the part of either the federal or provincial governments would have positive effect of the provision of adult basic education services.

### Basic problems

1. There are no clearly articulated policies, priorities or practices which govern the way in which adult basic education services are funded or provided. The programs are rarely integrated with other adult education services and are often a low priority of the service-provider.
2. In times of economic restraint adult basic education services are often the first to be affected by cut-backs.
3. Obtaining secured funding requires considerable time and energy on the part of committed service-providers.
4. Justifying the need for public funds for adult basic education services is not easy since governments appear to view this need as an individual responsibility and to be unwilling to acknowledge any public responsibility.
5. Governments and other service-providers do not view adult basic education services as an economic necessity nor as services which have an adequate, immediate return on the investment. The long-term benefits to governments and service-providers are generally ignored.
6. Educational services to children tend to be preventative in nature and to have a higher value in terms of resource allocation. Educational services to adults tend to be crisis-oriented/and remedial in nature and to have a low value in terms of resource allocation.

## Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations to the various levels of government regarding the establishment of funding to adult basic education programs on a basis of educational need and long-term development and planning.

CCLOW will encourage educational bodies to develop comprehensive and integrated plans for funding adult and adult basic education services.

CCLOW believes that the provision of adult basic education services should be an obligatory function of educational service-providers based on local need and literacy rates, but an optional activity for undereducated women.

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations to the various levels of government regarding the development of cost-sharing programs to provide learning opportunities and support services for undereducated women.

Your additions or suggestions . . . .

## Issue V: Information dissemination

The availability of information, its form and eventual dissemination about all aspects of adults basic education is inadequate, often not understandable or usable by the undereducated woman. Free access to information is not a right in Canada.

### Background

There are a number of sub-issues within this area of general concern. We considered each separately, but each contributes to the overall problem.

1. Comprehensive, up-to-date information about adult basic education programs is not readily available from any single source within a community or province. This situation will improve in the coming years. The Movement for Canadian Literacy has recently been re-organized and their files and information sources are scattered at this time. Provincial groups are being formed to keep local and provincial groups informed about developments in the field. However, even they do not consider themselves to be responsible for collecting and disseminating information about local programs, financial assistance, and so on. Within local communities, community information centers attempt to serve this purpose, but they must also pay attention to areas other than education. There have recently been several studies which have addressed the issue of information, counseling and referral services for educational purposes.<sup>(1)</sup> In general, these studies all recommend that such services be established at the community level, separate from information services provided by specific educational institutions. In the U.S. such services are generally called educational brokering services and appear to have achieved some success in connecting potential learners with the educational services best suited to their needs. <sup>(2)</sup>
2. Information which is available is often in a form which makes it unusable or incomprehensible to the undereducated (and often to the educated) woman. As a sample we have reproduced several information items (See Appendix C). All these were taken from Metro Toronto sources and are probably a reasonable reflection of what is available elsewhere. Some observations are:

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(1). See for example: G. Stewart and C. Starrs, "The community information network proposal", The Canadian Consumer, January-February 1972, pp. 17 - 21

D. Ironside and D. Jacobs, Trends in counseling and information services for the adult learner (Toronto: OISE, 1977)

D. Ironside and others, The power to communicate. A report on information handling in community centers in Canada prepared for the Consumers' Association of Canada, Ottawa, 1972.

L. E. Davie and others, "Educational needs and learning conditions of adult learners". A report to the Commission on Declining School Enrolments in Ontario (Toronto: Ministry of Education, 1979)

(2). J. M. Heffernan and others, Education brokering: A new service to adult learners. (Syracuse, N. Y.: National Center for Educational Brokering, 1976)

- the small advertisement embedded in the classified section (third section, page 23) would require that a potential user of this information be able, as an absolute minimum: (i) to know that this information is available in this particular section; (ii) to possess a newspaper; (iii) to be able to find, read, and understand the classified section in general; and (iv) to be able to read, understand, and respond to this specific ad.
  - the large advertisement from the Family Section is more noticeable in a section a woman is more likely to read (if she can read); but contains more information which makes it less easy to read and understand.
  - the catalogue pages from the Toronto and Etobicoke Boards of Education were delivered to individual homes and are extremely hard to read. They are generally found in the middle of information about many other types of courses. In fact, one school board official had trouble understanding why the undereducated don't register for classes - - all the information is right there for anyone who wants to read it!!! Basically the information provided is too complex to understand The information repeated in seven different languages is particularly confusing since there are so many words on one small page.
  - the pamphlet from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation on English as a Second Language programs is more readable and attractive. It is not mixed in with other information but the pamphlet does form part of a larger display of pamphlets. Even this requires assistance from a literate person. In addition, following a map is often assumed to be a skill which transcends illiteracy. This is an interesting assumption since it is our experience that reading a map is different from, but just as difficult a skill as reading words.
  - the computer print-out from the Metro Toronto Library Directory lists every known course provided within the greater Toronto area, both academic, vocational, general interest, and so on. We have used pages from the Winter Directory. The regular directory lists 1 full page of academic upgrading courses and 7 pages of English as a Second Language courses. Finding one's way through this information is difficult for even a fully literate woman.
3. Individuals who need adult basic education services and the accompanying support. services are not entitled to all the information available. This entitlement is not contained within any legislation, including the Canadian Bill of Rights. On the other hand, if we had been American citizens requesting information from our local congressperson or senator, we would have received ten other items we did not ask for but which they thought we would be interested in.
  4. Service-providers often withhold information because they assume it would not be useful to certain recipients; the recipient would be incapable of using it

correctly; or the recipient would misuse it. All of these require that the service-provider make a value judgment about the potential recipient. Withholding of information can also be the result of: lack of co-ordination among service-providers with each assuming another one has provided it; the service-provider taking the position that information cannot be given out until a specific request for specific information is received which follows on the assumption that redundant information is a bad thing and people don't listen anyway; the service-provider not informing the general public of the type of information it possesses leaving the potential user to guess which service-provider might have which information. These types of cyclical activities requiring assumptions, mind-reading and guess work lead to confusion, frustration and suspicion on the part of the potential user of information. It also has a tendency to lead service-providers to label the user as paranoid, a term which the radical feminist therapists suggest is the direct result of heightened awareness and lack of essential information. A report prepared for the Consumer's Association of Canada comments that: (1)

There are essentially three types of information: harmless information; information which helps you adapt to your pain; and information on the basic causes of your pain (usually called restricted or inaccessible). The first two are readily available, but most research on information deals with improving delivery (of this type). What is needed is research into ways of liberating the third type of information.

5. Information which is available is often in a symbolic form which is unknown or unfamiliar to the potential user. For example, we print pamphlets for ESL programs in English; we ask illiterates to read their information and complete registration forms. We use words which are outside the experience of the user. A report from the Public Policy Concern on Community Information Centers states that: (2)

(Information) is a commodity, a free good, but the value/utility can only be determined by the recipient. Therefore, the value of information must be understood in a personal context. What is useful information to one person may not be perceived as useful information to the next person... To reduce overload, information must be structured, sorted and made available at a time when it is being sought. The method by which information is made available is crucial to what is learned. There must be consistency between means and ends, between medium and message.

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(1).C. Starrs, Making connections, A report prepared for the Consumers' Association of Canada, 1973.

(2).G. Stewart and C. Starrs, Community information centers, A study prepared by the Public Policy Concern for Information Canada, 1970



The pamphlet on ESL programs is available at all times, provided the display is kept well-stocked. The Directory from the Library Board is available only in libraries where illiterates are not likely to be. The catalogues from the boards of education are distributed once a year but are available all year in libraries. There appear to be few sources of continuously available, usable information for the undereducated woman even though adult basic education programs are often provided on a continuous intake basis.

6. Information which is available tends to vastly over-rate the reading level of potential users. Sources of information for those who cannot read at all are virtually non-existent. There are a number of methods for determining readability level of print material. By these methods, the material provided in Appendix C average out to a reading level of grade 9. The surrounding material and the format tends to raise this somewhat.
7. The entire system of information dissemination is made more difficult by a basic conflict in the styles both sides prefer to use when communicating.

In general, the undereducated adult prefers: (1)

- personal information from personal contacts which requires a labour intensive information service
- information which reflects concrete realities rather than abstract ideas and which leaves nothing to mind-reading, assumption-making or guess-work.
- information in their native language or at least in a symbolic form they have had some experience with.
- information through a media they are familiar with such as radio or TV.

In general, the service-provider prefers:

- impersonal information which can be delivered in bulk and without an intensive input of staff time.
- information which sells an idea rather than a specific fact and which leaves the next step and the interpretation up to the recipient.
- information in the language of the majority and in words rather than any other symbolic form, and at the reading level of the average adult rather than at the level of the potential user. The general attitudes are that "one must never talk down to the recipient" and "symbols are so easy to misinterpret".
- information through the least expensive medium which reaches the widest audience (not necessarily an audience of potential users).

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(1). Department of Regional Economic Expansion, Planning Division, Who knows? A report on the Canada Newstart Program. (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973)

8. Information provided to the undereducated adult about adult basic education programs must be of a higher quality than that provided to any other educational group. However, the reality is that more often the available information is of a much lower quality. The saga of the telephone company, the CBC and the literacy movement points this out. (1)

In January 1978, the CBC's Fifth Estate did an intensive look at literacy in Canada and what was being done about it. Before the program the various agencies involved requested from Bell Canada that they be given a Zenith phone line to take calls from persons wanting information who might call in from all parts of Canada. The telephone company refused to provide only one line since it knew that the number of calls which would come in would overload the system. After the program, Bell Canada estimated that 10,000 calls were received in the first hour, plus many more calls which could not be handled. Only a fraction of the calls were received by the literacy volunteers.

The CBC staff were so amazed at the response that they decided to assist the Movement for Canadian Literacy in doing a follow-up program and Bell Canada agreed to provide more adequate phone service. Volunteers were drafted to take calls, the phone number was advertised and was to be the same for all of Canada. The Literacy Movement counted on the expertise of the CBC and Bell Canada, two leading experts in the field of telecommunications. The CBC provided a three-minute spot on the final program of the Fifth Estate which consisted of film clips from the previous show and the telephone number superimposed. The telephone company midway into the second week of the project announced that the incoming telephone line had been improperly connected and extended only as far as Quebec and excluded the Maritimes. When the problem was finally corrected, the service consisted of one telephone number for Ontario calls and another for out-of-Ontario calls. The information about the change in telephone numbers was not distributed adequately. Many, many potential callers did not receive the assistance they needed. All who did reach the volunteers answering the phone calls received assistance or were referred directly to someone who could be of help.

This type of inadequate quality in the information services provided for the undereducated segment of the population is typical. The providers of the information dissemination services and the providers of the information appear to be totally unaware of the difficulties which arise from such poor service and of the ways in which their procedures alienate the undereducated adult.

### Basic problems

1. Comprehensive, up-to-date information is not readily available in a form which is useful to undereducated women. There are no public or community agencies explicitly charged with the responsibility for providing such information.

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(1). A Coulter. Telephone referral project report" Literacy Alphonbétisation Vol. 3:3, 1978, p. 12

2. Information which is available is often incomprehensible except to highly educated persons.
3. Individuals are not entitled to all the information available. Service-providers often withhold information from potential users because they believe that: (a) the user is not capable of using the information properly; (b) if the information became common knowledge too many people would want to obtain services; (c) some other service-provider has already disseminated this information or should be responsible for disseminating it; (d) information cannot be given until a specific request has been made for specific information (general requests are not responded to); (e) redundant information is a bad thing (communication theory would suggest otherwise); and so on.
4. Information is not necessarily provided in a symbolic form familiar to the potential user, at a time convenient to the potential user, or in a style comfortable for the potential user.
5. Those who develop information resources tend to vastly over-rate the reading or skill level of potential users.
6. The type of information preferred by potential users is quite different from the type which service-providers prefer to disseminate. As a result information is most often disseminated in the form preferred by the service-provider.

#### Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW, at the local level, will develop and maintain an information file for the use of educators and those counselling women about adult basic education services.

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations to the appropriate public bodies with regard to funding local counselling, information and referral services

Your suggestions or additions . . . .

## Issue VI: Physical facilities

Adult basic education programs are often provided in inadequate surroundings with second-hand furniture and resources. The physical environment appears to be a low priority in the budgeting for these programs.

### Background

Budgeting for adult basic education programs tends to reflect the attitude that the need for such programs is only temporary, therefore the facilities and resources will also be temporary. Feelings of impending cut-backs tend to reinforce this temporary feeling. The attitude appears to be why spend money for something which may not exist next year. Available money tends to be used for staffing requirements. This is, no doubt, a wise choice. But, as adult educators, we also know that the environment in which an adult learns plays a vital part in what and how she learns. If an undereducated woman is learning in facilities provided through the generosity of a community agency and is using second-hand resources, then she may also be learning that she can only be part of her community through the generosity of someone else and that she is a second-class person.

After some investigation into this topic, we found that:

1. Adult basic education programs provided as part of a Manpower Training program are generally housed in well-equipped community colleges. These facilities range from small community centers to imposing, overwhelming new complexes of many large buildings. In most cases the undereducated woman is part of a large community of learners, without having much status within that community. Resource material is provided through the college budget and is probably limited only by what is available on the market.
2. Other adult basic education programs tend to be provided in facilities which are made available through the generosity of other community agencies such as libraries, churches, school boards, social service agencies, etc. Many of these facilities are either in the basement or on the third floor without facilities for handicapped adults (i.e. a walk-up)
3. Resources are often texts which are no longer used in the elementary or secondary schools, material produced in the United States, or material produced for Canadian school children. Some are good, some are dreadful, most are inadequate.
4. The furniture is very often a collection of second hand furniture from the local thrift shop, the Salvation Army or Crippled Civilians, or various garage sales. The furniture provided in settings which utilize school board resources is often sized for elementary school children. So are the plumbing fixtures.

We decided to photograph three of these settings in the Toronto area. (see

**Appendix D.)** These three buildings are to be found within a one-mile radius of each other and provide three different types of adult basic education programs in quite different facilities.

- a.) The Casa Loma Campus of George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology offers academic upgrading to Grade 13 to both Manpower students and to regular fee-paying students. Classes are offered during the day, five days per week in a lavish, almost overwhelming environment. Our impression of the building was that finding our way around required a sound sense of direction, lots of self-confidence and some perseverance. The setting feels formal, distant and imposing. There are good food services and library services. The building is within five minutes of the subway.
- b.) The Toronto Adult Day School is located two short blocks from George Brown and is two minutes from the subway. The school is operated and staffed by the Toronto Board of Education in facilities provided by the Toronto Department of Social Services. The school provides basic literacy and academic upgrading to grade 10. This particular school used to be located in a downtown basement which flooded regularly. The current facilities are viewed as a "palace" by the staff. The facilities are on the third floor. There is one elevator. Food services are non-existent although there is a kitchen and large common room for eating. The resources include a small library and a number of typewriters. While the rooms are grimy, the rooms are bright and cheerful and provide a great view of the Casa Lorna. Across the street, however, the trucks of a large province-wide dairy come and go constantly during the day. Our impression of the school was that it was friendly, comfortable, had a temporary look and was furnished with second-hand furniture. The building was at one time a factory of some type, and the interior decorating cannot hide this fact.
- c.) The Toronto Board of Education in its infinite wisdom, has decided that the Adult Day School will not provide adult basic education programs at night. These evening programs are provided twice each week at Jesse Ketchum Public School, an old elementary school which serves children to grade 6 only. We did not tour the inside of this facility but the outside consists of a typical school yard: high fence, playground equipment, small water fountains, and so on. Our impression is that the inside would be furnished with small desks, small plumbing fixtures and inadequate resources.

### Basic problems

1. The lack of assured funding and the limited resources provided for adult basic education programs means that facilities are often temporary and look it, borrowed from some community agency, and easy to move or disband at any time. This may be the result of the ad hoc nature of adult basic education policy or of the attitudes of service-providers that the need for such services is

temporary and not their real responsibility anyway.

2. Preferred facilities would be in community settings, with friendly comfortable adult surroundings, furnishings that do not look second-hand, and plumbing fixtures for adult-sized women. Rooms should be accessible to the handicapped. There should be facilities for food services, rest areas for socializing and eating that are comfortable and separate from the learning areas.

### Recommendations for CLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women.

CLOW will develop and make recommendations to the various service-providers in regard to the provision of capital funding for facilities and resources for adult basic education programs

## Issue VII: Resource material

Resource material used in adult basic education programs does not reflect the needs and life experiences of a Canadian woman. The material more often reflects: the values of other countries, predominantly the United States; middle class values and life styles; and stereotyped sexist attitudes about women.

### Background

Much has been written on this topic in relation to elementary and secondary school resources. Rather than reviewing this literature, while it is certainly relevant, we chose to investigate our concerns about adult learning resources. There was not much to discover since a great deal of the resource material for adults was written originally for adolescents and young children. That is clearly the first problem - - the general lack of any resource material for adults. Three other concerns surfaced:

1. Resource material written by Canadians for Canadian life styles and experiences is almost non-existent. The LINC and BLADE programs developed resources for adults and are now in use throughout Canada. Examples of the LINC material are to be found in Appendix E. These materials are very pragmatic. They give the appearance of austerity and lack the general flare of U.S. material on the same topics. The quarterly publication of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, Literacy Alphabétisation, recently published two lists: one on Canadian magazines and periodicals and one on Canadian literature. Each item is listed with a notation of its style and applicability and with a measure of its reading level. One of these lists is reproduced in [Appendix E](#). The other can be obtained through the organization.(1)
2. Resource material which reflects the life experiences and needs of women, particularly the women who must need adult basic education programs, is even harder to find. We met several women who have developed their own material but very few other resource people know of this work. There are currently several programs which are developing material for women using the techniques described by Paulo Freire.(2)

The Portuguese West of Bathurst Project in Toronto (P.I.S.E.M.) is one such group.(3) They are developing material based on the work and home experiences

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(1). For information write: The Movement for Canadian Literacy, 692 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto, Ontario.

(2). Information on the work of Paulo Freire can be obtained by writing: The Paulo Freire Resource Collection, c/o the Department of Adult Education, 252 Bloor Street, Toronto, Ontario

(3). For information on this project write: Sydney Pratt, P.I.S.E.M., 84 Augusta Avenue, Toronto, Ontario or Deborah Barndt, International Council for Adult Education, 252 Bloor Street West (4th floor), Toronto, Ontario.

of the women involved. The women develop their own ideas by using photographs of their homes, work places and neighborhood. As the participants become involved in the process they begin to transform their own perspective on their own living and working conditions. Out of this grows written material, vocabulary, reading skills, inquiry skills, community participation, and so on.

Another technique being used widely with women's groups in the U.S. is the Apperception-Interaction Method (AIM). This method is similar to the Freire method except that the material is not necessarily developed from scratch by each group of learners. AIM is based on the belief that adult education is a process concerned initially with promoting self-expression and the sharing of experience about individual problems, interests and concerns, in order to promote self-awareness and motivation that will lead to other activities. Materials are developed through a problem-solving process which utilizes photographs relating to problems and themes. The material is open-ended and nondirective. It consists of a four-page brochure that presents a photograph followed by a short narrative. Material is stored in loose - leaf binders and is also available through audiotape for non-readers. An example is provided in [Appendix E](#).

Material which does reflect women's life experiences and needs invariably focuses on middle class values and attitudes. For immigrant women, native women and low income women, this is not good enough. We did find some new material for native women (U.S. resource) and some which were Canadian and non-sexist. Samples of all these are included in Appendix E.

3. Resource material which is available and which is often widely used in adult basic education programs tends to have sexual stereotyping implied throughout. Some samples of these are included in [Appendix E](#).

#### Basic problems

1. A wide selection of resource material designed specifically for adults is not generally available in Canada.
2. Resource material which reflects the life experiences, life styles and needs of Canadian women is not generally available. That which is available tends to reflect the values and life styles of other countries; of middle class women; or of sexual stereotyping which is adverse to women.



## Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW will form a working relationship with other groups interested in educational publishing to assist in and encourage the development and publication of learning resources designed especially for Canadian women for use in adult basic education programs.

Your additions or suggestions . . . .

## Issue VIII: Training for service-providers

Many service-providers, particularly teachers and administrators who are directly responsible for adult basic education programs/have received little or no training in adult education techniques. Often, their lack of awareness of the development and learning principles related specifically to adults and of how best to apply these in a wide variety of situations means that their efforts and good intentions miss the mark and the learner is not helped and often hindered.

### Background

The following comment from Jack Mezirow, the director of the Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, seems to cover our major concerns:

The (A.B.E.) program (in the U.S.A.) is scandalously under professionalized. More than a decade after the enactment of the Adult Education Act ... teachers are still simply moonlighters. They are usually trained only to teach children. Most A.B.E. teachers are lucky if they have attended a three-day workshop on adult education. Most administrators - - even of major programs - - have never attended any instructional session on adult learning or education and know very little about the field. They are simply school men (and women) temporarily assigned to shape up a new program. By and large, adult education as andragogy - with its distinctive ideology, mission and methodology based upon the unique educational needs of adults - has been reduced by A.B.E. to mean teaching adults as you teach children, except more politely.

We have no solid core of adult educators able in helping adults become self-directed learners, increasingly able to define their own learning needs and to plan, conduct and evaluate their own learning experiences. Instead we have the educator as outpatient clinician - - testing, diagnosing, prescribing. The learner is simply presented with a series of programmed assignments, much like a doctor's prescription, to guide self-instruction.

... I am more alarmed by the andragogical illiteracy among educators charged with A.B.E. than I am by the magnitude of the need for A.B.E. in this country.(1)

In Canada, the major problem is not that instructors are reluctant or disinterested in training in their field, but that training opportunities are either non-existent, inaccessible, unaffordable or irrelevant to the needs of the classroom practitioner. We have managed to develop learning opportunities for adult educators at the graduate level and for the purposes of theory development and research; but we have very few opportunities for the field worker with few resources and little interest in generalized theory.

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(1). J. Mezirow, "Professional misgivings about adult basic education", World Education Reports Magazine, September, 1978, p. 6

A recent report on literacy activities in Canada (1) supports this view. Fewer than 50% of the instructors interviewed knew of training opportunities in Canada outside their own organization; while slightly more than 50% had received training from within the own organization. Those training opportunities mentioned were: at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education which offers a certificate program as well as graduate degrees; training as a life skills coach; and training as a teacher at the elementary or secondary level. Teachers who work for boards of education or community colleges receive a certain number of days each year for professional development. In some cases these days are used for in-service training activities most often conducted by other staff members. In other cases individual teachers can attend a workshop or conference of their choice. Many chose to attend reading conferences or TESL workshops. Most training events are from 2 to 4 days and offer little opportunities for future continuity or follow-up.

The instructors interviewed in this study expressed a need for training primarily in interpersonal skills, in curriculum development and in supervised field experiences. The report suggests that interpersonal skills are required so that instructors can help not only their students but also their own peers. One instructor commented that: "The teachers know the material but cannot communicate with the students". Other instructors felt they needed help to identify and cope with learning disabilities and perceptual problems among adults.

The report on the recent literacy campaign in Britain suggests that the major problems encountered in training tutors were: that courses were too short; that in-service training was almost impossible; that the relationship between specific literacy training and general training for teaching adults was unclear; and that there were divided views on whether qualified school teachers (of children) needed retraining for working with adults (2).

The report from Britain goes on to state that other problems were:

- adult learning and teaching principles had little reality for tutors until each had some experience in working with an adult learner. This suggests that while some preparatory training is useful, in-service training and supervision is more important.
- preparatory training tends to have a general applicability which leaves the tutors unprepared for the specific problems of individual learners. Preparatory training which focuses on curriculum development, resource selection, and general planning and problem solving principles was seen as most useful.

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(1). A. M. Thomas, Adult basic education and literacy activities in Canada, 1975 - 76 Toronto: World Literacy of Canada, 1976

(2). H. A. Jones and A. H. Charley, Adult Literacy: A study of its impact Leicester: National Institute of Adult Education, 1978, p. 37

### Basic problems

1. Teachers in adult basic education programs are, in many cases, untrained to work with undereducated adults at this educational level. They are unfamiliar with adult basic education techniques and principles and with the learning resources which would be most useful in their classes. Furthermore, most teachers of adults (at all levels) are untrained to work effectively with women.
2. There are very few training opportunities in Canada which focus on the practical application of adult basic education processes, which are accessible and affordable, or which provide both preparatory training and ongoing in-service training and supervision.
3. Training which is available tends to be highly specialized and, therefore, only useful to an experienced teacher of adults.
4. Training opportunities are required in interpersonal and group management skills, in curriculum and resource development, and in the principles of working with an adult learner.

### Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for women:

CCLOW will support and encourage the development of training opportunities for teachers and administrators in adult basic education programs

Your additions or suggestions . . . .

## Issue IX: Attitudes of learners and service-providers

The attitudes of adult basic education learners and potential learners about themselves and learning, and the attitudes of some service-providers about adult basic education learners and the services they require, are often mutually reinforcing and negative.

### Background

In an extensive background report on the disadvantaged adult in Canada, Anderson and Niemi write: (1)

The disadvantaged constitute a minority group subjected to the exercise of prejudice directed toward them by a superordinate group which inhibits the participation of the disadvantaged in the on-going life of the community. Because of prejudice, they do not have ready access to educational and employment opportunities through which to alter their status. Thus, prejudice is a major societal barrier that must be overcome through the education of the larger society in order that it might understand its role in the creation and maintenance of the disadvantaged sub-culture ...

Of equal importance to the barrier of prejudice are those barriers erected by the educational system itself. Although they are not directed specifically the disadvantaged as is prejudice, they nevertheless create impediments. The educational barriers stem largely from concepts of education and training held by educators serving the super ordinate group in society. Frequently there is a lack of awareness or refusal on the part of educators to recognize the existence of barriers facing disadvantaged students. The educational system has been developed to preserve the values of the middle class, and it lacks sufficient flexibility to function effectively with the disadvantaged who cannot meet the expectations of a system tailored for mass rather than individual development ...

The report on adult literacy programs in Britain states that: (2)

The progress of each student depended less upon what people did for him than upon the attitudes and relationships that informed their actions ... This quality of personal service is the most important element that our research revealed.

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(1) D. Anderson and J. A. Niemi, Adult education and the disadvantaged adult Occasional papers, no. 22 (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University, Continuing Education and ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education, 1970), p. 59

(2) H. A. Jones and A. H. Charnley, Adult literacy: A study of its impact, Leicester: National Institute of Adult Education, 1978), p.98

A further quote from another British educator states: (1)

(the most prevalent attitude in today's society is) ...to put it simply, the good guys can read; the bad guys cannot ... Reading has been identified as a critical element in social mobility... It does not seem to matter whether reading is necessary; it is simply required to get up the ladder... This situation can be described as "the reading elite" - - a sort of cultural elitism which means you are a second class citizen if you cannot read.

We had some difficulty finding a concise statement which truly reflected our concern about this issue. So we combined several sources plus our own experience and developed two parallel lists showing: (2)

a.) the generalized characteristics of undereducated learners, provided as a series of anecdotal comments; some of the possible behaviors which could result from this type of thinking and which could be observed by others; some possible interpretations which could be made about the observable behavior by service-providers; and some of the possible component parts of an overall attitude which might develop. These attitude components would coalesce into one larger attitude and should not be read as separate attitudes. Note that many of these parts are conflicting which suggests that the overall attitude would be inconsistent. Sometimes a service-provider will be overly helpful to an undereducated person who appears helpless, passive and dependent; and sometimes rejecting of those who appear competent or aggressive.

b.) a similar list starting with the characteristics of service-providers and ending with the attitudes which might be acquired by undereducated learners.

We recognize that there is always a danger in developing generalized statements of this type. We would agree before-the-fact that not all Undereducated learners and not all service-providers have these generalized characteristics and not all would interpret the others behavior this way. However, the attitudes and behaviors listed are prevalent enough to risk making such statements. Note that the list is intended to illustrate our main contention that the attitudes held by service-providers and learners about each other tend to be mutual reinforcing and often negative.

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(1). R. J. Kedney (ed.) The adult illiterate in the community. (Bolton, U. K.: Bolton College of Education, 1975), p. 3

(2). Sources used include: Anderson and Niemi, op. cit. pp. 7 - 28  
Jones and Charnley, op. cit.

Department of Regional Economic Expansion, Who knows? Report of the Canada Newstart Programs (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973).

J. M. Heffernan and others, Educational brokering: A new service to adult learners. (Syracus, N. Y.: National Center for Educational Brokering, 1976).

NOTE: The separate statements made in this table are meant to be read as if they were part of a cumulative whole. Each separate contributes something to the overall attitude developed. Neither behaviour nor attitudes should be viewed apart from the context in which they occur. The possible interpretations and attitudes suggested may be used by some of the service-providers, some of the time This material is not to be reprinted or cited for publication.

<b>Characteristics of undereducated learners</b>	<b>Resulting behaviour of learners</b>	<b>Possible interpretations by service-providers</b>	<b>Possible attitude of service-providers toward learners</b>
1. I've always been a failure but I'm really going to try this time. I don't know whether I can do it; if I thought I could I'd go for a higher level in school If I try and don't succeed I'll be worse off than if I had never tried I give up too easily	tend to act as dependents within learning context i.e. in relation to teachers, etc. although not necessarily in other contexts outside  may avoid trying new behaviors to avoid another failure  may avoid homework which requires self-direction	dependent learners  lack motivation  lazy	They are dependent persons  They are spectators rather than participants  They don't really want to change  You can't expect too much of them
2. You can't beat the system no matter how hard you try Every time I try to get ahead, something happens to stop me.	tend to respond passively to authority figures  may wait for someone to tell them what to do  may submit to authorities with thinly-veiled resentment resign themselves to current status and self-concept	passive learners  lack initiative & drive  no purpose in life  hostile to authorities  fatalistic  lethargic	They are passive-dependent, helpless & hopeless persons  They won't help themselves  They are aggressive  They don't care -- (Why should we?)
3. You mean I was right? That's what I think but I'd better check to make sure I have the "correct" answer	wait for others to tell them "correct" answer; to judge their own answers; to tell them what their problem is; & what "best" solution is	anti-intellectual  low aspiration levels  never figure anything out for themselves	They never think for themselves  They'll never succeed  They can't even help themselves  They don't value schooling
4. I get really depressed I don't like to talk to	communication skills reduced in effectiveness may not seek	uncommunicative	They are devious

<p>anyone about my personal problems; I handle my problems my own way The counsellor didn't really explain it to me; next time I'd ask more questions</p>	<p>clarification for questions/statements they don't understand &amp; do the wrong thing  Appear unable to retain anything which does not deal with here and now</p>	<p>don't listen  can't give a "straight" answer</p>	<p>They are stupid  They need to be spoken to slowly, clearly, loudly and simply</p>
<p>5. I know I don't talk good and I say ain't but people should listen. If you don't keep your eye on them, you can't tell what they are talking about When I get excited I wave my hands alot.</p>	<p>make extensive use of oral &amp; non-verbal styles  may not use standard form of English/French; prefer oral dialect pay more attention to how a thing is said than to what is said  may not be able to follow written instructions prefer personal communications</p>	<p>inflexible  rigid  intolerant  prejudiced</p>	<p>They are childish  They use physical rather than verbal dominance  They are stupid  They are stubborn  They don't care about us  They lack empathy  They are too demanding</p>
<p>6. You never know what could happen to you in a strange place; so its better to stay in your own place I like to talk with my friends about how things are; they understand me</p>	<p>unwilling to try new ways or ideas; will revert to old ways under stress  may fear new ways wince they feel like failures  resent having to change what they are proud of  tend to be isolated &amp; alienated from others</p>	<p>acting-out behaviour  ignorant  troublemakers always get the "wrong" ideas when listening to authority figures  require too much time of personnel</p>	<p>They are rigid and restrictive  They are conservative and reactionary  They are intolerant and prejudiced</p>
<p>7. They never get around to my problems What do they expect us to do -- live on nothing I don't like having to tell people I'm a failure They think I'm stupid just because I can't read</p>	<p>suspicious of helpers  want individual attention from one helper  confused by too many different helpers  anxiety may develop elaborate behaviours to cover up deficiencies. eg.</p>	<p>paranoid too demanding  confused and stupid  insecure  indifferent (disbelief at their expressed need for help)</p>	<p>They show insecurity which is often manifested by paranoid or acting-out behaviour (neurotic)  They don't want help anyway  They don't care -- (Why should we?)</p>



<p>They must be stupid; it takes so many of them to solve one little problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diffidence</li> <li>- excellent oral skills</li> <li>- avoid answering questions</li> </ul>	<p>unwilling to admit deficiencies / need for help</p>	<p>They can't be trusted to tell the truth</p>
<p>8. If I thought I could do it I'd go for the long-range goal. If I can't get my problems solved I'll have to quit As soon as I get my driver's license I can go off welfare -- that will that be a great day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may lack perseverance for long-range goals</li> <li>may be unable to plan ahead</li> <li>may be unwilling to do preparatory work</li> <li>may be unable to allocate time, money &amp; energy resources. eg. attendance may be erratic</li> <li>behaviour centered on own immediate needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited time perspective</li> <li>impatient</li> <li>expect too much</li> <li>can't be trusted</li> <li>ego-centric and narcissistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They live only to fulfill their own immediate needs</li> <li>They lack a willingness to defer gratification</li> <li>They are undependable</li> <li>They can't be trusted to make good use of resources so we must dole them out one day at a time</li> <li>They are childish</li> </ul>
<p>9. As an undereducated woman, I am a second- rate as well as a second-class person</p> <p>I should be at home where I belong</p> <p>I shouldn't need an education to be just a housewife or a mother or a wife</p> <p>My husband didn't want me to go to school. He wanted to be the educated one. He thought I would start to want a better life for myself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may not ask for or demand what she needs</li> <li>may not know she has the right to demand anything for herself</li> <li>may drop-out of course when first conflict arises between roles as learner, mother, and wife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>doesn't need anything</li> <li>doesn't cause trouble</li> <li>quitter second-rate learner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They don't need anything or they would be demanding it and causing trouble</li> <li>We shouldn't waste limited resources on such people</li> <li>They take up resources and don't accomplish anything</li> </ul>

NOTE: The separate statements made in this table are meant to be read as if they were part of a cumulative whole. Each separate contributes something to the overall attitude developed. Neither behaviour nor attitudes should be viewed apart from the context in which they occur. The possible interpretations and attitudes suggested may be used by some undereducated learners, some of the time This material is not to be reprinted or cited for publication.

<b>Characteristics of undereducated learners</b>	<b>Resulting behaviour of learners</b>	<b>Possible interpretations by service-providers</b>	<b>Possible attitude of service-providers toward learners</b>
<p>1. adult learners will be independent participants not dependent spectators adults who have not yet acquired childhood skills should be treated as children; they should be grateful &amp; dependent</p>	<p>those who cannot work independently do not deserve much attention</p> <p>those who can work independently deserve all the help we can provide and lots of extra attention</p> <p>those who try and fail are exasperating</p>	<p>if I don't try on my own I won't get any help;</p> <p>but when I try on my own I always fail; therefore</p> <p>I have to fail to get any help and then they get angry with me</p>	<p>I'm a failure</p> <p>I can't learn on my own</p> <p>I'm helpless and hopeless</p> <p>I'm powerless to stop their anger at me</p> <p>What did I do to make them angry? (guilt)</p>
<p>2. we know best how to help people in your situation we have standard ways for doing things to make everything easier for both us and you</p>	<p>we will tell you what to do, when and how</p> <p>do not vary from this standard way or you'll have to do everything over; go to the end of the line</p>	<p>They must know best</p> <p>I'd better do it their way</p> <p>My way must be inadequate</p>	<p>I can't fight them so I'll give in.</p> <p>They always get their way</p> <p>You can't beat the system</p> <p>I'm powerless here and helpless unless I resign myself to their will.</p> <p>They are very powerful</p>
<p>3. there is a "correct" way to do things we maintain standards of excellence by evaluating everyone on standardized tests. for each question there, can only be one "correct" answer</p>	<p>do things the " correct" way (our way)</p> <p>your answers are not of any interest to us unless they are "correct"</p>	<p>my ways for doing things must be "wrong" since they are different from their ways</p> <p>my answers must be "wrong" for the same reason</p>	<p>I'm not very intelligent</p> <p>I can't figure this out for myself</p> <p>They will have to tell me what is "correct" and what to do.</p>
<p>4. we have developed an efficient way to explain our instructions.</p>	<p>give instructions in a standardized, written format -- the same for everyone</p>	<p>I don't understand this but if I ask for help they'll think I'm stupid and get angry</p>	<p>I feel burdened and stupid</p> <p>They think I'm stupid</p>

these are written down to avoid confusion and inefficiency	give oral instructions in standardized format-- the same for everyone  no one could possibly misunderstand	I'll have to do my best even though I really don't know what I am supposed to be doing	They don't seem to want to help me  They think I'm a failure I know I'll be a failure
5. we prefer to use impersonal communications since they are more effective & efficient personal communications can sometimes give people the wrong idea about us	instructions are written; forms are in triplicate  document everything in writing  do as I say not as I do  we talk this way to everyone	I can't read - what will I do if I can't fill out this form and get all the information to their satisfaction  I have to keep a close eye on what they are saying or I won't know what's happening	They think I'm stupid  They don't listen  I am stupid because I can't make them understand me  They can't be trusted  Can't they see I'm confused
6. Our way of doing things has been tested and we have proved it is the best way for all	change your ways when you deal with us	I don't know how to do things their way and I can't learn unless they are willing to give me time and help	Their ways are a pain  I much prefer my ways  They are set in their ways and can't be changed
7. we like to be helpful; trust us to help you division of labour is efficient so we have specialists for every activity here you will need to talk to the correct specialist to solve your problem	specialists can't be expected to know what other specialists know or can do  we have no integrated approach for each individual - that would require another specialist  first we need to figure out which specialist you should talk to - repeat your story /problem again	I wish I could talk to one person; all these people just confuse me.  They all promise to help but no one does anything - just sends me somewhere else  I don't like being exposed I need to defend myself  I keep having to expose myself to more and more specialists	I trusted them which makes me a fool and stupid. They don't care about me anyway. No one wants to help me.  They can't be trusted  They are confusing  They like to ridicule me  I don't care if they do expose me; I'm as good as they are  I feel inadequate
8. the process of being admitted and registered takes time; everything happens at its proper time and in sequence we must operate on	don't bug us  you should have planned ahead; now you'll have to wait your turn  it takes time to solve	if I don't bug them, they'll never do it  how can I plan ahead when I don't know what problems will come up; I've never done this	I really need to solve this problem right now - can't they see how imperative it is for me  I only have little problems They don't care about my

<p>schedules to maintain an efficient service haste makes waste</p>	<p>these "little" problems  we have problems too.</p>	<p>before.  I don't like having my time wasted either</p>	<p>problems; only about their own.  They are blind to our needs  They are self-serving</p>
<p>9. undereducated women are probably the hardest kind of person to educate. you can't teach an old dog new tricks especially when they have never had to work in their life and probably won't work now but just go back on social welfare they are really someone else's problem - not ours</p>	<p>they will take twice as long as a man so there's no point in asking much of them  they will probably not finish  they will probably go back to being a housewife so let's teach them how to be better housewives.  we won't bother providing the services we might provide for other types of learners</p>	<p>these programs are boring; I could go a lot faster if they would let me and help  This takes so long - I can't wait to finish. I guess  I will have to go back to housekeeping  how come the others get things we don't get?</p>	<p>They don't seem to care about how well I am doing  I am wasting time and money which I need for other things  I should be at home anyway  They don't want me anywhere else but at home  They treat me as second-rate learner &amp; a second-class person I am a second-class person</p>

## Basic problems

1. Undereducated women hold attitudes about themselves as learners and persons, about learning situations and educational institutions which are frequently reinforced by the behaviour and attitudes of service-providers.
2. Service-providers hold attitudes about undereducated women, and about their own organizational ability to provide services to these adult learners which are frequently reinforced by the behaviour and attitudes of the undereducated women.
3. Frequently these two sets of attitudes and behaviors are cyclical and mutually reinforcing, with a Catch-22 built in which locks both sides into impossible positions and incongruent behaviour.
4. The biggest problem appears to be a lack of awareness on the part of the service-providers about how their organizational structures, processes and expectations about adult learners tend to act as a barrier to undereducated women.
5. The attitudes and values which are explicit or implicit in every encounter between the undereducated woman and the service-provider at every level are one of the most important elements determining whether she enters, remains and progresses in an adult basic education programs.

## Recommendations to CLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CLOW will work toward increasing the awareness of those who provide adult basic education services to women about the attitudes and organizational structures and processes which create barriers to undereducated women wishing to enter such programs.

Your additions or suggestions . . . .

## Issue X: Outreach and support services

There are two critical stages to the successful learning experience for a woman. These are: (a) the point at which the woman is seeking information about and admission to a learning program and the educational institution is reaching out to make its programs accessible to that woman; and (b) the point at which the woman enters the learning program itself as a fully registered learner. The first requires an interface between the woman and the personnel, structures and practices of the educational administration. It involves the outreach functions of the institution and the effectiveness of the functions will affect both accessibility and barriers to learning opportunities. The second requires an interface between the woman, the teacher and other students and between the woman and her perceptions of herself as a functioning person in the world in general and in the learning situation in particular. It involves the support functions of the institution and the effectiveness of these functions will affect the success or failure of individual women.

### Background

#### a. Outreach functions (accessibility and barriers)

A recent report from the state of Florida states: (1)

Outreach goes beyond merely making existing programs available to more persons. It may involve developing new educational services, perhaps new subject matter, and new modes of delivery. Outreach also involves the creation of better systems for the delivery and use of knowledge (information).

Two key concepts in educational outreach are "access" and "barriers". While educational services may be available, they are not necessarily accessible to those needing the services. Barriers, which restrict access, can be imposed by educational institutions ... (or) be self-imposed by the client...

Access, then, requires more than availability. It requires educational "affirmative action". The institution must do more than identify and correct institutionally imposed barriers. It should also determine what other types of obstacles -- financial, occupational, personal, informational -- confront potential participants and then do what it can to alleviate them.

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(1). Access to knowledge (Volume 1), Report of the Florida Commission on Educational Outreach and Service. Tallahassee, Florida, 1976 pp. 122 - 123

For the interface between an undereducated woman and the administrative structures and practices to work well . . . .

The potential participant must ...

... know learning opportunities exist

... be able to obtain information about learning opportunities

... be able to connect specific learning opportunities to her own specific problems and needs; and to be able to see that a learning program might help solve that problem

... be willing and able to request assistance to become admitted and to be able to find the necessary resources

... be able to plan ahead and to solve whatever problems might be involved at some later time in attending the learning program.

and the service-provider must ...

... provide information about learning opportunities

... provide information in a format suitable to the needs of the potential participant

... provide counselling services to assist potential participants to make these connections

... provide a wide variety of alternative learning opportunities suitable to needs of potential participants

... provide an unthreatening environment and helpful personnel with positive attitudes toward women and undereducated learners; and provide an uncomplicated admissions procedure

... provide a counselling service to assist the potential participant to obtain financial assistance; child care services; and transportation, if necessary.

All this assumes that adult basic education programs must have, as part of their total service to the undereducated learner, integrated auxiliary services: for counselling, information and referral; for assistance in obtaining financial support, child care services, and transportation; and for training administrative and counselling personnel to be sensitive to the needs of the undereducated woman and to be capable of acting with a high degree of empathy toward such women.

If any of these services are missing, their absence can become a barrier to the participation of undereducated women. Too many educational institutions assume that the outreach function is adequately served through advertising, public relations, telephone answering services, advisory committees, and so on. This

type of limited outreach does little to reach the undereducated woman nor is it responsive to her needs.

Several educational institutions do support outreach services, but they are invariably for educated women. Those outreach services which do serve the undereducated woman are invariably under-staffed, under-funded and over-worked.

b. Support functions (success or failure)

A recent report by Jean Skelhorne on the situation facing mature women who enter university as undergraduates, while focusing on educated women, provides the following description of a single mother of two small boys whose problems in trying to complete her education are not unlike those faced by less well educated women: (1)

She was up against all the barriers faced by a mature student ... anxiety about academic ability, lack of time, self-doubts, stress, a "second-shift" style of living, as well as the extra problems encountered by a single parent -- the lack of adequate day care centers or reliable baby-sitters, the daily uncertainty of domestic emergencies, the feeling that nobody cared, the difficulty of meeting deadlines because of so many responsibilities, and the perennial problem of lack of money. She was driven by the need to up-grade herself so that she could get a better job to support herself and her children.

Another report from Lillian Zimmerman at Douglas College in British Columbia says: (2)

I cannot stress the crucial importance of ... the acquisition of psychological skills. What we, who are programming for women, find is that endemic in women are feelings of low self-worth, lack of self-esteem and confidence in themselves. It is like a chronic low-grade infection. The statement I have heard over and over again is "There must be something wrong with me". ... This social isolation, I'm afraid, is part of our entire socialization process which imbues women with secondary status in our society, and their self-images -- the subjective part of their exclusion from the prestigious work of our society. What women do is usually regarded as of secondary importance, or as being frivolous.....

The largest response (in programs) has been, and will continue increasingly to be, for those short-term, skills acquisition courses which are of a self-developmental nature consisting of self-assessment, confidence building, goal-setting, and so on, and transition courses such as how to take a first

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(1). Jean Skelhorne, Does anybody care? (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Department of Adult Education, 1975), p. 11

(2). Lillian Zimmerman, "What should continuing education be doing for women", PACE Newsletter, volume 7:2, 1978.



step. Here women's resource centers have and will have vital roles to play in offering counselling and emotional support services.

A small number of research reports exist which indicate that women who, at the time of entry (or re-entry) to the learning environment, are fortunate to be able to participate in courses designed to help them learn psychological skills and learning to learn skills, tend to have lower drop-out rates, to achieve better grades, and to show a greater improvement in self-esteem, self-confidence and self-acceptance, than do women who do not have such learning experiences. (1) While more research is necessary, those who work with women in learning environments consistently report that most women require on-going counseling services, peer support structures, places to socialize with others their own age, assistance with various resource services such as the library, crisis-oriented services to meet unforeseen problems, and so on.

### Basic problems

1. Outreach services provided by educational institutions for adult basic education programs tend to be inadequate to meet the needs of potential participants in such programs. Such outreach services should not be limited to advertising, public relations, telephone answering services, and advisory committees; but should be extended to include counselling, information and referral services; assistance in obtaining financial support, child care services and transportation; and training for administrative and counselling personnel in working effectively and empathically with undereducated women.
2. Support services provided by educational institutions for adult basic education programs tend to be non-existent. Most such services are provided through the local welfare office, if at all, and through peer support from other women in the same programs. Support services should be extended by educational institutions to include ongoing counselling services and crisis-oriented services, peer support through organized group structures and through the provision of social areas, programs designed to help women acquire a sense of self-confidence and self-worth and to learn how to manage in the educational environment.

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(1). J. Mezirow, Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community college. (N. Y.: Columbia University, Teachers College, Center for Adult Education, 1978), p. 51

M. Patterson and L. Sells, "Women drop-outs from higher education" in A. Rossi and A. Calderwood (eds.), Academic women on the move. (N. Y.: Russell Sage Foundation Press, 1973), pp. 79 - 91

S. Vander Voet and others, Sole support mothers building self-esteem. Report of the Opportunity for Advancement program. Available from 111 Sun Row Drive Weston, Ontario. April, 1978.

## Recommendations to CCLOW

This committee recommends that the following policy statements be accepted by the Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women:

CCLOW will support and encourage educational institutions to develop better outreach and support services for women in adult basic education services.

CCLOW will develop and make recommendations to specific educational institutions about the barriers created by their outreach services for undereducated women and about deficiencies in the support functions provided in conjunction with adult basic education programs.

Your additions or suggestions . . . .