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A Study to Determine Why Students Enroll in ABE and GED Preparation Classes at Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia

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**A STUDY TO DETERMINE
WHY STUDENTS ENROLL
IN ABE AND GED PREPARATION CLASSES
AT MADISON CAREER CENTER, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA**

**A RESEARCH PAPER
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN EDUCATION**

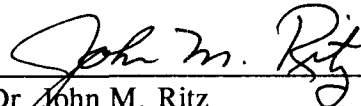
BY KIMBERLY A. BROWN

MAY 1992

This research paper was prepared by Kimberly A. Brown under the direction of Doctor John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. The report was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The invention of written language involved a gradual development from the use of pictures to the use of an alphabet, probably beginning in ancient Sumer around 3600 B.C. People who lived before that time had no written language and are therefore properly considered non-literate, rather than illiterate. Those who have lived since the invention of written language have been in a historical position to be literate, potentially; but even in these times there are societies that have not encountered a written language. The people of such societies are referred to as preliterate. Finally, there are people who live in a society that has a written language but are not themselves able to read and write. Such inability may stem from never having been taught or, if taught, never having used such knowledge. These people can be referred to as illiterate (Murphy, 1990, p. 775).

On the basis of these distinctions, preliterate and illiterate people can be classified as subgroups of the general category of "illiterate." In these terms, illiteracy is seen as a problematic condition either of whole societies or of individuals within societies (Murphy, 1990, p. 775).

Illiteracy is increasing in frightening numbers. There are 25 million Americans who cannot read or write at all. An additional 45 million are functionally illiterate meaning they do not have the reading and writing skills to find work. The number of functionally illiterate Americans are growing by two million a year (Zuckerman, 1989, p. 72). The lack of a formal certificate is the beginning of difficulties faced by the illiterate

adult. The illiterate adult frequently finds themselves in obsolete jobs, jobs that lay off regularly, or among the unemployed or the underemployed. Worse yet, these adults have to cope with society's assumption that they are lazy, shiftless, and lacking in self-respect (Rossman, Fisk, Roehl, 1984, p. 3).

Illiteracy costs our society billions of dollars annually. The economic bill for illiteracy comes to approximately \$20 billion each year (Kozol, 1985, p. 26).

Government studies show a high correlation between illiteracy and low income unemployment and underemployment, the need for public assistance, and involvement in crime. An estimated 75 percent of all unemployed adults in the United States are functionally illiterate, costing the taxpayers an estimated \$6 million yearly in welfare and unemployment compensation (Business Council for Effective Literacy, 1984, pp. 2-3).

According to the U. S. Census data, in 1980, in Norfolk, 25,114 adults 25 years of age and older had less than a ninth grade education. This represents an illiteracy rate of 18.4 percent. In 1980, there were 668,000 adults in Virginia 25 and older who had less than a ninth grade education. This represents an illiteracy rate of 21.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980). In an effort to curb Norfolk's illiteracy problem, the Adult Education Program of the Madison Career Center, an affiliate of the Norfolk Public Schools, offers Adult Basic Education Courses (ABE) for adults eighteen years or older, who have less than a ninth grade education and desire to learn basic skills in reading, grammar, writing, and mathematics. This free program also helps students prepare for entrance into a GED preparatory class. In addition to ABE courses, Madison also offers General Educational Development (GED) courses for adults who did not complete requirements for high school graduation an opportunity to earn a high school equivalency

certificate which qualifies them for admission to college or to a more advanced educational requirements for employment or promotion in a job.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem with this study was to determine why students enroll in Adult Education Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) Preparation Classes at Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of this research were as follows:

1. To determine why students enroll in ABE classes.
2. To determine why student enroll in GED Preparation classes.
3. To determine how students found out about the ABE and GED Preparation classes.
4. To determine how ABE and GED Preparation classes should be advertised in order to increase greater enrollment.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Adult Basic Education is designed for those adults who desire to learn the rudimentary skills of reading, grammar, writing, and mathematics. In addition, this program also prepares the student for entrance into a GED preparation class (Virginia Department of Education, Adult Education Services). The Adult Basic Education program began in 1964 with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). Previous programs had excluded millions of adults from participation because of specific age, physical, or geographical requirements, or because they lacked sufficient education

to begin the program (Pohl, 1990, p. 7). The Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) offered basic education to person 18 years old and older whose inability to read or write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to obtain or retain employment. Under the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), the Office of Economic Opportunity gave grants to states to help pay for local educational agency programs for teaching adults, including acquisition of information on what materials and methods would be needed for such programs. Each state was required to submit a plan to provide for program administration by the State Educational Agency. Funds were distributed to states based on the relative number of persons 18 or older in each state who had completed five or fewer grades of school or the equivalent (Pohl, 1990, p. 8). In 1966, Congress passed the Adult Education Act (Title II of the 1966 Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Act), thus transferring the Adult Education program to the U.S. Office of Education. Its purpose was to enable adults to become more productive and responsible citizens.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, three million students enrolled in Adult Basic Education Classes for the school year 1988-89 (Newman and Beverstock, 1990, p. 177). Nationally, 54 percent of participants were female and 46 percent of participants were male during the 1988 program year (Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 1990). A majority of adult education participants are between the ages of 16 and 44, 39.9 percent are between the ages of 16 and 24, and 41 percent are between 25 and 44 years of age. Approximately 6.5 percent of adult education participants are 60 years of age or older. The percentage of women participating in adult education programs increases for the older age groups (Kutner, 1990, p. 15). Only a relatively

small percentage of eligible adults participate in the adult education program. This has been an on going concern. Nationally, approximately four percent of those eligible annually receive services. A 1987 survey of 48 state directors found states served an estimated six to fourteen percent of adults in need of literacy services (Education Commission of the States, 1987). In the last ten years, Hispanics have become a growing segment of adult education participants. A decline in the percentage of participants who are white and black has been coupled with an increase in the percentage of hispanic participants. The 1980 Development Associates Study found that approximately 25 percent of adult education participants were black, 21 percent were hispanic, and 43 percent were white (Young, 1980, p. 177). Participants with limited English proficiency have increased in the adult education programs. A 1987 national study of English-as-a-Second Language programs found that the total number of limited English proficient students in adult education programs stood at 42 percent (Campbell, 1987, p. 8). The increase in English-as-a-Second Language participants has been attributed in large part to the large influx of refugees in metropolitan areas in the past few years. More than 882,000 refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam have emigrated to the United States. Since 1975, immigrants from Haiti, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Eastern Europe comprise about 25 percent of all immigrants each year (Bliss, 1989, p. 14).

According to Fingeret, the Adult Education Act viewed literacy as a set of skills and saw illiteracy as a cause of many of the problems encountered by poor or minority persons. The belief is that literacy instruction can change an individual's socioeconomic and cultural status. Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs goals imply that all adults should be literate to function as productive members of society (Fingeret, 1984, p. 8).

Adult Basic Education is the only game in town for those taking a last chance on education (Mezirow, Darkenwald, Knox, 1975, p. 3).

The Tests of General Educational Development was developed by the Department of Defense in cooperation with the American Council of Education in 1942. It was established to enable military personnel to attain the equivalent of a high school education and to encourage participation in educational activities for self-improvement (The Tests for General Educational Development, American Council on Education). The American Council on Education realized the need for Civilians and directed the GED program over the past four decades. It was geared toward civilians who did not finish high school an opportunity to earn a high school diploma. It also enables individuals to demonstrate that they have acquired a level of learning comparable to that of high school graduate. Recognized nationwide by employers and institutions of higher learning, the GED program has increased employment, education, and earning opportunities for more than ten million adults (The Tests for General Educational Development, American Council on Education). The test are normed periodically, most recently in 1986, by administering them, state by state, to recent high school graduates. Then, the passing score for GED candidates is usually established in the range of the 27th to 30th percentile of the scores attained by regular high school graduates in the particular state. The examination measures general skills in five areas: writing, reading, social studies, science, and mathematics (Change, 1989, p. 35).

The number of people taking the GED tests increased by 247.3 percent from 1967 to 1987. This is an annual rate of change of 6.4 percent. The figures include all candidates in Canada, the United States, and the U.S. citizens living abroad (Change,

1989, p. 35). By 1990, the number of people taking the test increased to 763,618, 12 percent more than 1989 (The Tests for General Educational Development, American Council on Education). Enormous growth in the GED program occurred from 1967, the past year, through 1972, with the number of candidates doubling from 218,386 to 430,346. Growth continued to be strong but not quite at the earlier magnitude from 1972 to 1982. Then, from 1982 to 1987, the number of candidates declines from 792,132 to 758,367. The most likely explanation for this drop was the decline during the 1970s of young people of high school age. Because men and women in their 20s are the chief group taking the test, the impact of the decline continued during the 1980s (Change, 1989, pp. 35-36). Approximately three quarters of the candidates for the GED Test past the examinations. The pass rate has steadily risen since 1972, when 67.4 percent of the test takers ultimately passed all sections and qualified for the certificate. The figure was 69.7 percent in 1977, 73.9 percent 1982, and 74.1 percent in 1987 (Change, 1989, p. 36). The number of GED graduates rose to 431,225 in 1990. GED diplomas accounted for more than one-eighth of the estimated three million high school diplomas issued in the United States in 1990 (The Tests for General Educational Development, American Council on Education). Each year since 1942, thousands have taken the GED Test. The program now tests more than 700,000 people each year in the United States, Canada, and many territories.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to a survey of students in ABE and GED Preparation classes at Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia, First Quarter, Fall (September 16 through November 15, 1991).

ASSUMPTIONS

It was assumed in this study that:

1. Students in ABE and GED Preparation classes share a common goal of obtaining their certificates.
2. Responses from the Norfolk group would be indicative of other adult population enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes in urban areas.
3. By understanding why adults enroll in ABE and GED Preparation classes, the message could be better advertised to attract more students into the programs.

PROCEDURES

The subjects of this study were selected from ABE and GED Preparation classes at the Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia. To satisfy the objectives of this study, students were surveyed on Thursday, October 17, 1991 to determine why they enroll in ABE and GED Preparation classes. The survey form was a closed form questionnaire administered by the researcher during ABE and GED Preparation classes.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following list is presented to clarify the meaning of terms used throughout this study.

1. Adult - Any individual who has attained to the age of eighteen years.
2. Adult Basic Education(ABE) - Education for persons whose inability to speak, read, or write the English language substantially impairs their ability to get or retain employment commensurate with their real abilities. Adult Basic Education is intended to raise the

educational level of such persons in order to decrease their dependence on others, enable them to benefit from occupational training, increase their opportunities for more productive and profitable employment, and make them better able to meet their adult responsibilities.

3. Adult Education Act of 1966 -

Purpose of this act was to "encourage and expand basic educational programs for adults to enable them to overcome English language limitations, to improve their basic education in preparation for, occupational training and more profitable employment, and to become more productive and responsible citizens." (The Adult Education Act P.L., 95-51).

4. Adult Education -

Services or instruction below the college level for adults who lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society or who do not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education and who have not achieved an equivalent level of education, and are not currently required to be enrolled in schools. (The Adult Education Act P.L., 95-561.)

5. Basic Skills -

Fundamental competencies deemed necessary for achievement of Academic success in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and mathematics. The successful acquisition of basic skills requires an integration of literacy, numerical, social, and problem-solving skills that prepare individuals to meet the changing demands of their social, economic, and work environments.

6. Functional Illiteracy -

A quality attributed to an individual who lacks one, of the basic skills necessary to communicate effectively in written or arithmetic forms.

7. The Economic Opportunity Act -
This act authorized an adult basic education program for persons 18 years of age or older who faced difficulty in obtaining employment because of an inability to read or write English (Kutner, 1990, p. 1).
8. GED (General Educational Development) Certificate -
The equivalent of a high school diploma earned by passing the GED Test.
9. GED Program -
A program of instruction designed to prepare persons to take a high school equivalency examination.
10. GED Test -
The GED Test provides a valid means of measuring the educational proficiency of those persons in comparison with high school graduate. Through achievement of satisfactory scores on this battery of GED tests, adults may earn a high school diploma.
11. Illiteracy -
Lacking the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable a person to engage effectively in all activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his or her culture or group (Cervero, 1985, p. 51).

SUMMARY

In Chapter I, the problem and goals of this study was to determine the reasons why students enroll in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes at Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia. The remaining sections of Chapter I support, analyze, and give information about the procedure used. In the following chapter, a review of literature is provided.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to review the literature that was related to the objectives. In this chapter are sections on the Adult Education Act, Why or Why not do students participate in Adult Education, ABE and GED Preparation classes, Motivational factors that relate to ABE and GED students participation in Adult Education, Barriers involved in Participation in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes, and Strategies for recruiting and retaining ABE and GED students in Adult Education Programs.

ADULT EDUCATION ACT

In 1964, Congress enacted the Economic Opportunity Act which authorized an adult basic education program for persons 18 years of age or older who faced difficulty in obtaining employment because of an inability to read or write English. Subsequently, in 1966, the Adult Education Act was passed (Kutner, 1990, p. 1). The passage of this Act has been hailed as a landmark piece of legislation. For adult educators, it marked the first time that the government became involved in adult education other than training. The purpose of this Act was to "encourage and expand basic educational programs for adults to enable them to overcome the English language limitations, to improve their basic education in preparation for occupation training and more profitable employment, and to become more productive and responsible citizens" (Rose, 1992, p. 21).

The Adult Education Act authorizes a number of programs, the largest of which is a

state grant program that funds three types of adult education activities. Activities supported by the state grant include: (1) basic literacy services for adults whose skill levels are below the eighth grade; (2) services designed to prepare students to obtain a high school equivalency diploma; and (3) English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) Services for adults with limited English proficiency (Kutner, 1990, p. 3). The Adult Education Act also authorized grants for special experimental demonstration projects and for teacher training. Since 1966, the Adult Education Act has been amended many times, most recently in 1988. These amendments have expanded the scope of the act to include adult high school completion, a competency based approach to assessment and programming and workplace literacy programs (Division of Adult Education and Literacy, 1990). When the Adult Education Act was reauthorized in 1991, it was expected to provide greater support for and coordination of adult basic education and adult literacy initiatives at state and local levels (Crandall and Imell, 1991, p. 2-8).

The enlarged scope of the Adult Education Act has been accompanied by an increase in both enrollees and financial support. The number of persons served by the act has grown from a half a million adults in 1968 to more than 3 million in 1988. Although the amount of federal funding for the act has increased from \$30.6 million in 1968 to \$238.8 million in 1991, it has been the increase in state and local support from \$9.6 million in 1968 to \$510.5 million in 1988 that is an indication of widespread support for the act and its purpose (Division of Adult Education and Literacy, 1990).

PARTICIPATION

There has been a large number of studies that have been concerned with questions related to participation in adult education. Until recently, most of them have focused on

who participates and why. Consequently, a great deal is known about the characteristics and motivations of those individuals who enroll in adult education offerings (Imell, 1986, p. 176). Despite the failure of scholars to provide a general theoretical explanation for participation in adult learning activities, program planners have been able to observe certain demographic, psychological, and sociological variables related to enrollment. The most generally recognized variable is the educational achievement level: The more education an individual has, the more likely he/she is to enroll in additional programs. Other variables that have been investigated with varying degrees of success include age, sex, race, and economic status (Long, 1983, p. 63). Also, adults participate in adult education for a number of reasons but those related to jobs are cited more frequently. Although these studies have enhanced adult educators' knowledge about which adults are most likely to enroll in what courses, they have not shed much light on why some individuals do not participate in adult education (Imell, 1986, p. 176).

The fact that certain groups of adults do not participate in adult education has become a social issue. Consequently, participate research has begun to focus on factors that may prevent or inhibit individuals from enrolling in adult education programs. The authors of the initial studies and reports that examined non- participation identified the groups of factors that prevented adults from participating as barriers to participation. More recently, however, the term deterrents has begun to replace barriers (Imell, 1986, p. 176).

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

There were predictions that by the year 2000, 76 percent of the nation's population would be adults (Cetrone and Sariano, 1985, p. 39). Adult education then would become increasingly more significant. The factors that motivated these learners would have multifaceted, including attitudinal dimensions of beliefs, feelings, and inherent in these factors would have been means of recruitment and retention of students.

Roger Boshier developed the Educational Participation Scale (EPS) in 1971 in order to investigate Cyril Houle's conceptualization of motivational orientations. His fact of analysis of the 48 item Educational Participation Scale was based on responses from 233 adult education participants at three institutions in New Zealand (Bova, 1985, p. 96). After a close examination of Houle's Inquiring Mind, which was written in 1963, the 48 items detailing reasons for participation (e.g. "to get a break from the routine of home and work") were assembled. The respondents were asked to check on a nine point scale to the extent that the reason influenced their enrollment in an adult education class. Respondents were identified by code numbers and no names were required (Boshier, 1971, p. 3).

Boshier identified four motivations of adult education in his Educational Participation Scale (EPS). These included:

1. Escape/stimulation - A need to escape routine, boring or frustrating situations and a desire to find intellectual stimulation. Individuals who score high on this dimension tend to view their participation in adult education classes as a relief from everyday boredom and responsibilities by

providing a contrast to their daily routine. This was a motivating factor of many groups, including non-whites.

2. Professional Advancement - A desire to improve ones position in the work world, to secure professional advancement and to increase competence on the job. It was a motivating factor of the 16-35 year old age group.
3. Social Contact/Community Service/External Expectations - This motivation included such items as improving social relationships, making new friends improving social position, preparing for community service, and participating in group activity. It was a motivating factor particularly for students in the 16-20 age group.
4. Cognitive Interest - This motivation included learning just for the sake of learning, seeking knowledge for its own sake, satisfying an inquiring mind, and providing a contrast to the rest of one's life. This was a motivating factor of the over 36 year old age group.

Cyril Houle's book entitled Inquiring Mind was written in 1961. The book dealt with Houle's Classic Study of twenty-two continuing learners. This study was done at the University of Wisconsin during which time he conducted lengthy open ended interviews with twenty-two continuing learners. Adults were identified by colleagues and friends to Professor Houle as continuing participants in adult education courses over a number of years (Brookfield, 1983, p. 3).

Houle's Three-Way-Typology of motivational orientation to learning was identified in three categories:

1. Goal-oriented learners - These learners use education to achieve previously specified objectives. They do not function solely within formal instructional settings but are willing to use private reading and educational visits as well as enrolling in an education program. For the goal-oriented, Houle says learning is scenes of episodes, each beginning with the identification of a need or an interest. Such learners do not restrict their learning activities to any one institution or method but select whatever method will best achieve their purpose, taking a course, joining a group, reading a book, and taking a trip (Cross, 1981, p. 82).
2. Activity-oriented learners - These adults have an extrinsic, instrumental attitude to learning in which they attend classes chiefly for social contact. The subject matter of the course is secondary to the social benefits bestowed by participation. Most of the activity-oriented learners in Houle's sample said that they do almost no reading. Houle suggests, however, that if the sample had been larger, it might have included activity-oriented people who used reading for purposes other than to learn the content. There may be people, for example, who escape into the relative solitude of a library or immerse themselves in reading in order to avoid real-life problems (Cross, 1981, p. 82).
3. Learning-oriented learners - These adults have an intrinsic commitment to learning and regard themselves as continuing learners. A constant engagement in some form of learning is a chief distinguishing characteristic of their lives. Most of the learning-oriented learners are

avid readers; they join groups, and even choose jobs, for the learning potential offered; they watch serious programs on television and make extensive background preparations when traveling in order to appreciate what they see (Cross, 1981, p. 83).

Allen Tough is the leading proponent of research on self-directed learning. He uses interviews as a methodology to try to understand what motivates people to undertake and continue self-directed learning projects (Cross, 1981, p. 83). In 1979, Tough and his colleagues Abbey and Orton did an experiment on adult learners reasons for learning. Their model consists of five stages at which benefits might be anticipated, moving generally through (1) engaging in a learning activity to (2) retaining the knowledge or skill to (3) applying the knowledge to (4) gaining a material reward, as in promotion, or (5) gaining a symbolic reward, as in credits and degrees. At each stage, anticipated benefits might be classified into three clusters of personal feelings: pleasure (happiness, satisfaction, enjoyment, feeling good), self-esteem (regarding self more highly, feeling more confident, maintaining self-images), and category labeled "others" (others regard individual more highly, praise him, like him, feel grateful) (Cross, 1981, p. 121).

In 1984, Breda Bova and John Zelazek used Boshier's Educational Participation Scale (EPS) to determine why adults participate in adult basic education programs. During the study, the researchers administered the Educational Participation Scale (EPS) to 85 females and 72 males enrolled in ABE classes in New Mexico. Data from reasons for participation in ABE were examined to determine if any of the reasons for participation in ABE were related to age and sex (Bova and Zelazek, 1984, p. 2-3). The researchers found that the factors "escape" and "stimulation" were of moderate importance to students

between the ages of 18 and 45, of little importance to those in mid-life stages, and of above - moderate importance to those over the age of 55. While "professional advancement" and "personal growth" were of above - average importance to adults under the age of 50, a dramatic drop in ranking of scores for these factors occurred for those in later years. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that ABE instructors make more use of small group instruction, mentoring programs, field trips, and community awareness programs (Bova and Zelazek, 1984, p. 7).

Fisher reports on a study that identified the distinguished characteristics of active older adults who participate in educational activities and measured factors that motivated participation. Data were collected from 786 older adults in Milwaukee County using a survey instrument (Fisher, 1984, p. 1). Both participants and non-participants were included in the study. It was found that respondents participated in learning activities because they enjoyed being with other people, liked the challenge of learning, and were attracted by the usefulness of the subject matter. Those who did not participate mentioned the following as deterrents: lack of transportation, night classes, uninteresting courses, high costs, and lack of transportation (Fisher, 1984, p. 2). Through demographic and other data collected in the survey, Fisher concluded that participation is related to prior educational experiences, confidence in relationships with others, propensity to engage in self-directed learning activities, awareness of the availability of education programs and interest in topics for future learning. Each of these, except prior educational experiences, is susceptible to direct or indirect manipulation by educators with older adults at the program level (Fisher, 1984, p. 7).

In light of these findings, he made a suggestion that programs for older adults should use self-directed learning activities. They should also concentrate on helping older adults to build dependable relationships with others (Fisher, 1984, p. 7).

In Reed's study, the main reasons students enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes was to earn their GED. Passing the GED helped them find jobs, obtain salary increases, or develop a sense of self-worth (Reed and others, 1984, p. 120).

BARRIERS

Early attempts to explain why adults fail to participate in education is considered the potential impact of changes in life circumstances upon participatory behavior.

Educational activity was seen as the interplay between personal needs and social structures. When both needs and social structures drive a person toward an educational objective, the likelihood of participation should be high (Kerka, 1986, p. 2). There has been existing models and theories that attempt to explain participation behavior by researchers. These include those recent approaches that attempted to combine dispositional, situational, and environmental factors into composite models. What these theories and models imply is that a variety of variables are associated with participatory behavior. A number of researchers have explored the influence of such demographic variables as age, sex, income, race, educational attainment, employment status, and geographic location. Non-demographic variables affecting participation are categorized as situational, associated with individual life circumstances, particularly in terms of career and social roles; dispositional associated with values, attitudes, beliefs, opinions or psychological, associated with individual psychological or personality traits (Kerka, 1986, p. 2).

In 1981, Cross developed a Typology of Barriers to participation in all adult education settings. It appears to have applicability to attribution research in adult basic and secondary education.

The three categories of deterrents are identified by Cross:

1. Situational barriers - Barriers that arise from one's situation in life at a given time. Lack of time due to job and home responsibilities, for example deters large numbers of potential learners in the 25-45 year old group. Lack of money is a problem for young people and others of low income. Lack of child care is a problem for young parents.

Transportation is a situational barrier for geographically isolated and physically handicapped learners.
2. Institutional Barriers - Barriers that consist of all those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities, inconvenient schedules or locations, full time fees for part-time study, in appropriate courses of study, and so forth.
3. Dispositional Barriers - Barriers that are related to attitudes and self-perception about oneself as learner. Many older citizens, for example, feel that they are too old to learn. Adults with poor educational backgrounds frequently lack interest in learning or confidence in their ability to learn.

The multiple factors deterring participation and their differential impact mean that a number of different approaches are needed to encourage adult involvement in educational activities (Cross, 1981, p. 146-149).

General guidelines for addressing deterrents include the following:

1. Ways of overcoming the powerful deterrents of poor self-concept and negative attitudes toward education include providing educational opportunities with low levels of risk or threat, reinforcement of self-concept, more positive personal experiences early in the educational career and the support of adults' significant others.
2. Situational and institutional deterrents can be addressed by administrative accommodations (alternative scheduling extended for counseling), student services (transportation, child care), and distance teaching.
3. Effective communication of accurate, timely, and appropriate information about educational opportunities must be targeted to the particular needs, expectations, and concerns of the intended guidance.

Dao utilized a projective technique to study reasons for non-participation among a sample of 278 employees of 17 profit-making organizations. Using personal interviews and a literature review, the investigator first compiled a listing of some 550 reasons given by adults for non-participation in educative activities. These were analytically reduced to 88 deterrents statements and sorted by a panel of 24 expert judges (Dao, 1975, p. 32).

Dao derived the following nine clusters of reasons for non-participation:

1. Not enough time to participate in educational activities.
2. Individual and personal problems make it too difficult to participate (e.g., poor transportation, cost, ill health, safety, and so forth).
3. Too difficult to succeed in educational activities (e.g., anxiety over instructional demands, insufficient time to devote to study, age-related

concerns over learning abilities, fear of public failure, and so forth).

4. Against the social norms to participate in educational activities (e.g., general social disapproval, fear of ridicule by family or peers, and so forth).
5. Negative feelings toward the institution offering instruction.
6. Negative prior experiences in educational activities.
7. Results of educational activities not valued (e.g., doubt that the learning will prove worthwhile, the conviction that experience is the best teacher, and so forth).
8. Indifference to educational activities.
9. Unawareness of the availability of educational activities.

In terms of the nine clusters on non-participation, lack of time (cluster 1) and indifference (cluster 8) were perceived by respondents as being the most significant. Cluster 7 was perceived third in importance, followed in order by clusters 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9. Cluster 4 was judged as being not influential. The perceived influence of the clusters on non-participation was most strongly associated with the educational attainment of those surveyed; in general, the higher the level of schooling of respondents, the less the magnitude of the clusters scores, particularly clusters 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 (Dao, 1975, p. 32).

Shipp and McKenzie administered a 31-item deterrents scale in 1980 to a stratified random sample of 678 non-participants in church - sponsored adult education programs (Shipp and McKenzie, 1980, p. 33).

Scale analysis yielded seven deterrents factors:

1. Resistance to change and education
2. Alienation
3. Marginality
4. Social non-affiliation
5. Perplexity/confusion
6. Program non-relevance
7. Activity incompatibility

Scanlan and Darkenwald used Cross's Typology Barriers to participation in adult education in their study in 1984 (Scanlan and Darkenwald, 1984, p. 138). The exception for this study was that "cost" was not included in the survey because the ABE programs were free; however, hidden costs such as transportation or child care might contribute to attribution. Dropouts indicated predominantly situational reasons for discontinuance; they responded "yes" or "sometimes" to having trouble getting to class (63 percent), needing to be at home due to children (43 percent), work schedules changes (32 percent), sickness (28 percent), and moving (16 percent). The major institutional barriers were the need for more individual attention (43 percent) and class scheduling (27 percent). Dispositional reasons appeared to play a minor role with deciding to study at home being a firm reason for less than (20 percent) for both groups. However, even here situational factors may be in evidence if this factor is related to the need to be with the children or moving. True dispositional factors such as enjoying class and people received (15 percent) "no" and "sometimes" responses while only (9 percent) regarded the class as a waste of their time. Similar responses for the dropouts (22 percent) and the completers (27 percent) suggest

that having classes too much like high school is not a critical factor in GED completion. Generally, in fact, the completers cited the same problems as the dropouts did except for having trouble getting to class (Scanlan and Darkenwald, 1984, p. 138).

Research evidence shows that demographic and non-demographic variables of and by themselves are not deterrents to participation. Instead, these research findings demonstrate that (1) "deterrents" is a multi-dimensional concept, encompassing clusters of variables; (2) these variables are influenced by prospective learners perceptions of their magnitude; and (3) the impact varies according to individuals characteristics and life circumstances. Synthesis of these findings suggests the following categories of deterrence factors (Scanlan, 1986, p. 35):

1. Individual, family, or home-related problems.
2. Cost concerns
3. Questionable worth, relevance or quality of available educational opportunities.
4. Negative perceptions of the value of education in general.
5. Lack of motivation or indifference toward learning.
6. Lack of self-confidence in one's learning abilities.
7. A general tendency toward non-affiliation.
8. Incompatibilities of time and/or place.

STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING AND RECRUITING ABE AND GED STUDENTS

Retention of adult students is a persistent and perplexing problem for providers of adult education. Participation and non-participation are popular subjects in the literature, as researchers attempt to identify characteristics and motivations of adult students and the

cause of dropping out. One problem centers around the definition of retention and the value placed on it. Defining retention in terms of program completion is relevant only for some students. For others, retention is successful if students achieve objectives for participating. Some argue that retention and attribution are neither good nor bad, but that the achievement of the student's goals should be the measure of program success (Holm, 1988, p. 14-15).

The literature on retention of adult learners strongly suggests that previous educational attainment is closely tied to participation and persistence. Educationally disadvantaged adults are more likely to lack self-confidence and self-esteem, have negative attitudes toward education, and need mastery of basic skills such as literacy before attaining job skills that could improve their economic circumstances (Kerka, 1988, p. 3).

Recent research by Haynes confirms several propositions about this population: (1) educationally disadvantaged adults typically experience a combination of barriers that cause them to dropout, (2) perception of these barriers varies according to such characteristics as age, sex, and educational level, and (3) even among groups with similar background characteristics, great differences exist in motivation and deterrence factors. Haynes classified six groups of low-literate adults based on their scores on five deterrence factors: low self-confidence, social disapproval, situational barriers, negative attitude toward education, and low personal priority. Most groups had relatively high scores on more than one factor. This new typology suggests that the most effective recruitment and retention strategy may be to tailor individual programs to the needs of specific groups (Haynes, 1988, p. 1-2).

In 1985, Wlodkowski provides 68 strategies and examples of learning activities or instructional behavior to carry them out. The following suggestions synthesize the advice of a number of writers and apply to all types of programs:

General Retention Strategies

1. Do not seek 100 percent retention. There are different types of attrition; identify which are harmful to the vitality of the program and to student objectives.
2. Begin retention efforts with recruitment; devote as much energy to retention as to recruitment.
3. Target recruiting at those whom the program is best equipped to serve.
4. Emphasize placement, orientation, counseling and advising early in the program.
5. Follow up inactive students with phone calls; have an ongoing process for identifying and tracking these students.

Specific Strategies for Specific Needs

Strategies in this section are grouped by deterrence factors.

Low Self-Confidence

1. Make special efforts in the first few weeks to orient students and get them to feel their goals are reachable - first by helping them have realistic goals and expectations.
2. Provide comprehensive orientation that includes assessment of ability, self-esteem, learning style motivations, and values.
3. Offer support services such as peer counseling and mentoring.

Social Disapproval

1. Emphasize the social aspects (making new friends warm, friendly atmosphere, informal settings).
2. Involve community organizations. Advertise in laundromats, churches, area stores. Use word-of-mouth and door-to-door recruiting with information as inserts in store purchases, paychecks, or telephone bills, or flyers sent home with schoolchildren.
3. Increase the visibility of the program through community service projects.
4. Provide opportunities for the academic and social integration of students.

Situational Barriers

1. Offer programs in accessible neighborhood locations with flexible scheduling to fit adult life-styles.
2. Arrange transportation (e.g., car pools) and child care.

Negative Attitudes

1. Advertise success stories and use successful students to recruit and to follow-up on dropouts.
2. Emphasize the difference between adult basic education and regular school.

Low Personal Priority

1. Focus on employment and employability skills, job survival, vocabulary and reading related to daily work situations.
2. Emphasize daily living/family life skills as a means of improving family relationships.
3. Give value for money in terms of education, services, and facilities.

SUMMARY

The review of literature indicated there has been some research as to why students enroll in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes. Motivating factors as to why student enroll in ABE and GED Preparation classes were also indicated in review of literature as well as barriers that deter adults from enrolling. In spite of the fact that many motivating factors have been identified along with barriers that deter students from enrolling in these programs, it was necessary to constantly strive to find new means to recruit ABE and GED preparation students and retain them once they enrolled.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of Chapter III is to explain the survey procedures used to obtain data from the Madison Career Center ABE and GED Preparation classes. The population, the data-gathering instrument, the collection of the data, and the data analysis are addressed in this chapter. In later chapters this information will be interpreted to determine why student enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes.

POPULATION

Subjects of this study were enrolled in the ABE and GED Preparation classes at the Madison Center. The study included: 44 ABE students and 14 GED preparation students.

DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENT

A closed questionnaire was administered to the above population to obtain factors as to why students enroll in ABE and GED Preparation classes at Madison Career Center. Included in the survey were questions related to the demographics of the population, classes they were enrolled, reasons for enrollment and how they learned of the classes. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix A.

COLLECTION OF THE DATA

Because the survey was undertaken during classes, the researcher had to obtain permission to administer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the ABE and GED Preparation students. The students were required to answer the following

questions by checking an answer to the questions. For one ABE group whose grade level ranged from one to four, the researcher read the questions and asked for an oral response.

DATA ANALYSIS

A suitable method for comparison of data will be utilized in the computation of findings. The research will be analyzed by using percentages to study the results of the questionnaire statements.

SUMMARY

Chapter III discussed the methods and procedures used to determine why students enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation classes at Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia. In this chapter, Population, Data-Gathering Instrument, Collection of Data, Data Analysis, and the Summary were reviewed. In the following chapter findings that resulted from the collection of data were found.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings compiled from data collected through a survey that was administered on October, 17, 1991 to Madison Career Center ABE and GED Preparation classes. The data collected was to be used to answer the following objectives:

1. Why students enrolled in ABE classes?
2. Why students enrolled in GED Preparation classes?
3. How did students find out about ABE and GED Preparation classes?
4. Effective strategies to encourage higher enrollment in ABE and GED Preparation classes.

ENROLLMENT IN ABE AND GED PREPARATION CLASSES

Table 1 contains the responses as to why ABE students enrolled in Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia, Adult Education program in the fall of 1991. Forty-four ABE students were administered questionnaires to determine why they decided to take ABE classes. Ages in ABE classes ranged from eighteen years of age to over sixty. The majority of the ABE students functioned on the 5-9 grade level. As the table shows, only six categories received responses, but improving basic skills (50 percent), improving job progress (17 percent), and qualifying for training programs (11 percent) received the most responses from ABE students. Additional comments as to why ABE students enrolled in

these classes included such reasons as obtaining their GED certificate and furthering their education.

TABLE 1
WHY ABE STUDENTS ENROLLED

REASON	NUMBER	PERCENT
To improve basic skills	27	50%
To learn better English	5	9%
To obtain drivers license	0	0%
To improve job progress	9	17%
To help children with homework	2	4%
To obtain citizenship	0	0%
To qualify for training program	6	11%
Other	5	9%

Table 2 contains the responses as to why GED Preparation student enrolled in the Adult Education program. Fourteen GED Preparation students between the ages of seventeen and fifty responded. The answers to the questionnaires indicated that this group functioned on grade levels ranging from 10-11. GED Preparation students chose to enroll in the class to get a diploma or a certificate (88 percent). Also included was a desire to go into the military.

TABLE 2**WHY GED PREPARATION STUDENTS ENROLLED**

REASON	NUMBER	PERCENT
To get a diploma or certificate	14	88 %
To assist with your current job	—	—
To receive a promotion	—	—
To prepare for a job change	—	—
Other	2	12 %

HOW STUDENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT PROGRAMS

Table 3 contains information as to how ABE and GED Preparation students found out about Madison Career Center Adult Education programs. Most of the ABE students received information through relatives and friends (36 percent) or the Local Board of Education (13 percent). Additional comments as to how ABE students found out about programs included Employment agencies, Social Services, and Adult Education programs (15 percent). GED Preparation students enrolled after receiving handouts and mailed leaflets (62 percent) and going through the Local Board of Education (23 percent). Some students were there as a result of their social worker (15 percent).

TABLE 3

HOW ABE AND GED PREPARATION FOUND OUT ABOUT PROGRAMS

How did students find out about programs	ABE		GED	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Local Board of Education	5	13 %	3	23 %
Newspaper, radio, TV	4	10 %	0	—
Handout, mailed leaflet	2	5 %	8	62 %
Relative, friend	14	36 %	0	—
Employer	2	5 %	0	—
Union	—	—	0	—
Student in ABE/GED	3	8 %	0	—
School counselor	2	5 %	0	—
Clergy	1	3 %	0	—
Other	6	15 %	2	15 %

BEST WAY TO ADVERTISE PROGRAMS

Information in Table 4 relates to how the students felt future programs could best be advertised. ABE students responded that mailing brochures to Norfolk residents would be the most effective means of advertising (39 percent), although they indicated that advertisement of the programs through the schools was important too (34 percent). GED Preparation students also felt the brochure (71 percent) and Presentations in the communities were good ways to advertise programs (22 percent).

TABLE 4
BEST WAY TO ADVERTISE PROGRAMS ABE AND GED

Best Way to Advertise Programs	ABE		GED	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Brochures to Norfolk Residents	17	39%	10	71%
Presentations in the Community	12	27%	3	22%
Distribution of Information Through Schools	15	34%	1	7%

SUMMARY

Information obtained from the survey administered to Madison Career Center Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes were presented in this chapter. This data was to be used to determine why students enrolled in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes and was presented in written explanation and in table form. Also reported was data concerning how students found out about these programs and how they felt future programs could best be advertised. That information was used to determine effective strategies to encourage higher enrollments in those programs. A summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reported the summary of this study, its conclusions, and the recommendations as a result of the research data obtained from the questionnaires answered by Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation students. The results were used to assist Madison Career Center adult educators to more effectively market their programs.

SUMMARY

This study indicated a variety of reasons that prompted students to enroll in Madison Career Center Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes. Chapter I presented the problem of this study, provided background regarding the problem, and related why the problem was being studied. This chapter also gave the limitations and assumptions of the study. A list of definitions was included to aid in understanding terms used by the researcher. Chapter II reviewed the literature previously researched on this subject, and Chapter III described methods and procedures for collecting data, including the subjects surveyed, design of the questionnaire, and when and where the instrument was administered. Chapter IV presented the data collected.

CONCLUSIONS

This research paper was designed to determine why students enrolled in Adult Education ABE and GED Preparation classes at Madison Career Center. The goals of this research was as follows:

1. To determine why students enroll in ABE classes.
2. To determine why students enroll in GED Preparation classes.
3. To determine how students found out about the ABE and GED Preparation classes.
4. Effective strategies to encourage higher enrollment in ABE and GED Preparation Classes.

The survey conducted by the researcher has established that students enrolled in ABE and GED Preparation programs for reasons such as improving basic skills and job progress, to qualify for training programs, and to obtain a GED certificate. Many indicated other reasons for enrolling such as furthering their education. Also evident from the study was a desire to go into the military. Most of the ABE students received information about the program through relatives and friends (36 percent) or the Local Board of Education (13 percent). GED Preparation students enrolled after receiving handouts and mailed leaflets (62 percent). They also received information through the Local Board of Education (23 percent). Both groups recommended that the programs be advertised in the brochure as a first choice. Distribution of information through the schools was a second choice for ABE students (34 percent), while it was the least choice for GED Preparation students. Presentation in the community was a third choice to advertise programs for ABE students (27 percent), while GED Preparation students considered it a second choice for advertising programs (22 percent).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the collected data and the findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. Brochures mailed to Norfolk residents should remain the focus of the advertising efforts.
2. Information about these programs should be provided to as many sources as possible. These might include:
 - A. Principals, Teachers, and Counselors in the public schools.
 - B. Local businesses whose employees might have a need for such programs could provide information to employers in the area and employers could in turn distribute the information to employees.
 - C. Any organizations relating to ethnic groups who could benefit from these programs, such as the ESL classes.
3. Future advertising emphasize all benefits of adult education. Brochures could depict the social aspects of adult education and advertise counseling for those students who would like to go to college.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

**STUDENT INTAKE/DATA FORM
ABE AND GED ADULT EDUCATION**

PURPOSE: This survey is being undertaken to determine why students enroll in adult education ABE and GED Preparation classes in Madison Career Center, Norfolk, Virginia.

DIRECTIONS: Please answer the following questions by placing a check (✓) in the spaces provided.

1. AGE:

- _____ Under 18
- _____ 18-25
- _____ 26-30
- _____ 31-40
- _____ 41-50
- _____ 51-60
- _____ Over 60

2. Class enrolled in:

- _____ ABE (Adult Basic Education)
- _____ GED Preparation (General Educational Development)

3. Last high school grade completed: _____

4. Major reason for enrolling in this class (ABE students only):

- _____ To improve basic skills
- _____ To learn better English
- _____ To obtain Driver's license
- _____ To improve job progress
- _____ To help children with homework
- _____ To obtain citizenship
- _____ To qualify for Training program
- _____ Other (specify):
