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A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CONTINUING ADULT
STUDENT BODY AT THE OKLAHOMA CENTER
FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION IN PROGRAMS
OF LIBERAL EDUCATION.**

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GRADUATE COLLEGE

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CONTINUING ADULT STUDENT BODY
AT THE OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
IN PROGRAMS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

A DISSERTATION
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degree of
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BY
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Norman, Oklahoma

1966

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CONTINUING ADULT STUDENT BODY
AT THE OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
IN PROGRAMS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

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This work is affectionately dedicated to Miss Debra Jeanne Ford, the raison d'etre.

There is so much to know and so little time
in which to learn it that not even the longest
lifetime is enough.

Cyril O. Houle

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CONTINUING ADULT STUDENT BODY
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Statements concerning "the rapid rate of social and technological change" are so commonplace today that any observation on this matter seems trite. However, the accelerating changes in the nature of skill and knowledge and social and cultural competence is a fact which must be faced in the last half of the Twentieth Century. There seems to be a danger that the transistor, not the meek, shall inherit the earth. Margaret Mead emphasized this point when she proclaimed that the most vivid truth of this age is that "no one will live all his life in the world into which he was born, and no one will die in the world in which he worked in his maturity."¹

Burton R. Clark, of the University of California, points out that the retraining and reorientation of adults

¹Margaret Mead, "A Redefinition of Education," NEA Journal (October, 1959).

must become a major educational objective as society moves deeper into the modern technological stage. Modern technology dictates that adult life be characterized by ever sharper requirements of occupational, social, and cultural competence. "Ours is an educative society and we are undoubtedly on the threshold of an age of adult education."²

Many different agencies, institutions, and organizations interested in this multi-faceted problem are offering programs of adult education designed to meet the demands of this new age. The present study is concerned with the programs of liberal education for adults which are offered at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. These programs are designed to assist the adult in his individual social and cultural orientation.

The operational philosophy of the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education and the College of Continuing Education of the University of Oklahoma assumes education to be a life-long process and that, indeed, one must continue learning throughout life.

In a speech to the Pacific Air Force Conference in 1964, Thurman J. White, Dean of the College of Continuing Education, indicated that only those people who are too old to learn or those who know everything have no further need for

²Burton R. Clark, "Knowledge, Industry, and Adult Competence," Sociological Backgrounds of Adult Education, ed. Robert W. Burns (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, c. 1964), pp 15-16.

education.³ Thorndike's early experiments dealing with the learning ability of adults demonstrated that adults can learn,⁴ and common sense seems to tell us that no one has all the answers. Therefore, White's remarks may be taken to mean that everyone needs to continue his education. Perhaps more to the point, he is quoted in a Kellogg Foundation publication dealing continuing education, ". . . learning is an endless process and nobody ever really completes his education. We must return to learn and learn more so that we are able to meet the competition of those persons who are aware of the necessity of periodical refreshing and retraining."⁵

In the University of Oklahoma's proposal to the Kellogg Foundation for the establishment of a center for continuing education, it is noted that ". . . education in a rapidly changing world becomes increasingly non-terminal. Modern man needs to continue his learning throughout his life time."⁶ Reference is also made to the growing "adult student body" and to the proposed center as the "intellectual home of an adult student body."

³Thurman J. White, A Philosophy of Continuing Education, an Address delivered at the Pacific Air Force Conference, December 8, 1964, Tokyo, Japan.

⁴E. L. Thorndike, Adult Learning (New York: Macmillan, 1931).

⁵Continuing Education, An Evolving Form of Adult Education (Battle Creek, Michigan: The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, n.d.), p. 48.

⁶Proposal to The W. K. Kellogg Foundation for Establishing a Center for Continuing Education at the University of Oklahoma, May, 1958, p. 46.

This proposal further points out that "educational growth depends on continuity and sequence. Programs of sequential nature depend upon a repeating clientele or, in other words, the presence of an adult student body. The Oklahoma center's emphasis on the individual is a severe test of the concept of an adult student body. Does such exist in fact? If one exists, what is it like?"⁷ Therefore, it seemed important to test the hypothesis that such a student body exists and to describe such a student body if it exists in fact.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was threefold: (1) identify the adult student body in programs of liberal education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education; (2) describe such a student body in terms of their commonalities of age, sex, level of formal education, occupation, size of community of residence, and extent of husband-wife participation; and (3) discover if there is participation relationship between the vocationally oriented programs and the programs of liberal education at the Center.

Hypotheses

The major hypothesis of this study was that an adult student body in programs of liberal education at the Oklahoma Center does exist.

⁷Kellogg Proposal.

There were five minor hypotheses:

1. Such a student body can be identified and described from the records maintained by the Office of Adult Admissions and Records.
2. The characteristics of the participants are consistent with those described by Brunner and Knox.
3. The sequence of participation in liberal education is individually determined. There is no common point of entry or sequence to be followed.
4. The extent of participation is related to the persistence of programming.
5. Persistence of programming in both liberal programs and programs which are vocationally oriented serves a cross-program participant recruitment function.

Assumptions

This study made five basic assumptions:

1. Adults can learn.
2. Programs of liberal education are available at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education.
3. Adults are motivated to avail themselves of the opportunities for continuing their liberal education.
4. Adults have participated in the programs of liberal education at the Center.
5. Liberal education for adults is a desirable activity for adults.

Scope of the Study

An attempt was made to identify and analyze only that group of adult continuing learners who participated in programs of liberal adult education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education from February 1, 1962, through June 30, 1965.

This period corresponds with the opening of the Center and the end of the 1964-65 fiscal year.

While a search was made to determine if the continuing learner also participated in vocationally oriented programs, no attempt was made to identify an adult student body in the vocationally oriented programs.

Only those participants in programs of liberal adult education conducted by the College of Continuing Education, under the terms of the 1962 grant from The Fund for Adult Education,⁸ in the Center were considered. Participants in the Bachelor of Liberal Studies seminars were not considered to be a part of this study.

Operational Definitions

Adult education. This term was defined as planned educational opportunities and activities offered adults who have completed the formal education of their youth and are engaged in adult pursuits.

Adult student body. For the purpose of this study, the adult student body was defined as that group of continuing adult learners (students) who continue to avail themselves of learning opportunities and experiences, over a period of years and in a number of different educational programs. The particular reference is to participants in

⁸Proposal to The Fund for Adult Education for a Six-Year Project to Develop a Comprehensive Program for Liberal Adult Education, presented by the University of Oklahoma, May, 1960.

programs of liberal education offered by the College of Continuing Education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. It implies an identifiable body of "continuing learners" (students).

Continuing adult learner (student). This term was defined as that adult who avails himself of continuing learning experiences over a period of years and utilizes a variety of programs but is not working toward a formal degree. In this study, it is that adult who has participated in at least three of the several programs offered by the College of Continuing Education, one of which must have been within the last year included in this study.

Continuing education. In this study, this term referred to continuing study by adults, utilizing periodic learning experiences within a university environment which features a specially designed physical facility.

Cross-program recruitment. This term referred to that action whereby participants, in a given program, upon exposure to other programs, become participants in them as well. The special reference here was to students participating in vocationally oriented programs becoming exposed to liberal education programs and becoming involved in such programs. The term may be applied also to the reverse situation where liberal participants availed themselves of opportunities offered by the vocationally oriented programs.

Education. For the purpose of this study, education was considered to be a purposive organization of learning experiences through which intellectual capacities were developed, attitudes were changed or re-enforced, and knowledge and skills were acquired for the modification of behaviorial patterns (toward meeting the exigencies of life).

Educational program. This term referred to a schedule of learning experiences designed to meet the needs of a specific clientele with a methodology for the orderly achievement of these ends. The terms "conference" and "seminar" are used loosely in this study and are interchangeable with the more generic term "educational program".

Fund for Adult Education grant. This term was applied to that grant of monies made by The Fund for Adult Education to the University of Oklahoma for the development of a comprehensive program for liberal adult education.

Liberal adult education. For the purposes of this study, this term referred to those five program areas specifically spelled out in the FAE grant as being liberal education.

1. Unified university approach to liberal education (Conference Center Programming).
2. Educational television programming for liberal adult education.
3. Study-discussion groups and discussion leadership training.
4. Education for leadership in public responsibility.
5. Alumni education in liberal education.

These programs were designed to offer educational experiences in the social sciences, current issues, the natural sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts.

Vocationally oriented programs. This term was defined as those programs which offer educational experiences for vocational and professional training and retraining. Reference was also made to programs for vocational and professional advancement and the up-dating of vocational and professional knowledge and skills.

Design of the Study

Dating from the opening of the Center in 1962, the Office of Adult Admissions and Records has maintained an IBM registration file on all enrollments at the Center. These records provide such information as name, address, sex, occupation, highest level or formal education attained, age group (under 21, 21-35, 36-55, over 55), and conferences attended. Based upon an enrollment of 33,148 participants during fiscal 1963-64,⁹ it was estimated that the Office of Adult Admissions and Records contains entries in excess of 100,000 for the two and one-half year period from the opening of the Center through the end of fiscal 1964-65. These records should provide an excellent source for a critical study of the participants in the programs of liberal education which have been offered at the Center during this period.

⁹College of Continuing Education and Extension Division Annual Report 1963-64.

Such a study would mark the first use of these records in a serious study of the participants in the programs conducted at the Center. Since the information contained on the enrollment forms is consistent with most of the general findings mentioned in Chapter II, these records may be used for a comparison for consistency.

The data for this study were gathered from the IBM enrollment records of the Office of Adult Admissions and Records at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. These records were visually examined in an attempt to locate all those participants who met the above requirements for the definition of a continuing learner. All of the enrollment records of those participants satisfying this requirement were then examined and analyzed in an effort to determine if there were clusters or groupings of age, sex, occupation, level of formal education, size of community of residence, and the extent of husband-wife participation which would portray commonalities among the continuing learners which might be used to make generalizations about the adult student body. Such generalizations led to some logical predictions about the future composition of such a student body and the prospective clientele or continuing learners.

The commonalities discovered in this study were compared with the general characteristics of the adult participant described in the chapter on related readings. No statistical treatment of this data was attempted. The clusters

and groupings were treated only as percentages of the total adult student body which was identified. This seemed to be in keeping with the studies which were cited in the chapter on related readings.

A further attempt was made to determine if there has been cross-program recruitment between these liberal education programs and the Center programs which were vocationally oriented. The enrollment records of each student fulfilling the requirements of the definition of a continuing learner were checked for participation in the vocationally oriented programs. Where such participation was indicated, the enrollment dates were used as the basis for assuming some motivation for further participation was afforded during the prior enrollment. This was considered as constituting cross-program recruitment.

Significance of the Study

The identification of a continuing adult student body is important to the Center and College for at least seven reasons. Knowledge of such a student body will be of inestimable value in:

1. Providing data to the Assistant Dean for Continuing Education for decision making concerning long-range program planning.
2. Assisting the Center management in the assignment of space priorities in the Center.
3. Facilitating communications between program administrators, planners, and faculty.

4. Contributing to the development of new principles in program planning.
5. Assisting the program administrators in recruitment for programs.
6. Assisting in the administration of the budget for a given program.
7. Providing the basis for further research.

CHAPTER II

RELATED READINGS

The abundance of studies concerning participation in adult education seems to give ample testimony to the importance which adult educators have attached to the subject. The frequent reference in the literature to Brunner's An Overview of Adult Education Research¹ and Verner and Newberry's "The Nature of Adult Participation"² would indicate that they have been the definitive reports on this subject as of this date. These two summaries give an extensive treatment of the research in the area of adult participation.

All the studies on which they report tend to follow a single general theme --- an attempt to discover the characteristics of those people who are served by one or more of the established educational institutions or associations. The questions invariably seem to be: Who uses---?, What kinds of people go---?, Who is reached---?, and Who belongs to---? These studies have all been oriented toward a description of

¹Edmund deS. Brunner, An Overview of Adult Education Research (Chicago: The Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1959), pp 89-118.

²Coolie Verner and J. S. Newberry, Jr., "The Nature of Adult Participation," Adult Education, VIII (Summer, 1958).

the participation in adult education at the given point-in-time when the data were collected and has not been directed toward previous or continuing participation. The findings of these investigations seem to be fairly consistent. The results lead to the following general conclusions:

1. Every adult education program has been developed in terms of more or less explicit conditions which limit its clientele. The people actually served turn out to be drawn chiefly or entirely from the middle class, the relatively highly educated, and from professional or clerical occupations.
2. While the clientele of each institution has its unique features, certain characteristics are common to all the groups served. Some of these common factors are:
 - a. Middle income groups are more likely to participate.
 - b. Participation is related to the size of the community.
 - c. People with certain nationality or religious backgrounds are more active than others.
 - d. Age seems to be a factor with the greatest participation ranging from the late 20's to 50.
 - e. Married people participate more than single people.
 - f. Families with school age children participate more than families without them.
 - g. Professional, managerial, and technical people are highly participative.
 - h. The most universal factor is schooling and the higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely he will take part in continuing education.
3. These eight factors listed above cannot be treated as separate influences. Actually, they are all related to one another and often in unexpected ways.

Cyril O. Houle contends that the amount of schooling is so important that it underlies or re-enforces many of the other determinants.³

³Cyril O. Houle, The Inquiring Mind (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), p. 7.

Alan B. Knox has made a summary of participant surveys conducted by seven colleges and universities as well as the Great Books Foundation and The Fund for Adult Education (Ways of Mankind). The colleges and universities included in this summary are the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Chicago, New York University, Northwestern University (Laboratory College for Adults), Syracuse University, Whittier College, and University of Wisconsin.⁴ The participants surveyed were enrolled in programs designated by the sponsoring institutions as "liberal education." While each institution made a different emphasis on liberal education, there seems to be considerable agreement on the content which was to be included, i.e., political science, social science, current issues, humanities, and the fine arts; all with the emphasis on man as man rather than man as money maker. This concept of what constitutes liberal education is not incompatible with that concept held at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. This concept will be treated at some length in Chapter III.

In his summary, Knox identified five common characteristics of the general audience for liberal education programs. They are (1) age, (2) socio-economic level (using occupation as the index), (3) education, (4) adult roles, and

⁴Alan B. Knox, The Audience for Liberal Adult Education (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1962), p. 6.

(5) reasons for attending.⁵ He made ten generalizations about these common characteristics.

1. Almost all of the students will be in occupations, or will be married to persons in occupations, classified as "middle class."
2. Programs will attract primarily middle-aged students.
3. Programs associated with a larger vocational educational program (credit) will attract younger students than programs that do not have this attachment.
4. Younger adults attending programs will tend to be atypical of their peers in terms of the developmental tasks they are in the process of accomplishing.
5. Programs dealing primarily with abstract or spiritual concerns will attract more older adults than will other programs.
6. More single women than single men attend the programs.
7. More wives will attend without their husbands than will husbands without their wives.
8. Wives attending alone are usually middle-aged, while couples attending together will tend to be either young adults or older adults.
9. When encouraged to do so, husbands and wives will attend together.
10. Couples attending together will be in one of the following status groups: married, before children are born; newly establishing their social role in the community; or with grown children who have left the home.⁶

Zahn and Phillips have made a study of the drop-out in university adult education⁷ and Novak and Weiant have identified

⁵Knox, The Audience for Liberal Education, pp 6-9.

⁶Knox, The Audience for Liberal Education, pp 25-27.

⁷Jane Zahn and Laura Phillips, "A Study of the Drop-out in University Adult Education," Adult Education, XI (Summer, 1961), pp 230-34.

some reasons for attrition in evening classes.⁸ However, there is still a paucity of reliable data in this area of participation. Houle has observed that should the reasons listed as producing the drop-out be removed, perhaps the continuing student would leave and the drop-out problem be farther from solution than ever. He points out that a great deal of serious and productive research has been devoted to the double question: "Who comes to adult education activities --- and why? It is now time to devote at least some attention to an equally important pair of questions: Who stays --- and why?"⁹

It is his position that the continuing learner has existed in every age and he maintains that anyone with a classical education will readily find examples from antiquity. He points out that whole cultures have been based on the conception of life-long learning, and the Renaissance is the archetype of such a culture. The many-sided men of fifteenth-century Italy, whatever their calling in life, felt it necessary to be learned in many things, sometimes in everything. He contends that it is not necessary to explore every other age in a tedious search for continuing learners: ". . . every era has produced men and women with keenly inquiring minds."¹⁰

⁸Benjamin J. Novak and Gwendolyn E. Weiant, "Why Do Evening School Students Drop Out," Adult Education, XI (Autumn, 1960), pp 35-41.

⁹Cyril O. Houle, "Who Stays --- And Why," Adult Education, XIV (Summer, 1964), p 233.

¹⁰Houle, Inquiring Mind, p 11.

It was Houle who made the first studies with the emphasis on the individual or the "continuing adult learner." In describing the sample for his study reported in his Inquiring Mind, he points out that they share a common characteristic --- they are so conspicuously engaged in various forms of continuing learning that they could be readily identified for him by their personal friends or by the counselors and directors of adult educational activities.

This group produced six basic similarities:

1. They are perceived by others as being deeply engaged in learning and this perception proved to be valid, for they themselves regard continuing education as an important part of their lives even though they differ from each other in their ways of considering it.
2. Everyone interviewed would be near the upper end of any scale which measured the extent of people's participation in educational activities.
3. They had the same basic ways of thinking about the process in which they were engaged.
4. They all had goals which they wished to achieve.
5. They all found the process of learning enjoyable and significant.
6. They all felt that learning was worthwhile for its own sake.¹¹

Houle found that there were three subgroups within this larger group. These he has labelled:

1. The goal-oriented: those who use education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives.
2. The activity-oriented: Those who take part because they find in the circumstances of the learning a meaning

¹¹Houle, Inquiring Mind, p 15.

which has no necessary connection, and often no connection at all, with the content or the announced purposes of the activity.

3. The learning-oriented: those who seek knowledge for its own sake.¹²

A study conducted ten years earlier by Nicholson points toward these same generalizations made by Houle. In a survey of 8,900 workers of their interests in adult education, he concluded that people want not only educational programs related to their occupations but also programs related to cultural subjects, and an opportunity to meet interesting friends and develop social skills.¹³

Houle reports other studies concerning adult participation and approaches to learning which have been made subsequent to the publication of his Inquiring Mind. Among these are Sherman, Ingham, Litchfield, and Netherton.¹⁴ While each used different research instruments, different samples, and approached the subject from a different point of view, they came to some amazingly similar conclusions about adult participation. On a scale rating participation, they all found that the scale bulks toward the lower end indicating that most people fall rather low in amount of participation

¹²Houle, Inquiring Mind, pp 15-16.

¹³David H. Nicholson, "Why Adults Attend School," Adult Education Bulletin, XIII (August, 1949), pp 172-77.

¹⁴Cyril O. Houle, How the Individual Adult Approaches Learning, an address delivered at the Eighth National Cooperative Extension Administrative Seminar, University of Wisconsin, May 3, 1965.

in educational activities. On the other hand, they all tended to show a continuation on the right hand of the scale indicating that there are a few individuals who participate very extensively in adult educational activities.

The three subgroups identified by Houle, and listed above, were given a rigorous examination by Sheffield. In a factor analysis of the results of his data, he found that Houle's original classifications held up fairly well but that he could further subdivide two of the orientations. The goal oriented people could be divided into "personal-goal" and "societal-goal" while he divided the activity oriented people into "desire-activity" and "need-activity."¹⁵

Houle points out that the variation in motivation suggests the likelihood that, however precisely defined the motive of an educational activity may be, it will draw people who have other motivations. He calls attention to Sheffield's findings that if he classified his subjects in terms of their dominant orientations, there was no clear patterning in terms of the purposes of the conferences which they attended. He found that if a conference had more than 16 people it was almost certain to have all five orientations represented.

Houle says that this research is still in its infancy and contends that there is no reason why it will not continue to produce highly useful findings. He maintains, however, that the question of the best pattern of participation and the best

¹⁵Houle, How the Individual Approaches Learning.

orientation for an individual involves matters of choice and value and cannot be studied objectively. He emphasizes the individuality of the learner by pointing out that:

. . . Each person has his own set of standards and will try to achieve them in his own distinctive way, even though there are clusterings and groupings of both activities and motives. In a democratic society, we must take it for granted that each person will work out his own destiny and that he will have the right to choose what is best for him.

.
However much we may be able to broaden the acceptance of all kinds of learning and motivation, each man or woman will always have a distinctive pattern as he or she undertakes this continuing necessary activity of life. In his approach to education as in his approach to anything else, man remains persistently and unquenchably an individual.¹⁶

The two major factors, the assumption of a continuing adult student body by the professional staff of the Center and the paucity of research data on this subject, suggest the need for answers to the two questions raised in the Kellogg proposal: "Does such adult body exist in fact? If one exists, what is it like?"¹⁷ To paraphrase Dr. Houle's double question, who is the repeating adult student at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education and why?

Houle pointed the way for much research in his Inquiring Mind by identifying certain continuing learners and studying their motivations. These he labelled as goal-orientation, learning-orientation, and activity-orientation.¹⁸

¹⁶Houle, How the Individual Approaches Learning.

¹⁷Kellogg Proposal, p 11.

¹⁸Houle, Inquiring Mind.

Sheffield went deeper into the study of motivations when he attempted to locate Houle's three basic types in a general adult population.¹⁹ Other studies such as Ingham,²⁰ Nether-ton,²¹ and Litchfield²² have touched upon this area while utilizing differing approaches and theoretical backgrounds. Their major contribution to the background of this study is that they all discovered that a few individuals included in their studies participated extensively in adult educational activities. This supports the assumption of a clientele for a continuing adult student body.

The studies which seem to have the greatest relevance to this one were two studies conducted by Dr. Alan B. Knox of the University of Nebraska. In his study mentioned earlier in this chapter, he summarized surveys of participants conducted by seven colleges and universities plus the Great Books Foundation and The Fund for Adult Education. These participants were enrolled in programs which were designated by the sponsoring institutions as "liberal education." The programs listed correspond closely to the liberal education

¹⁹Sherman B. Sheffield, "The Orientations of Adult Continuing Learners," The Continuing Learner, ed. Daniel Solomon (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1964), pp 1-22.

²⁰Roy Ingham, "The Relationship of Educative Behavior to the Leisure Satisfaction of College Alumnae," The Continuing Learner, pp 23-40.

²¹Reported in Houle, How the Individual Approaches Learning.

²²Reported in Houle, How the Individual Approaches Learning.

programs defined in the previous chapter.

Knox identified five influences on people which encourage them to attend programs of liberal education.

1. Participation may be largely a matter of money.
2. Leisure is related to disposable income.
3. Education tends to breed more education.
4. The general audience might consist of persons who are dealing with an ego stage conflict that has been either consciously or subconsciously perceived as being related to the issues of a particular liberal education seminar.
5. It is possible that participation is largely a function of the changing patterns of life experience which alter with passing years.²³

Knox placed a great deal of importance on the fifth influence and viewed it in terms of the "developmental tasks of adulthood" as described by Havinghurst in his Human Development and Education. Here, Knox viewed the stages as being early adulthood, middle age, and later maturity. He listed the developmental tasks and primary concerns of middle age as being highly congruent with the topics of liberal adult education programs. This seemed to be especially true of the middle-aged, middle-class adult.²⁴ On the other hand, the developmental tasks of the period of early adulthood are focused primarily toward programs of a vocational nature. Conversely, the developmental tasks of later

²³Knox, The Audience for Liberal Adult Education, pp 30-31.

²⁴Knox, The Audience for Liberal Adult Education, p 37.

maturity presents a picture of holding onto life by adjusting to physical aging, retirement and reduced income, loss of family and friends, age-graded group associations, and altered living arrangements.

In generalizing from the programs studied, Knox pointed out that of the general audience, six out of ten were women; the median age was 40, with most of the participants between 30 and 55; about one-quarter of the participants were homemakers, and most of the remainder were in either professional or managerial occupations or were married to men who were.

Knox says that there appears "to be three types of implications of this report for persons interested in developing liberal education programs, especially for adults: promotional, research, and the locating of a particular audience."²⁵ The promotional task must be predicated upon program objectives. The promotional challenge is to communicate as compellingly as possible with the target audience and to do so within the groups and organizations with which they are connected. For the evident general audience this is a middle-aged, middle-class group.

In the second study, Knox collaborated with Alan Brown and Arden Grotelueschen. This study deals with persistence in university adult education classes. The major hypothesis was that the extent of prior adult education is

²⁵Knox, The Audience for Liberal Adult Education, p 38.

positively correlated with the level of (1) age, (2) formal education, (3) verbal intelligence, and (4) income. The second hypothesis was that there is a negative correlation between the extent of prior adult experience and the time-lapse since the last experience.²⁶

These hypotheses were generally confirmed. The adult who had completed many prior courses was older and had more formal education, verbal intelligence, and family income, than was the case for the adult who had completed fewer prior adult education courses. The persister had also engaged²⁷ in his previous classroom experience more recently.

However, in testing another hypothesis, they found that, in no instances, was recency of education associated with grades.

These findings suggest that the highly participative adult has become a "continuing learner," for whom the skills, values, and satisfactions which he derives from education result in participation in more continuing education. Furthermore, these findings provide a basis for encouraging highly motivated, intellectually active adults who have been away from educational activities for a long time to return with chances for success equal to adults who have continued to participate.

One difficulty encountered in the present study was the periodic nature of adult participation. This resulted

²⁶Alan Brown, Alan B. Knox, and Arden Grotelueschen, "Persistence in University Adult Education," MS, to be published in Adult Education, XVI (Autumn, 1965), MS, p 9.

²⁷"Persistence in University Adult Education," p 25.

in the arbitrary definition of "continuing learner" which was used. This seemed necessary in view of the short period of time covered by the data used in the study.

Brown, Knox, and Grotelueschen point out that several studies have shown that adult education participation "is frequently an intermittent experience in which several months or years typically separate adult education experiences."²⁸ Joe E. Brown gives one explanation for this when he explains his "flattened multi-peaked interest or commitment profile."

. . . An increasing mass of society can afford the luxury of diverse commitment to many things, including stamp collecting, bowling, mountain climbing, longer vacations, travel, (even adult education activities), and many other things. Because for each of us time is limited, what has possibly resulted . . . is a 'flattened multi-peaked interest or commitment profile.'²⁹

Brown observes that "we may be so multi-peaked and diversely committed as individuals that it may . . . be difficult to rally serious commitment in depth on really fundamental issues."³⁰ Herein lie some serious implications for program planning and promotion in continuing liberal education. With this in mind, it is imperative that the program planners know as much as possible about the characteristics, needs, and desires of the potential clientele

²⁸"Persistence in University Adult Education," p 5.

²⁹Joe E. Brown, "A Report on the Structure and Focus of the Urban Science Program at the University of Oklahoma," Paper presented at the Third National Community Development Seminar, in Carbondale, Illinois, June, 1963, p 29.

³⁰Brown, "Urban Science Programs at the University of Oklahoma."

for programs of liberal education. Those responsible for recruiting the participants should possess the ~~same~~ information and should use this information to answer the question: What should I say to whom? Since the background and related readings cited in the present study point out that those who attend liberal adult education programs do so for a number of reasons, the program planner would be well advised to select all of the reasons which he deems consistent with his objectives. Likewise, those responsible for program recruitment should appeal to all these reasons in his promotional and selection efforts. He should state these reasons directly and as compellingly as possible to the potential audience which he has selected.

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION

Difficulty of Terminology

The term "liberal adult education" is not so much vague as it is ambiguous. Indeed, there seem to be as many definitions of the term as there are people discussing the subject. This ambiguity forces upon us the recognition that different people react to different motivations. In discussing the subject, one should take pains to see that the interpretation is stated as clearly as possible.

As Ulich points out, perhaps the problem of ambiguity is not as grave as it at first appears to be.

Now I sometimes . . . have thought about the vagueness and preciseness of concepts, and have come to the conclusion that, if the founding fathers of this nation had first been sitting together in conferences semantics and had tried to find out what they meant by 'liberty' and by 'freedom', we would still be an English colony. They just knew what they meant without being able to define it --- a kind of vision toward something. All great concepts of humankind are of that nature. . . . I like clear concepts; but I have to admit that, without some kind of great embrace in our vision, we wouldn't have the incentive to go ahead.¹

¹Robert Ulich, "Adult Liberal Education," an informal talk given at Boston College to a New England Faculty Seminar sponsored by the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, October 15, 1955.

Definition of liberal adult education. With the discussion of the difficulty of terminology in mind, the term will be defined as it was used in this study. No attempt was made to achieve an all-encompassing definition since the effort would result in only adding one more definition to the present over-supply. The definition here is a working term to serve the purposes of the paper.

Liberal education is the education of free men for a life of freedom and citizenship. This was the definition in Ancient Greece and a definition still accepted by many men respected in the field of liberal education. However, it is in the interpretation of the terms "free" and "freedom" that the ambiguity begins. Some think of freedom from the obvious point of view. They define it as being free from all restraint. On the other hand, it might be considered to be individual choice free from all external restrictions. Still others maintain that freedom is an internal quality having nothing to do with events which take place outside the individual. Such a point of view might well consider an inmate in a penal institution as having more freedom than one not incarcerated. This study presents a more middle-of-the-road point of view on the matter.

In this paper, freedom is considered as having to do with enfranchisement and the absence of excessive governmental control in private matters. Freedom also has to do with the absence of externally imposed commitments and the

loosening of the bondage of ignorance. Liberation affects one's total personality. The liberated individual is aware of his own limitations, he is a judge, a critic, and is capable of reflective thinking. He readily accepts his social responsibilities and is able to meet the ever-present changes in society. He is governed, as far as possible, by his own choices which are broadened by knowledge, spontaneity, and reflection.

In defining liberal education, Ralph Perry says:

Education is liberal so far as it invites and qualifies men to choose deeply and fundamentally, to choose ends as well as means, to choose remote as well as immediate ends, to choose from many rather than from few possibilities. Liberal education, so construed, makes successive generations of men aware of the widest range of possibilities by the discovery of new possibilities, and by reminding of old possibilities forgotten. It does so in order that men may choose with the utmost amplitude of freedom --- in order that their lives may be filled to the maximum extent by what they thoughtfully and wittingly choose them to be.²

Although this is the internal quality of freedom, it does consider the internal freedom as a freedom from external commitments. It is that quality which permits the individual a large number of alternatives from which to choose. It is his "liberal education" which enables him to choose "thoughtfully and wittingly." It is toward this type of freedom which liberal education for adults is aimed.

²Ralph Barton Perry, "When is Education Liberal?" Modern Education and Human Values. Crabbe Foundation Lecture Series, Vol III (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1950), pp 1-20.

In his "Thomist Views on Education," Jacques Maritain says:

It is truth which sets man free. It appears . . . that education is fully human education only when it is liberal education, preparing (man) to exercise his power to think in a genuinely free and liberating manner --- that is to say when it equips him for truth and makes him capable of judging according to the worth of evidence, of enjoying truth and beauty for their own sake, and of advancing . . . toward wisdom and some understanding of those³ things which bring to him intimations of immortality.

Maritain says that whatever his particular vocation may be, and whatever special training his vocation may require, every human being is entitled to receive such a properly human and humanistic education. Such an education should be designed to permit each individual to develop his particular skills, abilities, and interests to his fullest capacity. As Theodore Greene points out, "man is a complex being with many needs and many proper activities, physical and mental, practical and spiritual, routine and creative, and a well-rounded liberal education should help him to satisfy all these needs and indulge in all these activities more skillfully, wisely, and justly."⁴

Such an education should have a direct bearing upon a greater social awareness, a greater consciousness and

³Jacques Maritain, "Thomist Views on Education," Modern Philosophies and Education: Fifty-Fourth NSSE Year-book, ed. John S. Brubacher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). p 60.

⁴Theodore M. Greene, "A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education," Modern Philosophies and Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp 118-20.

acceptance of social responsibility. Such education, not directed toward the betterment of social conditions for all members of the society is liberal in name only. It adheres only to the built-in snob-appeal of the traditional "Seven Liberal Arts." Ulich says that by the term we mean, perhaps, helping a person to understand a little more about both himself and the great goals of human striving. "It requires knowing how the environment has arisen, what are the deepest tendencies of humankind, and whither they may lead us."⁵ He has to go deeply into not only knowledge but also the non-knowledge.

The concept of liberal education is not merely the ivory-towered concept of a conservative, traditionalist philosophy; it also finds its way into pragmatism. While denying its conservative-traditionalist aspects, the pragmatist does not deny liberal education and its role in society. George Geiger, in his "An Experimentalist Approach to Education," questions some of the more conservative views of liberal education and criticizes the study of the Great Books as advocated by Adler as "a bald apologia for medieval theology." He draws out a rather lengthy definition of liberal education which is found to be at no great variance with Greene.

. . . that he (the liberated individual) be free to change present society because he can observe it critically and from a historical perspective, change it in the direction of providing those conditions

⁵Ulich, "Adult Liberal Education."

without which a liberated individual cannot grow and realize his capacities . . . for if change, educability, and growth are basic concepts in all education, then that area called 'liberal' . . . cannot be set off on some island alone.

Nor can liberal education be simply content with efforts to preserve the past; it must take the lead in understanding, criticising, and directing cultural change. That knowledge of the past contributes mightily to an understanding of the present in indubitable, and the present interpretation takes full account of it. But that the past be cultivated for its own sake is something else again. It is present culture, not past, which is our problem. . . . The experimentalist . . . uses contemporary issues that demand drawing on the thought and experience of the past, hoping⁶ thereby to maintain historical and logical continuity.

C. Scott Fletcher, former President of The Fund for Adult Education, views liberal education as involving "those areas of knowledge which enlarge the understanding and deepen the insights of men with regard both to men themselves and men in their social relationships, and which at their highest levels, assist them to develop the capacity successfully to deal with these abstract ideas that illuminate and allow them more wisely to control the world in which they live."⁷

He further argues that such an education is a life-long process, since no man can congratulate himself that he has all the understanding and insight he needs. Such a point of view merely serves to emphasize that learning is a process which begins at birth and terminates only at the grave.

⁶George R. Geiger, "An Experimentalist Approach to Education," Modern Philosophies and Education, p 152.

⁷C. Scott Fletcher, "Introduction," Toward the Liberally Educated Executive (White Plains, New York: The Fund for Adult Education, 1957).

Liberal education viewed as a leisure activity.

Fletcher alludes to liberal education as a leisure activity when he advises that early in life one should acquire the habit of turning to the liberal studies in his leisure that he may refresh himself and go on growing. Adler flatly asserts that liberal education is a leisure activity:

Liberal schooling prepares for a life of learning and for the leisure activities of a whole lifetime. Adult liberal education is an indispensable part of the life of leisure, which is a life of learning.

He further states:

The results of leisure activity are two sorts of human excellence or perfection: those private excellences by which a man perfects his own nature and those public excellences which can be translated into the performance of his moral or political duty -- the excellence of a man in relation to other men and to society. Hence I would define leisure activities as those activities desirable for their own sake (and so uncompensated and not compulsory) and also for the sake of the excellences, private and public, to which they give rise. This means, by the way, that leisure activities are identical with virtue. . .⁸

He says that the good or happy life is a life lived in the cultivation of virtue. The good life, he contends, depends upon labor but consists of leisure.

While liberal education represents a proper use of leisure and, indeed, must be pursued during one's leisure, it is by no means to be construed as an education for a leisure class. As we face automation and the possibility of a resultant increase of leisure for the masses, we face a

⁸Mortimer J. Adler, "Labor, Leisure and Liberal Education," Toward the Liberally Educated Executive (White Plains, New York: The Fund for Adult Education, 1957).

dilemma. Leisure construed as "time-to-kill" can be a frightening thing. Leisure viewed as a time one has to devote to a fuller life through service to society and a greater personal growth presents a rosy picture. Certainly, with the latter view, liberal education is a proper leisure activity as well as a vehicle for pointing the way to a more rewarding use of leisure.

Liberal education versus vocational training. Some authorities view liberal education as being diametrically opposed to vocational training. Adler is of this school.

Liberal education is education for leisure, it is general in character; it is for an intrinsic and not an extrinsic end; as compared with vocational training, which is the education of the slave or workers, liberal education is the education of the free man.⁹

Perry has much the same concept of liberal education and vocational training when he calls the latter an "opposite illiberality."¹⁰ He says that an occupation, once adopted, narrows the choices that remain open. Geiger takes the opposite view.

Certainly there will be no apology here for the evident abuses of over vocationalism in many sections of present-day education. But to assume that training for making a living has no place in liberal education is to assume that education has no context.¹¹

⁹Adler, "Labor, Leisure and Liberal Education".

¹⁰Perry, "When is Education Liberal?"

¹¹Geiger, "An Experimentalist Approach to Education,"
p 153.

Greene says that man is a complex being with many needs and many proper activities, physical and mental, practical and spiritual, routine and creative, and that a well-rounded liberal education will help man to satisfy all these needs and indulge in all these activities more skillfully, wisely and justly.¹²

In actual practice, present-day adult education programs tend to have a strong pragmatic quality. As Johnstone points out in his study of adult uses of education, "the major emphasis in adult learning is on the practical rather than the academic; on the applied rather than the theoretical; and on skills rather than knowledge or values."¹³ The position is taken that man cannot be viewed in "parts" but must be considered as the "whole man" he is. This point of view is in harmony with that of Greene and Geiger.

Liberal education, thus conceived, is designed to permit each individual to develop his particular skills, abilities, and interests to his fullest capacity. It is designed to afford him a number of alternatives from which he may choose thereby having freedom in his choices and a minimum of external control. It will enlarge his understanding and deepen his insights with regard both to men themselves and men in

¹²Greene, "A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education," p 119.

¹³John W. C. Johnstone, "Adult Uses of Education: Fact and Forecast," Sociological Backgrounds of Adult Education (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1964), pp 98-99.

their social relationships. It will assist him in developing the capacity to deal with abstract ideas and allow him more wisely to control the world in which he lives. It will provide him with method and criteria for finding his own answers to those questions basic to all mankind: What is man's proper relationship to his family, to his society, to his government, to his religion? What is truth? What is beauty?

A Need for Liberal Adult Education

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, there has been a shift in our power base. The shift, gradual at first but accelerating as time passed, has been from muscle-power of men and animals to "other-power," i.e., steam, internal combustion, electricity, and atomic power. This has caused a considerable change in the types of work men do.

In addition to the evolution in the power base, there has been, in recent years, a revolution in transportation and communications which has drastic implications for society. In this age of instant communications and supersonic speed transportation, societal change that once required generations for accomplishment now takes place in decades. Margaret Mead has observed that "no one will live all his life in the world into which he was born, and no one will die in the world in which he worked in his maturity."¹⁴ Present-day society can

¹⁴Margaret Mead, "A Redefinition of Education," NEA Journal, October, 1959.

no longer wait for the slow moving trial-and-error method to produce solutions to the basic questions facing it. There is an urgent need for man to use his reason and employ his education in the solutions of the problems facing our civilization. There is a need for man to combine his liberal skills with his technological skills in the search for these solutions.

A liberal society and problems of social change. The inevitable trend in all areas of life and activity is to become technical. Technology and its resultant tendency toward specialization dominates our civilization. Hallenbeck says that as individuals focus their attention, interest, and energy so completely on their specialization, their pre-occupation precludes their contacts and association with other specialists; and out of this isolation grows misunderstanding and even inability to communicate. While such concentration of attention makes people more knowledgeable in the area of their activity it makes them less acquainted with the community within which their special services are carried out. This process is self-defeating, because the need which requires the special function and the circumstances within which the specialization must be carried out are in the community.¹⁵

¹⁵Wilbur C. Hallenbeck, "The Function and Place of Adult Education in American Society," Handbook of Adult Education in the United States, ed. Malcolm S. Knowles (Chicago: Adult Education Association of the USA, 1960), pp 30-36.

Belth and Schueler say that the very technological advances which were designed to promote greater mastery of nature and enable men to live without the need of struggling against each other seem to have served but to heighten men's struggle against each other. They say that in a world shrunk by instant communication devices and by travel at supersonic speeds, people need to strive not only for mutual understanding and acceptance of their differences, but, burdened by partial understanding and recognizing fundamental difference, still find the strength and will and deepen their knowledge and skill to work out solutions --- entire or partial --- to world-wide problems. They contend that the changes in our civilization have intruded into every level of our lives. If we are to understand the changes that drive us, they maintain that we must in some way lay these bare to the understanding, and nurture our abilities to grasp them.¹⁶

Sociologists tell us that we accept change quite readily in the areas where we can immediately test the results and enjoy the benefits. We quickly accept the resultant more comfortable lives, better health, greater leisure, etc., but these benefits are accompanied by an increasing conglomerate of changes in the area of human relations --- changes which are not readily testable nor are the benefits easily recognizable. As changes occur in the technological culture, there are

¹⁶Marc Belth and Herbert Schueler, "Liberal Education for Adults Re-examined," Notes and Essays on Education for Adults, No. 25 (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1959).

changes in the demands made upon the social institutions and, more frequently than not, the institutions are not able to keep pace of the demands made by the technological changes. The result is what sociologists call the "cultural lag." It is in this area that most of the social problems of today are spawned.

Hallenbeck thinks that some of society's most serious difficulties are in the area of human relations. The members of each new generation of adults find that the kind of relationships in the midst of which they were brought up and to which they have become accustomed are not appropriate amid circumstances within which they must live. Relationships within families, within work situations, within friendship associations, within organizations, within communities have changed and become more difficult. Few people seem to realize how crucial these relationships are to their welfare and happiness and how important they are in communities. Nor are people sufficiently aware that to fulfill their responsibilities in making constructive and happy relationships takes understanding and careful study. This is a function of continuing adult liberal education.

The role of adult education in a changing society.

Hallenbeck says that under the changing societal needs, even the best education, in the formal sense, can be no less than a generation behind.

Under such circumstances those who do the work and carry the responsibilities for organization, leadership,

and decision-making could not be qualified, except by fortuitious accidents, for their contemporary tasks. Educational opportunities to help adults meet their contemporary problems and interests become necessary to compensate for the cultural lag which is an ever-present danger in a rapidly changing world.¹⁷

He says that no matter how effective contemporary schooling may be it can never fully prepare youths to meet the world as it will be when they are adults. He contends that the fundamental function of adult education is to keep the balance between people and circumstances in a changing world. It could well be adult education of which Margaret Mead was speaking when she pointed out that we have added a new function to our educational system: "Education for rapid and self-conscious adaptation to a changing world."¹⁸

The increasing emphasis on technology has made it necessary that more and more time be spent in acquiring vocational knowledge and less and less time devoted to a study of those subjects which free men's minds to study man as man -- his relationship to society, to his family, to his government, to his religion. If society is to solve the problems created by the cultural lag, some unifying agent is needed to bring the technological sciences and the social sciences into harmony --- to bring the mores, the social and political institutions into balance with the technological advances. This may well be the unique role of liberal education in our present-day society.

¹⁷Hallenbeck, "The Function and Place of Adult Education in American Society," p 29.

¹⁸Mead, "A Redefinition of Education."

The Goals of Liberal Adult Education

Aims and functions of liberal adult education. In determining the "aims and functions" of anything one must first examine the basic underlying philosophy for it is here that the aims are implied, if not stated. In examining six of the philosophies most prevalent in today's society, it was found that the disagreements were less in the aims and functions than in the method and content for the accomplishment of these aims and functions.

The aims and functions thus identified fall into four broad categories: (1) to extend and integrate such truth as is known, (2) to develop social responsibility, (3) to encourage the acceptance of the responsibility to change that which can and ought to be changed, and (4) to help each individual to identify himself in his own confined environment as well as in his particular century.¹⁹

1. Extend and integrate such truth as is known. The realist, John Wild, said that "the function of education is to extend and integrate such truth as is known and to make an attempt to see things all together as they really are,"

¹⁹The six philosophies examined were: (1) realist (John Wild), (2) Thomist (Jacques Maritain), (3) liberal Christian idealist (Theodore M. Greene), (4) pragmatist (George R. Geiger), (5) existentialist (Ralph Harper), and (6) logical empiricist (Herbert Feigl). All material used for this study was taken from essays by each of these men published in Modern Philosophies and Education: Fifty-Fourth NSSE Yearbook, et., John S. Brubacher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

and that "(education) is not exclusively theoretical. It is profoundly concerned with practical problems and especially with the major problems of contemporary life."²⁰

This same point of view is approached from a different angle by the logical empiricist, Herbert Feigl.

As long as education promotes the formation of intelligence and character in a manner which allows for free learning, rational choices, and critical reflection, human beings so educated will have an excellent opportunity for being masters of their own activities and achievements. From the lessons of their experience they will learn how to adjust themselves for future exigencies.²¹

2. Develop social responsibility. All of the philosophies which were studied in this instance denied that liberal education has as its goal the making of future professors and specialists in all the branches of knowledge. Maritain, in his "Thomist Views on Education," perhaps best expressed it by saying that "it looks upon them as citizens, who must act as free men and who are able to make sound and independent judgments in new and changing situations, either with respect to the body politic or to their own particular task."²² He carries this still farther and applies it to the area of social responsibility.

²⁰John Wild, "Education and Human Society: A Realistic View," pp 29, 33.

²¹Herbert Feigl, "Aims of Education for Our Age of Science: Reflections of a Logical Empiricist," Modern Philosophies and Education, p 322.

²²Maritain, "Thomist Views on Education," pp 82-83.

. . . it is assumed that they would dedicate their own leisure time to those activities of rest through which man enjoys the common heritage of knowledge and beauty, or those activities of superabundance through which he helps his fellow-men with generosity.²²

This thought is upheld by Greene in his liberal Christian idealist philosophy.

(A liberal education) will . . . seek to educate (the student) for a life of creative responsibility, a life in which he will not only make the maximum use of his creative potentialities but in which he will also be eager to use his various capacities in a socially responsible manner.²³

3. Encourage the acceptance of the responsibility to change that which can and ought to be changed. Greene thinks that liberal education "will do its best to make the student's total experience an introduction to 'existential' living."²⁴ This would lead the student to accept not only that which cannot be changed but also to accept the obligation to change that which can and ought to be changed. It might be added here that the student should also learn to distinguish between the two.

The pragmatist says that liberal education "must take the lead in understanding, criticizing, and directing cultural change."²⁵ He thinks the student must use contemporary issues

²²Maritain, "Thomist Views on Education," pp 82-83.

²³Greene, "A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education," p 130.

²⁴Greene, "A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education," p 131.

²⁵Geiger, "An Experimentalist Approach to Education," p 152.

that demand drawing on the thought and experience of the past, hoping thereby to maintain historical and logical continuity.

4. Help each individual identify himself with his environment and his own century. It seems important that everyone should be aware of the narrow confines of his own environment and, at the same time, identify himself in his own time and place --- within his own century. While the existentialist is primarily interested in the individual's identification of himself and of freeing himself from anonymity, he is also interested in man's ability to know his limits and to locate himself in time and place. Harper expresses this view quite well.

Every man should know what it is to be a man, the limits and the powers of man. But every man should know also his own time, both as an individual in a certain confined environment and as a man in a certain century, with its particular problems.²⁶

Result of liberal adult education. Hallenbeck lists five functions of adult education in American culture. He thinks that it should (1) expand communication skills, (2) develop flexibility (the ability and willingness to change in a changing society), (3) improve human relations, (4) facilitate participation, and (5) expedite personal growth.²⁷

²⁶Ralph Harper, "Significance of Existence and Recognition for Education," Modern Philosophies and Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p 228.

²⁷Hallenbeck, "The Function and Place of Adult Education in American Society," pp 36-37.

Bertrand Russell says that the task of liberal education is "to give a sense of the value of things other than domination, to help create wise citizens of a free community, and through the combination of citizenship with liberty in individual creativeness to enable men to give human life that splendor which some few have shown that it can achieve."²⁸ This, truly, should be one of the results of a liberal education. Should liberal adult education result in the accomplishment of the four aims noted by this writer, the five functions listed by Hallenbeck, and Russell's "tasks," the present civilization will succeed in solving its cultural problems as no preceding civilization has been able to do.

Emphasis of liberal adult education. There are two readily identifiable types of emphases in liberal adult education. One has to do with what types of liberal adult education is to be offered and the other has to do with the clientele for such education. Harry Miller lists three types of liberal adult education: (1) transfer of major disciplines, (2) development of intellectual skills, and (3) liberation from social or self-imposed bondages.²⁹

The first type assumes that the major bondage is

²⁸Bertrand Russell, Power: A New Social Analysis (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1938), Chapter XVIII, "The Taming of Power."

²⁹Harry L. Miller, "Liberal Adult Education," Notes and Essays on Education for Adults, No. 30 (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1960), p 29.

ignorance, and emphasizes liberation by communicating knowledge. The second emphasizes intellectual skills rather than the understanding of knowledge and principles. The bondage here is habit and this emphasis would liberate by teaching skills of judgment. The third selects from the socially induced bondages --- the restricted family life and the narrow training and environment of the professional and technician. This type would liberate through a broadening of the horizons of the individuals concerned.

One point of view concerning the clientele of liberal education holds that it is the education which every human should have. To the extreme right of this view is one closely allied to the Jeffersonian concept of liberal education. That is, it should be used to create an intellectual elite. There is no argument with the first view. Every individual who is capable of an education should have the opportunity to receive a liberal education. However, that education which one should receive and that education which one is willing to receive are often two different types of education. Perhaps this is what Theodore Gnagey had in mind when he suggested that liberal education be offered to those who have already been introduced to the arts, humanities, and sciences. He contends:

They may be in a minority in most communities, but they are the ones most likely to fill our classes if the courses are good. It is tremendously important that they have this opportunity to continue studies on the home front and on increasingly advanced levels; for they, in a very real sense, are the leaders and potential leaders in our society and the upholders of the best

values of our culture. This is not to suggest a high-brow image of adult education; but every analysis of our society reveals the need for an intellectual elite large enough to be influential. So I may say we should put our main emphasis on the valuable market we do have for liberal education, and hope that greater numbers gradually drift up to it rather than that our adult schools sift down to them by dilution.³⁰

There is much truth in what Gnagey says and more will be said about that in the concluding remarks of the present study. It is indeed true that, in a representative form of government, decisions for the many are made by the few and these "few" certainly should have the best liberal education possible. On the other hand, it seems just as necessary for the "many" to have the best liberal education possible to equip them to select the "few". If we expect greater numbers of adults to "drift up" to liberal education, it will be necessary for us to do more than merely "hope" this will happen. The emphasis of liberal adult education should be that the "greater numbers" be introduced to the arts, humanities, and sciences to furnish the clientele which Mr. Gnagey suggested.

The Liberal Education

The method. Whatever the method of liberal education, it is not dogmatic. Dogmatic education implies an imparting of beliefs without evidence of their truth --- the individual is required to submit passively to authority. The liberally

³⁰Theodore P. Gnagey, "Liberal Education in the Community Adult School," Adult Leadership, Vol. IX (November, 1960).

educated individual chooses his own conclusions by proving their truth for himself. The method of liberal adult education must be such that it facilitates this type of activity on the part of the learner.

Russell says that "education should be designed to counteract the natural credulity and the natural incredulity of the uneducated: the habit of believing an emphatic statement without reasons, and of disbelieving an unemphatic statement even when accompanied by the best of reasons."³¹ One of the most widely accepted current methods of developing this attitude in adult learners is the group discussion. Kinney says that discussion has special significance.

People with different experience contribute widely divergent viewpoints which tend to set up the dialectical process. An individual may have a single viewpoint. It is even difficult for him to tolerate another's view when it differs sharply from his own. But as he defends his own position and also learns to listen to cogent reasons for a different view, he engages in a process of reflection that may have a creative effect on his own understanding. Whether it comes as a flash of insight which he cannot trace by logical steps or is a formulation of a position which takes full account of divergent thought which he had not previously reconciled, he advances in understanding.³²

Hutchins would accept the discussion method wholeheartedly but he would extend the method of liberal education still farther.

The method of liberal education is the liberal arts, and the result of liberal education is discipline in

³¹Russell, "The Taming of Power."

³²Laurence F. Kinney, "Perspective for Discussion," Adult Education, XI (Autumn, 1960).

those arts. The liberal artist learns to read, write, speak, listen, understand, and think. He learns to reckon, measure, and manipulate matter, quantity, and motion in order to predict, produce, and exchange. As we live in the tradition (of the West), whether we know it or not, we all practice the liberal arts, well or badly, all the time every day. As we should understand the tradition as well as we can in order to understand ourselves, so we should be as good liberal artists as we can in order to become as fully human as we can.³³

From the point of view of this paper, there are as many methods of liberal adult education as there are opportunities for acquiring liberal education. Opportunities are classified into three categories: (1) informal, (2) semi-formal, and (3) formal. Each category may also be divided into participative and non-participative types. The informal participative type of opportunities include the wealth of pre-packaged study discussion materials such as Great Books, Modern Painting, the various political series, etc., as well as materials compiled to meet specific needs of a particular group.

The non-participative opportunities include that whole area of independent reading --- books and periodicals --- which the learner reads for recreation or self-improvement. These may be either purchased or obtained from the libraries. Also included in this group are the large offerings of educational and liberalizing programs on radio and television, both the educational stations and the commercial stations.

³³Robert M. Hutchins, Great Books: The Foundation of a Liberal Education (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp 26-32.

The semi-formal participative type of opportunities include the various workshops, conferences, clinics, seminars, and short courses offered by university extension divisions and centers for continuing education, which would be liberal in nature. It is the participants of this category with which this study is concerned.

The non-participative opportunities would include the numerous public concerts, recitals, dramatic offerings, lecture series, museums, and galleries of which the learner could avail himself.

Listed in the non-participative category of the formal opportunities are the various correspondence courses in the liberal area, the telecourses, and such directed study programs as the one offered by the University of Oklahoma which leads to the Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree. Into the participative group fall those opportunities offered by the numerous classroom courses which may be taken for credit or audit. This would include the regular schedule of university courses as well as the evening classes and extension center classes offered through the extension divisions and continuing education divisions of the several universities.

The subject matter. It seems to follow that there are as many ideas concerning the subject matter of liberal adult education as there are definitions of the term. These ideas range from the concept of liberal education as an end in itself, which would have as its subject matter the

traditional liberal arts with emphasis upon the humanities, to the concept of liberal education as any education which "frees" one. Robert Blakely represents this group to some extent when he contends that the subject matter is "whatever interests free citizens in a free society . . ."³⁴

Obviously, the answer lies somewhere between these two extremes. The College of Continuing Education of the University of Oklahoma may be close to the answer in its Bachelor of Liberal Studies requirement of a degree of proficiency in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. There is considerable support for this position. Maritain says that the notion of the humanistic disciplines and the field of liberal arts must be enlarged to comprise physics and the natural sciences, the history of science, anthropology and the other human sciences, with the history of cultures and civilizations, even technology (in so far as the activity of the spirit is involved), and the history of manual work and the arts, both mechanical and fine arts.³⁵ He says that physics and the natural sciences should be considered one of the chief branches of the liberal arts since they are concerned with the mathematical reading of natural phenomena and insure the domination of the human spirit over the world of matter.

³⁴Robert J. Blakely, "What Is Adult Education," Handbook of Adult Education.

³⁵Maritain, "Thomist Views on Education," p 78.

Feigl approaches the matter through the door of the scientist but what he has to say is not in essential disagreement with Maritain.

The training in the sciences and in the scientific attitude should, of course, be combined with studies in history, literature, and the arts. Man does not live by technologically enhanced creature-comforts alone. His very interest in pure knowledge for its own sake is of the same sort --- partly aesthetic in character as his need for artistic creation and/or appreciation.³⁶

Perry says that there is no subject that is automatically liberating; however, there are certain studies which, owing to their subject matter, their tradition, and the habits and attitudes of those who teach them, are peculiarly apt to be liberating. "These, not without reason, are commonly classified as the liberal studies, par excellence: literature and the fine arts, history, religion, and philosophy."³⁷

Friedenberg further supports this concept of the subject matter of liberal education by pointing out that liberal education liberates by examining the meaning of life in its particular complexity. "Liberal education works by using the arts to illuminate the immediate specifics of life as well as its goals, and the sciences --- social and natural --- to explain its dynamics."³⁸

Gnagey defines liberal education in terms of the three areas of the humanities, social sciences, and natural science.

³⁶Feigl, "Reflections of a Logical Empiricist," p 338.

³⁷Perry, "When Is Education Liberal?"

³⁸Edgar Z. Friedenberg, "The Purposes of Liberal Study Vs. the Purposes of Adult Students," Adult Leadership (May, 1960).

(Liberal education) means (1) the study of the nature of man, through literature, philosophy, psychology, the arts; (2) the study of the nature of society, through anthropology, history, economics, politics, international relations; (3) the study of the nature of the physical universe, through learning the fundamental concepts of physics, astronomy, geology, biology. This trinity --- man, society, the universe --- is the province of liberal education.³⁹

Programs of liberal education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. The programs considered in this study were those conducted by the Department of Liberal Studies of the College of Continuing Education under the terms of a grant from The Fund for Adult Education. This grant, made in 1961 to the University of Oklahoma, was for the partial financing of a six-year project for the development of a comprehensive program of liberal adult education. The Department of Liberal Studies approached this project by working toward the development of a unified, integrated university community capable of focusing its resources on the task of comprehensive programming in liberal adult education. The vehicles for offering these programs included conferences and seminars at the Center for Continuing Education, study discussion groups organized throughout the state, and educational television. Alumni education and education for public responsibility were singled out for special emphasis.

For the purposes of this study, only those programs which were conducted at the Center were considered. While

³⁹Gnagey, "Liberal Education in the Community Adult School."

one of the programming units in the Department of Liberal Studies is designated as "Conference Center Programs," other units such as education for public responsibility, alumni education, and study discussion programs were conducted at the Center. Since, by definition, these constitute programs of liberal education conducted at the Center, they were also considered to be a part of this study.

Vocationally oriented programs. Two major divisions of the Extension Division and one department of the College of Continuing Education conduct educational programs at the Center which are vocationally oriented.

Business and Industrial Services offers programs of continuing education for management development, middle management, small business management, water resources management, sales and sales management, safety, petroleum engineering and problems confronting the petroleum industry, and industrial development as well as training courses for supervisors in business and industry. School and Community Services offers programs of in-service training for teachers and school personnel as well as continuing education for the legal professions, law enforcement, and public administration. The Department of Health Studies conducts programs for the medical and paramedical professions including physicians and surgeons, nurses, and medical technicians. There are also programs in environmental health, community health, and health care administration.

These vocationally oriented programs were important to the present study as a potential avenue for student recruitment for the programs of liberal education. During the period of time covered by this study, the writer served as the Director of Discussion Programs of the College. On numerous occasions, participants from these vocationally oriented programs asked him for further information on the discussion programs and other liberal education offerings at the Center. This superficial contact seemed to indicate that the vocationally oriented programs offer excellent opportunities for recruitment.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADULT STUDENT BODY

Identification of the Adult Student Body

In setting up the hypotheses of this study, it was assumed that programs of liberal education were available at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. It was further assumed that adults are motivated to avail themselves of such opportunities for continuing their liberal education. Records at the Center indicate that thirty-four programs, meeting the definition in this study, were offered at the Center during that period of time covered by the study. There were 944 adults who did avail themselves of these opportunities.

The College of Continuing Education maintains a list of all potential participants who respond, with interest, to the promotional efforts in behalf of the programs of continuing education which are conducted at the Center under the terms of the Fund for Adult Education grant. During that period of time covered by this study, there were 1,240 individual responses to the promotional efforts. This list of potential participants was checked against the records of the Office of Adult Admissions and Records to determine the extent of actual participation. Of the total number making a

positive response to the promotional efforts, 944 individuals became participants in one or more of the programs offered.

TABLE 1
IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS IN PROGRAMS OF
LIBERAL EDUCATION BY FREQUENCY

| Number of Programs | Number of Participants | Per cent of Total |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| One | 751 | 79.55 |
| Two | 80 | 8.47 |
| Three | 85 | 9.00 |
| Four | 17 | 1.80 |
| Five | 3 | |
| Six | 3 | |
| Seven | 3 | 1.18 |
| Eight | 2 | |
| Nine | 1 | |
| Total | 944 | 100.00 |

While 751 individuals participated in only one program, 112 participants met the requirements of the definition of a "continuing learner." Two other participants met the requirements of frequency of participation but were excluded from the study since neither participated in one of the programs during the last year covered by the study. Since the operational definition of "adult student body" implies an

identifiable body of continuing learners, these findings support the hypothesis that such a student body does exist at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. Further, these findings support the minor hypothesis that such a student body can be identified by the records of the Office of Adult Admissions and Records.

Commonalities of Age, Level of Education,
Occupation, and Community of Residence

Age Characteristics

From studies of the age characteristics of the continuing learner, Brunner's compendium indicates that "age seems to be a factor with the greatest participation ranging from the late twenties to fifty."¹ On the other hand, Knox found in his summary of participant surveys conducted by seven colleges and universities that such programs attract "primarily middle-aged students."² The findings of this study tend to give greater support to Knox's findings than to those of Brunner. The age group customarily considered as being "middle-aged" (36-55) accounted for fifty-eight per cent of those participants qualifying as continuing adult learners under the definition of this study. Such a percentage indicates that this is the age group which will comprise the majority of the continuing adult student body and tends

¹Above, p 4.

²Above, p 6.

to agree with Knox's findings. However, as such a student body increases in number, 10.7 per cent of such a group will represent too significant a number of students to be overlooked. Since the 21-35 age group does represent 10.7 per cent of the total student body as identified in this study, Brunner's findings do not appear to be discounted.

TABLE 2
AGE GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS BY SEX

| Age Clusters | Female | Per Cent | Male | Per Cent | Total | Per Cent |
|-----------------|--------|-------------|------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| Under 21 | .. | | .. | | .. | |
| 21-35 | 6 | 5.3 | 6 | 5.3 | 12 | 10.7 |
| 36-55 | 38 | 33.9 | 27 | 24.1 | 65 | 58.0 |
| Over 55 | 14 | 12.5 | 7 | 6.2 | 21 | 18.7 |
| Not Reporting | 13 | 11.9 | 1 | | 14 | 12.6 |
| Total | 71 | 63.4 | 41 | 36.6 | 112 | 100.0 |

One factor in this data forces serious question concerning the ultimate accuracy of the age statistics found in this study. If age information were available on the fourteen participants who neglected to list their ages on the enrollment forms, a considerable reshuffling of the present percentages could result. Though not be considered as scientific data, information was obtained from working with this group of participants during that time covered by this study.

While the addition of these ages would not greatly affect the percentages of the present data, the results would tend to be skewed in favor of the "middle-aged" group and would add to the number of the group over fifty-five. It is likely that the addition of this data would slightly increase the percentage of that group over fifty-five.

The 21-35 and 36-55 age groups, plus the unreported age group constitutes 81.3 per cent of the total enrollment, but that group of participants over fifty-five must not be overlooked. This group, constituting 18.7 per cent of the enrollment, is an enigma. One may wonder if the increased longevity is producing a concomitant expansion of the "middle-age" period and, therefore, a prolonged interest in participation in programs of continuing liberal education. On the other hand, this phenomenon may be indicative of a combination of many factors resulting in motivation for participation. Certainly, such factors as increased leisure, improved health, improved communications and transportation, increased affluence, and the accumulated effect of the continuing promotion of such programs, coupled with the persistence of programming, has some bearing on motivation to participate within this age group. Programs of continuing liberal education offer this age group an excellent opportunity to keep abreast of what is going on in the world, as well as an opportunity to satisfy the need for companionship --- the fulfillment of the societal goals mentioned by Houle and Sheffield.

The sex of the participant does not appear to have a great influence upon the age at which he participates. It is worth noting, however, that many more women than men (a 13-1 ratio) failed to report their ages. One may conclude that this might tend to contribute to the upward skewing of the age level. The women participants do tend to be slightly older than the men but this can be explained by the presence of an unusually high percentage (as compared with the general population) who are occupied in the professions and the presence of several widows. The former seems more likely to possess sufficient affluence to allow them to participate without financial strain while the latter is more likely to be faced with too much leisure.

Educational Characteristics

Knox and Brunner's findings concerning the level of formal education achieved by the participants in continuing education are in harmony, differing only in the degree of their statements. Knox says that "education tends to breed more education,"³ while Brunner makes the stronger statement by contending that "the higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely he will take part in continuing education."⁴

³Above, p 21.

⁴Above, p 4.

The present study tends to confirm these conclusions since 20.6 per cent of the participants had done some graduate work. However, it should be noted that 51 per cent of the participants did not have college degrees.

TABLE 3
GROUPINGS BY LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION BY SEX

| Level of Education | Females | Males | Total | Per Cent |
|-----------------------|---------|-------|-------|----------|
| Less than high school | .. | .. | .. | |
| High school | 19 | 20 | 39 | 34.8 |
| Some college | 13 | 5 | 18 | 16.0 |
| Degree | 11 | 4 | 15 | 13.4 |
| Graduate work | 14 | 9 | 23 | 20.6 |
| Not reporting | 14 | 3 | 17 | 15.2 |
| Total | 71 | 41 | 112 | 100.0 |

Attention should be called to the fact that none of the participants reported less than a high school education. It is very likely, however, that some of the 15.2 per cent who failed to report the level of their formal education were not high school graduates. It must be remembered that these programs were conducted on a university campus and that the vast majority of participants (84.8 per cent) had completed twelve or more years of formal education. Although the enrollment cards were intended for university use only, it seems

reasonable to assume that the participant with less than a high school education experienced some embarrassment in supplying this information.

The number which failed to list their level of formal education (14 females, 3 males) corresponds closely to that number (13 females, 1 male) which did not list their age grouping. The women tended to have a slightly higher level of formal education than did the men; however, this difference does not seem to be out of line since the women participants tended to be slightly older than the men and the large number of women trained for the professions could explain this difference.

It is still axiomatic in the South and Southwest that women pursuing professional careers must possess a higher degree of professional training than their male counter-parts to be able to compete on something approaching an equal basis for financial gain and professional advancement. It is also easy to conjecture that women are more immediately sensitive to the need for participation in continuing liberal education than is the man. Should this conjecture prove to be correct, these statistics will change with the persistence of programming.

Occupational Characteristics

Brunner's statement concerning the occupational characteristics of the adult learner is rather vague. He merely observes that the "middle income groups are more likely to

participate."⁵ Knox's observation, on this characteristic was also rather general. He concluded that "about one-quarter of the participants were homemakers, and most of the remainder (three-fourths) were in either professional or managerial occupations or were married to men who were."⁶

TABLE 4
GROUPING OF PARTICIPANTS BY TYPE
OF EMPLOYMENT BY SEX

| Type of Employment | Female | Male | Total | Per Cent |
|--------------------|--------|------|-------|----------|
| Professional | 16 | 31 | 47 | 41.2 |
| Managerial | .. | 7 | 7 | 6.3 |
| Clerical | 12 | 1 | 13 | 11.7 |
| Self-employed | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4.6 |
| Housewife | 32 | .. | 32 | 28.7 |
| Retired | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4.6 |
| Not reporting | 3 | .. | 3 | 2.9 |
| Total | 71 | 41 | 112 | 100.0 |

Since Brunner's statement is of such a general nature, it is easy to generalize on the findings of this study and conclude that the data is consistent with Brunner's findings. On the other hand, differences in specific data collected

⁵Above, p 4.

⁶Above, p 22.

complicates a comparison with Knox's findings. The Office of Adult Admissions and Records' IBM enrollment form does not request occupational information of the spouse of the participant. Therefore, occupational data collected in this study does not readily admit of comparison with Knox's findings.

Some comparison is possible with Knox's findings if the per cent of housewife participation is combined with those participants who are engaged in professional-managerial pursuits. The professional-managerial groups account for 47.5 per cent of the participants while the housewife group accounts for 28.7 per cent. If those participants who are listed as being self-employed (4.6 per cent) are considered also, these categories would account for 80.8 per cent of the participants. With these statistics in mind, the findings in this study must be considered as not differing "significantly" with those described by Brunner and Knox.

Of the participants in the professional occupations, slightly more than thirty-four per cent were women. As observed earlier in this chapter, this percentage is considerably larger than the nationwide ratio of women to men in the professions. This phenomenon was not reported in the earlier studies; consequently, no comparisons can be made. As noted earlier, persistence in programming may attract a higher percentage of professional men to programs of continuing liberal education in the future.

Residence Characteristics

In his summary, Brunner pointed out that "accessibility and proximity to center for adult education increase participation."⁷ Citing the findings of Houle and others in The Armed Services and Adult Education, Brunner suggested that persistence of program promotion and the dissemination of information about the programs to the potential clientele are factors in participation. The armed services study found that the more persons knew about the availability of adult education programs, the greater was the amount of participation.

Such statements seem axiomatic concerning participation; however, in the present study, the data were examined in an effort to ascertain any variances with the previous findings. Of the 112 participants qualifying as continuing learners, 87.5 per cent lived within a radius of 140 highway miles of the Center. The condition of the Oklahoma highway system leading into Norman from all sections of the state is such as to place this group of participants within an easy driving range of one and one-half hours or less. The public transportation facilities serving Norman place the Center in a less favorable light in terms of accessibility. This does not seem to exert an extremely adverse influence since driving such distances in Oklahoma is an accepted practice. Therefore, the findings of this study appear to be consistent

⁷Brunner, et al., p 97.

with those reported by Brunner concerning the accessibility and proximity of the Center for Continuing Education.

Without elaboration, Brunner reported that "participation is related to the size of the community."⁸ Considering the context in which this statement was made, one might assume that Brunner referred to programs conducted in and for a specific community rather than programs of a state-wide nature as those included in this study. However the statement stirred the interest of the writer to explore another avenue. The questions which immediately came to mind was: Is the urban and suburban resident more likely to become a continuing learner than the rural resident?

TABLE 5
RURAL OR URBAN RESIDENCE BY SEX

| Residence | Female | Male | Total | Per Cent |
|-----------|--------|------|-------|----------|
| Rural | 15 | 3 | 18 | 16.0 |
| Urban | 56 | 38 | 94 | 84.0 |
| Total | 71 | 41 | 112 | 100.0 |

Oklahoma has only two metropolitan cities: Oklahoma City and Tulsa. However, since most of the larger towns can, with reasonable accuracy, be considered as "suburbia," the decision was made to class all cities and towns with a

⁸Above, p 4.

population of 10,000, or more, as being urban in nature. This classification includes twenty-five municipalities. Further, since it is not an unusual practice for one to live on a farm or ranch while being employed in the city, this study considered any participant who lived within a thirty-minute driving distance of one of the two metropolitan cities as being in an urban area. While this decision was somewhat arbitrary, it does not seem unreasonable. The atmosphere, the furnishings, and the conveniences of the homes of these people tend to show a greater urban influence than rural.

While much sociological research would be required to determine the underlying causal factors, the findings of this study indicate that a considerable majority (eighty-four per cent) of the continuing learners reside in urban areas. However, as such a student body increases in numbers, the rural residents constitute too large a per cent (sixteen per cent) to be discounted. If persistence in programming has any bearing on participation (and a subsequent section of this chapter supports this hypothesis), perhaps this data, in a negative manner, supports Houle's findings which were mentioned above.

Extent of Husband-Wife Participation

While Brunner does not mention this particular factor, Knox points out that "when encouraged to do so, husbands and wives will attend together."⁹ This seemed to be an appropriate

⁹Above, p 6.

participation factor to include in this study since the College of Continuing Education took definite steps to encourage husband-wife participation in those programs of continuing education which met the requirements of the study. Statements urging this type of participation were incorporated in the promotional material and brochures of the several programs. In addition, a reduced enrollment fee was offered for husbands and wives who participated in the programs.

TABLE 6
EXTENT OF HUSBAND-WIFE PARTICIPATION

| Participation by Programs | Total Participation | Married Couples | Per Cent |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| One | 751 | 73 | 19.3 |
| Two | 80 | 8 | 20.0 |
| Three | 85 | 9 | 21.2 |
| Four | 17 | 2 | 23.5 |

Of the 1,240 positive responses to the promotional efforts in behalf of these programs, twenty-three per cent were husband-wife responses. Of the actual enrollment in one or more of these programs, there were ninety-two married couples participating. This amounted to 19.5 per cent of the total participation. Of the 112 participants qualifying as continuing learners in this study, there were eleven married couples which accounted for 19.3 per cent of this group.

The consistency of percentages tends to indicate that, when husband-wife participation is specifically encouraged, one may expect the husband-wife enrollments to constitute approximately twenty per cent of the total participation.

None of the studies reviewed made reference to familial participation other than the husband-wife combination. Indeed, the enrollment forms in use at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education do not contain items which elicit such information. However, the author has personal knowledge of several familial combinations among the participants included in the present study. Two combinations which readily come to mind include a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law combination and a grandmother-mother-daughter combination. All five of these participants were classified as continuing learners under the terms of this study.

Participation Sequence Individually Determined

No pattern of participation sequence emerged from the study of these data. Indeed, there seemed to have been as many patterns of participation as there were individual participants. The only pattern of participation which even approached sequential order was connected with a single program series. One of the programs included in the study was divided into three weekend seminars spaced over a nine-week period. While this program was designed and presented in such a manner that sequential participation was not essential,

the majority of the participants did attend all three seminars. Beyond this one instance, the pattern of participation was determined on an individual basis.

The absence of participation sequency probably involves many causal factors. Of these, there are two which stand out. The programs were not designed to require sequential participation; hence, any sequential pattern which might have developed would have been done on an individual basis by the continuing learner himself. The factor which is perhaps the greatest determinant deals with the truism that adult students do not constitute a "captive audience." Unlike the students attending the public schools or the students working toward formal degrees, the continuing learner attends only those educational programs which interest him. This, coupled with the many factors which may inhibit an adult's participation in any given program, results in the adult being a periodic participant.

Participation and Persistence of Programming

The fourth of the minor hypotheses of this study is that "the extent of participation is related to the persistence of programming." Perhaps the paucity of reference to this possible participation factor is due to the obvious fact that there could be no participation in the absence of programming persistence. However, it was felt that it would be important to ascertain if persistence in programming merely perpetuates the initially established student body or if

additional potential continuing learners could be reached by continuing and expanding the program offerings.

TABLE 7
SUMMARY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION
ENROLLMENTS BY YEAR

| Fiscal Year | Number of Enrollments | Per Cent Increase |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1961-62 (last half) | 305 | .. |
| 1962-63 | 435 | 39 |
| 1963-64 | 736 | 41 |
| 1964-65 (first half) | 390 | .. |

It seems reasonable to assume that persistence of programming is positively related to the numerical increase of a continuing student body. There are many obstacles in the almost insurmountable tasks of identifying the potential participants in programs of continuing liberal education and actually recruiting the participants for the programs. When one considers that the "word-of-mouth" promotion by previous participants looms large as a participation factor, persistence of programming appears to be a necessary corollary.

The findings of this study indicate that participation is related to persistence in programming. The data show an increasing enrollment each year covered by this study with

the most significant increase showing up in the second full year of the study. The 1963-64 programming year showed a forty-one per cent increase over the previous year. The data for the first half of the 1964-65 year seem to project a negligible increase. However, there were circumstances, not appearing on the table, which tend to reinforce the conclusion that participation is related to persistence of programming. At the end of fiscal 1963-64, there was a reduction of programming personnel in the liberal studies area. While this did not affect the number of programs offered in fiscal 1964-65, it did reduce the amount of program planning and promotion time which could be devoted to any given program. In spite of this handicap, the number of participants did not decrease.

Since it has been previously stated that word-of-mouth promotion of programs of continuing liberal education are of prime importance, persistence of programming is necessarily implied. However, mere "persistence" is not sufficient. The quality of the programs is a factor of greater import than the quantity of the offerings. The word-of-mouth promotion must be done by previous participants who consider their own participation to have been a rewarding and worthwhile experience. They must consider such participation to be so important that they feel impelled to recommend it to their friends and associates.

Participation Relationship to
Vocationally Oriented Programs

One phase of the problem of this study was to determine if a recruitment relationship existed between the programs of continuing liberal education and the vocationally oriented programs which were conducted at the Center during the period covered by this study. The problem of participant recruitment for programs which are vocationally oriented is made somewhat less difficult than recruitment for liberal programs by the fact that the potential audience for the former is more specific and more readily identifiable. While the recruiter for vocationally oriented programs directs his efforts specifically to teachers, lawyers, judges, salesmen, engineers, industrial supervisors, etc., depending upon the content of the program, the recruiter for the liberal programs is forced to "knock on every door."

Ideally, those participants in one type of programming should be exposed to the other types of program offerings. Such exposure would, hopefully, result in motivation for a broadened participation and an increased clientele for both liberally oriented and vocationally oriented programs. Indeed, such cross-program recruitment was envisioned by the members of the faculty and staff of the University of Oklahoma who were responsible for the planning of the Center and the overall organization of programs for the Center. This is attested to

by the reference to "common learnings" in the Kellogg Proposal¹⁰ and that section of the Fund for Adult Education Proposal dealing with the coordination of Conference Center Programs.¹¹

TABLE 8
CROSS-PROGRAM RECRUITMENT BY SEX

| Program to Program | Female | Male | Total | Per Cent |
|-----------------------|--------|------|-------|----------|
| Liberal to Vocational | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8.1 |
| Liberal to Other | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4.4 |
| Vocational to Liberal | 1 | 9 | 10 | 9.0 |
| Not Recorded | 61 | 26 | 87 | 78.5 |
| Total | 71 | 41 | 112 | 100.0 |

The data collected for this study present insufficient evidence to warrant acceptance or denial of the hypothesis that the liberally oriented programs and the vocationally oriented programs serve a cross-program recruitment function. Enrollment information in the Office of Adult Admissions and Records reveals that, of those participants who met the requirements of the definition of continuing learners in this study, 78.5 per cent of them participated in liberal programs only. One can only presume that the participants gave accurate enrollment information and that they engaged in no other types of participation.

¹⁰Proposal to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, pp 48-49.

¹¹Proposal to The Fund for Adult Education, pp 12-13.

On the other hand, the positive yields of the data cannot be dismissed lightly. It was found that 8.1 per cent of the continuing adult student body identified in this study subsequently enrolled in programs of vocational orientation and 4.4 per cent enrolled in still other types of programs offered at the Center. In other words, 12.5 per cent of the student body was motivated (by one means or another) to participate in Center-conducted programs other than the liberal programs through which their participation was initiated. Conversely, nine per cent of this student body initially participated in vocationally oriented programs.

While the results of this data are inconclusive, they certainly point to a need for further study in this area of program participation. If the student body in programs of continuing liberal education persists, and increases in number, 12.5 per cent of such a student body will represent a significant contribution to the enrollment figures in other programs at the Center. By the same token, nine per cent of such a student body will represent a significant contribution from the vocationally oriented programs.

Summary

The data upheld the major hypothesis of this study. There were 112 participants in programs of continuing liberal education at the Center who met the requirements for the definition of "continuing learner." This group constitutes the

adult student body in programs of liberal education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education for that period covered by this study. Of all the participants who enrolled in the programs, slightly more than eleven per cent ultimately became continuing learners.

1. The student body can be identified and described by the records of the Office of Adult Admissions and Records. The student body was identified through the records of the Office of Adult Admissions and Records. Further, the data collected from this source enabled the writer to describe the student body in terms of their commonalities of age, sex, level of formal education, occupation, the size of the communities of residence, and extent of husband-wife participation.

2. The characteristics are consistent with those described by Brunner and Knox. These findings tended to be consistent, in varying degrees, with those reported by Brunner and by Knox. In this study, the majority of participants (63.4 per cent) were female while the male participants comprised 36.6 per cent of the student body. The participants tended to range from thirty-six to fifty-five years of age (fifty-eight per cent); were above average in their level of formal education with 34.8 per cent reporting a high school education, sixteen per cent reporting some college work, 13.4 per cent reporting a college degree, and 20.6 per cent reporting post graduate work; and tended to be employed in the professions or management (47.4 per cent) or were housewives (28.7 per

cent). A considerable majority of the participants (eighty-four per cent) reside in urban or suburban areas. Very little research has been done in this area of participation which is probably explainable by the fact that the vast majority of liberal education programs, up to this time, has been conducted in the larger urban centers. The approach at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education is to offer such programs to a state-wide clientele. The theory is advanced that this participation factor is related to the persistence of programming. This is based on the assumption that the potential participant residing in rural areas is more difficult to identify and reach with information concerning the programs.

Knox found that, when encouraged to do so, husbands and wives will participate together in programs of continuing liberal education. The findings of this study were consistent with those of Knox. Of all participants included in this study, husband-wife participation accounted for 19.5 per cent of the enrollment. The percentage was only slightly less, 19.3 per cent, in that group of 112 participants which composed the student body identified in this study.

3. The sequence of participation was individually determined. A careful study of the enrollment records revealed no pattern or trend toward a sequential participation in the several programs. There was no common point of entry into program participation nor was a common sequence followed once an adult became a participant in the programs. Therefore,

the data upheld the hypothesis that the sequence of participation in these programs was individually determined.

4. The extent of participation is related to the persistence of programming. The data tended to support the hypothesis that participation is related to the persistence of programming. The amount of participation increased each year covered by this study with the most significant increase, forty-one per cent, coming in the second full year of the study. This hypothesis was further supported by the fact that, of all individual enrollments covered in the study, approximately eleven per cent ultimately became members of the "continuing adult student body."

5. Persistence in programming in both liberally and vocationally oriented programs serves a cross-program participant recruitment function. The data was somewhat inconclusive concerning cross-program recruitment. However, it was determined that the programs of continuing liberal education did contribute eleven individual participants to other programs conducted at the Center. Further, the vocationally oriented programs contributed nine participants who ultimately became continuing learners in the liberal programs. This seems to be sufficient evidence to indicate that some cross-program recruitment did, indeed, take place.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The Problem of the Study

The threefold problem of this study was (1) to identify the adult student body in programs of liberal education at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education; (2) to describe such a student body in terms of the commonalities of age, sex, level of formal education, occupation, size of community of residence, and extent of husband-wife participation; and (3) to discover if there is a participation relationship between the vocationally oriented programs and the programs of liberal education at the Center.

At attempt was made to identify, and analyze the enrollment records of, only that group of continuing learners who participated in the programs of liberal adult education at the Center from February 1, 1962, through June 30, 1965. This period corresponds with the opening of the Center and the end of the 1964-65 fiscal year. Only those participants in programs of liberal adult education conducted by the College of Continuing Education, under the terms of the 1962 grant from The Fund for Adult Education, were considered.

Participants in the Bachelor of Liberal Studies Seminars were not considered to be a part of this study.

Related Readings

The abundance of studies concerning participation in adult education seems to give ample testimony to the importance which adult educators have attached to the subject. However, the great majority of these studies were oriented toward a description of the participation in adult education at the given point-in-time when the data were collected and has not been directed toward previous or continuing participation.

Dr. Cyril O. Houle made the first studies with the emphasis on the individual or the "continuing learner." Subsequent studies by Sheffield, Ingham, Netherton, and Litchfield, while utilizing differing approaches and theoretical backgrounds, have tested and modified Houle's findings. Brunner, in his An Overview of Adult Education Research, and Knox, in his The Audience for Liberal Adult Education, have summarized research findings concerning the characteristics of participants in adult education. Their findings were fairly consistent and it is these two studies which seem to have the greatest relevance to the present study. These generalizations are listed below under Concomitant Findings.

Procedure of the Study

The data for this study were gathered from the IBM enrollment records of the Office of Adult Admissions and

Records at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education. These records were visually examined to locate all those participants who meet the requirements of a continuing learner as defined in this study. All of the enrollment records of those participants satisfying this requirement were then examined and analyzed in an effort to determine if there were clusters or groupings of age, sex, occupation, level of formal education, size of community of residence, and husband-wife participation which would portray commonalities among the continuing learners which might be used to make generalizations about the adult student body.

The commonalities discovered in this study were compared with and checked for consistency with the general characteristics of the adult participant described by Brunner and Knox in their studies. No statistical treatment of this data was attempted. The clusters and groupings were treated only as percentages of the total adult student body which was identified. This seemed to be in keeping with the studies which were cited under Related Readings.

Concomitant Findings

The findings in this study proved to be generally consistent with the findings of previous studies dealing with the characteristics of participants in programs of continuing liberal education for adults. That is, program planners, administrators, and faculties may expect the participants of any given program to follow a general pattern:

1. Almost all of the students will be in occupations, or will be married to persons in occupations, classed as "middle class."
2. The majority of the participants will be middle-aged (36-55 years of age).
3. The participants will be above the average of the general population in formal education.
4. Almost all the participants will come from urban and suburban areas.
5. Programs dealing primarily with abstract or spiritual concerns will attract more older adults than other programs.
6. When encouraged to do so, husbands and wives will attend together.
7. The participation pattern is individually determined.

It would be very easy to terminate this study at this point and merely accept the findings of the previous studies as being completely valid for this study. This would imply a relatively simple formula for program planners, faculties, and those responsible for the recruitment of program participants. The program planners could predicate their curricula efforts upon what they know about the educational needs and interests of the middle-aged, middle-class citizens of the geographical area which they serve. The faculties could presume a subject-matter sophistication (or at least a basis for learning) beyond the high school level. Those responsible for participant recruitment could concentrate their promotional efforts on the location of the middle-aged, middle-income groups and attempt to communicate with them on the grounds of known interests and values for this group.

However, a closer study of the findings of this study indicate such conclusions to be overly simplified. A closer scrutiny of the data is indicated.

Implications for Program Planning and Promotion

A major significance of this study is that a knowledge of the continuing adult student body should be of inestimable value to those responsible for the planning and promotion of educational programs for that student body. The findings of this study point toward five major implications for planning and promoting the programs. These implications, all having to do with increasing the number of participants, are (1) philosophical implications, (2) promotion possibilities with the pre-middle and post-middle-age groups, (3) participation potentialities within the clerical occupations, (4) rural residents as an audience source, and (5) participants in other Center-sponsored programs offer a recruitment opportunity.

1. Philosophical implications. While the operational philosophy of the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education and the College of Continuing Education implies a major concern with a continuing body of adult learners, it in no way disavows the one-time participant or the infrequent participant. The latter is considered to be farsighted indeed. The findings in this study indicate that, of every 100 participants who initially enroll in programs of continuing liberal education, only twelve will become continuing learners. This has serious

implications for program recruitment when one considers the intermittent nature of adult participation in such programs. If a "continuing adult student body" is to persist, there must be an ever-growing number of adult participants who meet the definition requirements of the continuing learner. The findings of this study point toward the need for continuous recruitment of "first-time" participants.

It seems unlikely that any programming unit will ever reach the point of saturation with its potential middle-income, middle-aged clientele. However, it is entirely reasonable to assume that a point of diminishing returns on the promotional efforts may be reached at an early date. Before this happens, it will be necessary for those who are responsible for recruitment to locate other likely audiences for programs of continuing liberal education. The findings of this study indicate four audiences which may well yield a significant number of participants for programs of continuing liberal education. Those responsible for program promotion may well look to the pre-middle and post middle-aged groups, the clerical occupations, rural residents, and participants in other programs conducted at the Center. In this same vein, the possibilities of recruitment through husband-wife participation (or other types of familial co-participation) should not be overlooked.

2. Promotion possibilities with the pre-middle and post-middle aged groups. While the previous studies have

indicated that young adults are basically concerned with education which deals with furthering vocational qualifications and the establishment of a home and family, this study indicates that they also have some interest in liberal education. Of the continuing adult student body identified in this study, 10.7 per cent were in the 21-35 age group. The participants who were over fifty-five years of age accounted for 18.7 per cent of the student body. Further, 12.6 per cent of the student body failed to report their ages which leads to the conclusion that, were their ages known, there would be a larger percentage of students in the "over fifty-five" age group. However, considering only those participants who did report their ages, approximately thirty per cent of the student body fell into either the pre-middle-aged group or the post-middle-aged group. This percentage should be of sufficient significance to get the attention of any program recruiter.

3. Participation potentialities within the clerical occupation. The great majority of participants in this study were either housewives or were employed in the professional-managerial occupations. On the other hand, 11.7 per cent reported occupation of a clerical nature. If such a percentage can be projected, this number of participants is quite significant. The limitations of time and income for participation in continuing liberal education for this group should give programmers and recruiters alike cause to question the

projectability of these percentage figures. However, two factors seem to mitigate in possible support of these percentage figures. In addition to the well-publicized factor of the ever-increasing number of working wives, the trend toward a rise in the educational level of the general population indicates a rise in the level of clerical employees. In the case of working wives, the extra family income would tend to off-set what might otherwise be financial limitations on participation. If a higher level of formal education is a participation factor (as this study and others indicate), the rise in the level of education of clerical workers may well mitigate in favor of participation in continuing liberal education programs. More study and research, however, is indicated for these two possible participation factors.

4. Rural residents as an audience source. Residence as a participation factor seems to call for much more study and research. Sixteen per cent of the participants reported that they reside in rural areas, but this data has no obvious correspondence with the other data included in the study. None of the participants reported employment which seemed to be directly connected with rural residence. Of those reporting rural residence, 83.3 per cent were women who listed "housewife" as their employment. Perhaps the safest conclusion one might make on this would be that their respective spouses were employed in occupations directly connected with rural residence. However, this is nothing more

than supposition since the enrollment forms did not call for employment information about the spouse. Further conjecture on this participation factor, based on the present evidence, is unwarranted. On the other hand, sixteen per cent of a program's participation seems to represent a sufficient percentage to merit the attention of program planners and recruiters.

5. Participants in other Center-sponsored programs offer a recruitment opportunity. The data in this study show that 12.5 per cent of the continuing students identified in this study subsequently enrolled in programs of vocational, and other, orientation at the Center. On the other hand, nine per cent of the participants were initially enrolled in vocationally oriented programs and then became participants in the programs of continuing liberal education. This gives indication that some cross-program recruitment has taken place and that it may offer a fruitful recruitment source for future programs of liberal education. This should certainly give the program planners and recruiters a talking point with their counterparts in the other programming areas at the Center.

The Tasks of the Program Planner and Recruiter

While research in the nature of the present study presupposes that similar future groups will display the same general characteristics of the group identified in the study, it behooves the program administrators, planners, and

recruiters to keep in mind the individual nature of adult participation. Sheffield pointed out that there was no clear patterning in terms of individual motivation in a given program. He found that if there are as many as sixteen participants in a given program, all five of the basic orientations which he identified will be represented in the group. Houle points out that in his approach to education as he approaches anything else, man remains persistently an individual.

It is an administrative task to decide the extent of the audience for which the institution is responsible. The program planners must decide which particular audience is to be served by a given program and the recruiter is then responsible for communicating with that audience in an effective manner. It is entirely possible that the program planners may decide that a particular program should be offered to a specific audience. It is then imperative that the program planner knows as much as possible about the characteristics, needs, and desires of this potential audience. Those responsible for recruiting the participants should possess the same information and should use this information to answer the question: What should I say and to whom?

Although the College of Continuing Education at the University of Oklahoma has been a leader in the development of the type of liberal adult education programs covered by this study, such programming is still in its infancy. One

of the major problems is that of attracting an ever-increasing number of participants in continuing liberal education and, at the same time, maintaining programs of quality and not just offering programs which attract wide attention. Although this does not rule out programming for specific audiences, it does focus attention upon the need for programs which will attract participants from many audiences and programs which will be of sufficient quality to attract re-enrollments by those who participated in previous programs. In order to plan programs of this nature, the program planner would be well advised to select all of those program objectives which he deems consistent with the programming philosophy of the institution and to provide a good variety of instructional (or learning) situations. Likewise, those responsible for program recruitment should appeal to all those reasons for participation in his promotional and selection efforts. He should state those reasons directly and as compellingly as possible to the potential audience which has been selected.

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