THE EFFECT OF SERVICES OF THE

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

CENTER ON POSTSECONDARY

ENROLLMENT

BY

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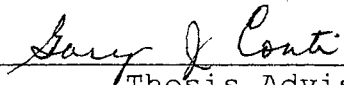Williamsburg, Virginia
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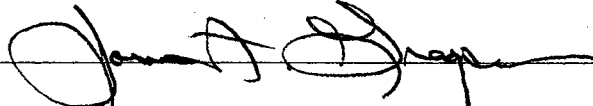the Degree of
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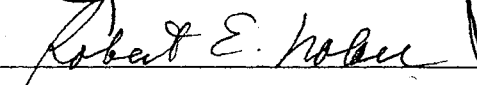
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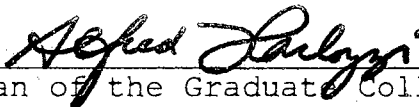
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Welfare Reform

Throughout the ages, education has been treasured and defined as the key to success in the American society. Knowledge brings power, opens career opportunities, ensures human welfare, and increases society effectiveness. Despite the potential benefits that can be obtained by education, there is a unique population within the community that does not participate and in turn does not receive the great rewards that education can bring. Often these participants are low-income, disadvantaged adults that are currently on welfare or some state assistance. In recognition of the existence of benefits from education and of a population that does not reap from them, governmental entities have created grant programs and adopted welfare guidelines to decrease the once growing population of uneducated, welfare participants. School-to-Work, Welfare-to-Work, Workforce Investment Act legislation (One-Stop Career Centers), and America's Career Kit are just a few of the new programs designed to help unemployed individuals find a job (Barkume, 1998). Each of these national programs operates under the assumption that work itself is the solution to both the "welfare problem" and chronic

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unemployment of low socioeconomic status individuals. This effort to decrease the welfare roles and increase the number of employed individuals within the country is known as Welfare Reform.

Welfare Reform has been a common topic of conversation and has promised to end welfare as it is currently known. This new notion has become a challenge to educational providers and trainers. Even old programs designed to assist at-risk, low-income adults have adapted their services to meet the new criteria of welfare legislation. The Federal Department of Education programs such as the Educational Opportunity Center and Upward Bound and the Federal Department of Labor programs such as those established by the Job Training Partnership Act have changed their referral systems to include short-term training to assist the Department of Human Services in its efforts to overhaul the welfare system (M. Eastwood, personal communication, May 15, 1996).

However, present evidence reveals that the anecdote of employment placement as welfare reform is grossly oversimplified. Placement of this population is not long lasting, results in low-income wage jobs, and results in high welfare recidivism (Burtless & Friedlander, 1995; Donohue, 1998; Riemer, 1997). The grim outcomes of these

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new government programs must be addressed if previous

welfare participants and low-income, uneducated citizens

are to have a fair chance at achieving the "American dream"

and benefit from the present economic growth. An analysis

of the types of reform programs and their participants can

possibly provide insight and suggestions to more accurately

encourage self-sufficiency of low-income, disadvantaged

individuals.

<div align="center">The Educational Opportunity Center</div>

Since 1972, the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)

has been providing services to low-income, first-generation

or at-risk adults in the United States and is a part of the

TRIO Programs that are funded by the Federal Department of

Education. TRIO Programs were established under the

Education Opportunity Act in 1964, the original War on

Poverty statue. The three original programs were Upward

Bound, Talent Search, and Special Services thus generating

the title TRIO. This act was followed by the Higher

Education Act of 1965 and a second re-authorization act in

1972 which created the Educational Opportunity Center

(Wolanin, 1997).

The federal government gave specific regulations to

EOC programs to guide their services to the disadvantaged.

EOC is mandated by the Department of Education (1997) to

provide the following services:

1. To provide information with respect to financial and academic assistance available for individuals to pursue a program of postsecondary education.
2. To provide assistance to such persons in applying for admission to institutions, at which a program of postsecondary education is offered, including preparing necessary applications for use by admissions and financial aid officers.
3. To provide public information campaigns designed to inform the community regarding opportunities for postsecondary education and training.
4. To provide academic advice and assistance in course selection.
5. To provide assistance in completing college admission and financial aid applications.
6. To provide assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations.
7. To provide guidance on secondary school reentry to a general educational development (GED) program or other alternative education programs for secondary school dropouts.
8. To provide personal and career counseling, tutorial services, and career workshops.
9. To provide mentoring programs involving elementary or secondary school teachers, faculty members at institutions of higher education, students, or any combination of such persons. (p.17)

Program participants must meet several eligibility

criteria. At least two-thirds are required to be both low-

income (150% of poverty level) and first-generation

students (first person in household to attend college).

Also participants must be at least 19 years of age, but

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they can be younger if they do not have access to other

TRIO educational programs in their area. Applicants

participate after reading promotional material about the

program or being referred by cooperating agencies such as

the Department of Human Services, the Department of

Corrections, the Private Industry Training Council, and

Workforce Oklahoma. Some individuals referred by state

agencies are often mandated to participate in the EOC

program, or they will be denied agency privileges

(Educational Opportunity Center Performance Report, 1999).

The majority of EOC programs in the nation have

decided to provide their services through a 2-day workshop

format (Wolanin, 1997). On the first day of the workshop

EOC staff access the academic levels and career interest of

each individual at the beginning of the workshop by

administering a basic skills assessment and a career

assessment. The basic skills assessment measures

vocabulary, reading, math, and language, and administration

time of this instrument is approximately 4 hours. Career

interest, career aptitude, and work personality are

measured by a 2-hour career test.

The assessment process takes up the first day of the

workshop. Information from the assessments is used the

second day to help the client develop an individualized

education plan (IEP). Career goals, job training needs, and future actions necessary are documented on the IEP for each participant. To assist the client in this process, counselors provide personal counseling and important enrollment information such as job and labor market material, job descriptions, and training and academic information. If it is determined that the individual will attend an institution that accepts federal financial aid, the EOC counselor will offer to helps prepare and electronically forwards the federal financial aid form. The remainder of the services lasts approximately 4 hours. Collectively, these activities make up the 2-day workshop (Workshop Agenda, 1999).

Each project grant requires the grantee to formulate program objectives and outcome measures. In light of the program purpose, at least one objective is designed to measure the percentage of participants that will enroll in postsecondary education. Nationally, most EOC programs report that 30% of the clients served will enroll in postsecondary education. Although this is not a high percentage, it has been acceptable to the Department of Education. However within the last 2 years, Department of Education officials have been discussing terms such as program effectiveness, cohort groups, and statistical

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analysis. Also government administrators are in the process of changing yearly performance reports so that they more accurately measure the effectiveness of program services. Grant appropriations for the TRIO programs are presently eleven billion dollars a year. Due to the limits of federal budgeting, additional pressure has been placed on programs to verify the necessity of their existence. Federal regulators want to know if or what services provided by EOC actually result in participants enrolling in postsecondary education.

Participation in Adult Education

The Educational Opportunity Center goals are to provide services to low-income, uneducated adults that result in participation in educational programs. The modern study of participation in adult education in the United States began in the 1960's and has proceeded into the social, psychological, and environmental influences that affect adults' decisions to enroll and participate in adult education activities. Participation in adult education activities involves the characteristics of adult learners, influences on participation, and the barriers that deter participation.

Learning Orientations

In past research dealing with participation in adult education, surveys have asked respondents about their possible reasons for learning and what motivates them to learn (Cross, 1981). Over the years, the profile of the participant has remained rather stable, and the data revealed that most participating adults share a variety of socioeconomic similarities. Learners are just as often a women as a man and less than 40 years old; have an above average income, have children, and have a high school diploma; and are more frequently urbanized and from the West (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Subsequent research agreed that learners more than non-learners could be described by the previous listed traits (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; National Center of Education Statistics, 1995).

Along with the socioeconomic traits of learners, specific motivations characterize adult learners. In a classic study, Houle (1961) used in-depth interviews and found that motivations could be divided into three categories: goal-oriented learners who desire to complete a goal, activity-oriented learners who participate for the sake of an activity, and learning-oriented learners who pursue learning for its own sake. Boshier (1971) validated

Houle's orientations to categorize motivations of adult learners, but he titled the motivations cognitive interest, activity orientation, and professional advancement. However, it should be noted that Houle's typology did not anticipate the complexity of reasons for participation and failed to recognize a continuum (Furst, 1983).

In addition to Houle's three orientations, an institutional orientation has been identified among adult participants in educational experiences (Lowe, 1991). The term institutional orientation refers to the degree to which the individual's loyalty and commitment to the sponsoring institution such as an agency, organization, or group affects the decision to participate in instruction provided by the institution. Several investigators classified the motivations of adults with orientations. Sheffield (1964) identified five orientations; Burgess (1971) listed seven; and Boshier and Collins (1985) found 14. Although various numbers of orientations have been found, these studies confirmed Houle's original three orientations as the prevailing ones into which the others could be characterized.

These early participation research studies accurately provided through descriptive research a profile of the typical adult learner that has remained consistent over

time. Nevertheless, motivation orientations fail to address the fact that participation occurs as a result of an interaction between the individual and the environment (Boshier, 1980). To adequately comprehend this interaction, an analysis of surrounding influences must be integrated with the characteristics of adult participants.

Influences on Participation

A tremendous amount of exploration has been devoted to discerning why adults participate in learning activities. Most of the research in this area has used factor analysis and found that adults participate for social, cognitive, and professional development reasons (Boshier, 1971; Burgess, 1971; Morstain & Smart, 1974). National surveys conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics (1995) and United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Valentine, 1997) substantiated early factor analysis and also listed job-related reasons as the main reason for participation. This was followed by personal interest or personal development.

Statistical analysis of the reasons why adults participate can be correlated with the three motivation orientations categorized by Houle (1961). Morstain and Smart (1974) identified the following factors: social relationships, external expectations, social welfare,

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professional advancement, escape/stimulation, and cognitive

interest.   Professional advancement and external

expectations related to the goal-orientation;

escape/stimulation, social welfare, and social

relationships related to the activity-orientation; and

cognitive interest related to the learning-orientation.

One important difference between these observations was

that like Tough (1968) and Burgess (1971), Morstain and

Smart (1974) allowed an individual to identify multiple

reasons for participation.

Barriers that Deter Participation

Pat Cross (1981) captured the dilemma of educators

seeking to understand why adults do not participate in

education.

> It is just as important to know why adults do
> not participate as why they do.   Indeed it is
> usually the people who "need" education the
> most--poorly educated--who fail to participate,
> understanding the barriers to participation has
> been a subject of special interest to research
> the policy makers. Unfortunately, it is usually
> even harder to find out why people do not do
> something than why they do. (p.87)

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) did one of the first major

studies to document why adults fail to participate in

education.   In this study 43% of the adults reported that

they failed to attend for financial reasons.   After cost,

time constraints and family responsibilities were

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inventoried most often. Also, in studies with populations

similar to EOC, these three deterrents continue to rank in

the top three (Valentine, 1997).

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) classified participation

deterrents into situational and dispositional barriers.

Situational barriers arise from one's situation in life at

a given time, and dispositional barriers relate to the

learners' attitude and self-perception about themselves.

Respondents listed situational barriers more often than

dispositional barriers as the cause for not participating,

but because of social desirability, the true importance of

dispositional barriers is probably unknown. Other barriers

that deter participation are institutional barriers, which

are policies of the institution that prevent attendance,

and informational barriers, which are a lack of knowledge

of the programs offered (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam,

1982).

Quantitative research on adult education participation

is a fairly new concept that began with the national

Johnstone and Rivera study in 1965. Since this

conception, hundreds of studies have been completed seeking

to grasp a mastery of this phenomenon. Over the years, the

researchers have progressed from characterizing adult

learners to organizing models of participation. Presently

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the participation research focuses on volunteerism and institutional program changes (Babchuk & Courtney, 1995; Stalker, 1993, Murk & Wells, 1988, Quigley, 1999).

While much of the participation research has been conducted with participants in general adult education programs, some has been conducted with specific populations such as low-income, at-risk learners. In interviews, potential learners have expressed that although they valued learning, they did not want to participate in adult education. The three major reasons for resisting were personal and emotive, cultural and ideological, and age related (Quigley, 1999). They believed that education had failed them, that teachers were insensitive, and that subject matter was often irrelevant. Even though personal and situational barriers were included, the facts showed institutional barriers, negative educational experiences, and administration skepticism as the main reasons for not attending. As a result of such information, new marketing strategies are called for that are based on need assessments from potential learners and include "unlearning" components to overcome previous negative associations with schooling (Quigley, 1999). Although Quigley (1999) work was based on the Adult Basic Education (ABE) population, these studies are relevant because the

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characteristics of the ABE population are similar to the
EOC clientele.

<center>Problem Statement</center>

"There is an interactive relationship between the
conditions of learning and the society in which it takes
place" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 72). Since 1965
participation researchers have identified the
characteristics and barriers of learners, examined why
adults participate, and developed models of participation.
The complexity of this phenomenon has caused adult
educators to incorporate both psychological and
sociological aspects of human behavior to explain adult
education participation. Borrowing from these disciplines
has generated hypotheses and theories to explain the social
and cognitive factors that contribute to institutional,
dispositional, informational, and situational barriers.
Understanding why adults participate in education can give
administrators and professors the ability to focus
recruitment efforts and to design appropriate curriculum
and programs that promote optimal learning. It is this
optimal learning that provides adults the opportunity to
improve their lifestyle and benefit society as a whole.

The importance and benefits of education in society
are the main reasons the government spends billions of

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dollars on programs like EOC. Traditional educators and scholars assert that education positively affects the community. However, presently adult education is often an attempt at social reform and problem solving (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). An abundance of an unemployed and welfare-recipient population can generate economic hardships and social unrest. In addition, when a segment of the population is not reaching its potential, this adversely affects the community as a whole and prevents the entire community from optimal functioning.

Education is a form of empowerment that can positively impact the lives of those who participate. Myles Horton and Paulo Freire used education to empower individuals to change their social situations through education (Conti, 1977). Education can provide an atmosphere of unification that liberates. Liberatory education enables learners to reflect both on their past and present experience and also on their future, which in turn can awaken them to collectively transform their society (Freire, 1970). Despite education's ability to empower, it is often a hindrance to poor and low-income citizens; students are forced to accept their curriculum regardless of their personal differences (Adams, 1975). Thus adaptive and creative educational settings and programs must be created

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to provide optimal learning environments and situations for the disadvantaged. Educating the poor can provide empowerment and yields the potential for political and social change.

Mezirow (1991) asserts that adult education has abandoned its once significant social goals and must begin to foster democratic change again. Increased global technology requires significant social responsibility and self-direction, thus creating a greater need for transformative learning through rational discourse. Through rational discourse, learners can examine and challenge their beliefs, values, and social practices.

"As adult educators, we have a special responsibility to actively work toward a participative social democracy in which the conditions impeding free full participation in learning thorough rational discourse are changed to meet the needs of all adult learners" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4). Socially it is necessary for adult educators to create educational programs that provide curriculum and areas of study that promote quality learning and not political control. In addition there must be a creation of delivery systems that do not encourage individuality but rather that encourage community and support (Cunningham, 1993).

Because adult education is so critical to a democratic

society, it is central that information about why adults

participate in education be studied and analyzed.

Educators must alleviate institutional, dispositional,

informational, and situational barriers that prevent

participation. If these barriers are alleviated in a

program such as EOC, the staff could more accurately and

effectively serve all future participants and use the

information collected to adjust workshop formats and

presentations. In addition, the Department of Education

could use the results to justify funding, create

performance reports, and update both regulations and

legislation. However, there has been no attempt to

identify the effect of services provided by the Educational

Opportunity Center on postsecondary enrollment.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe what

specific components of the EOC workshop influence

participants to enroll in postsecondary education. Since

the dissemination of information is a main part of the EOC

workshop format and an intricate part of the program

regulations, those delivering the workshop anticipate that

the majority of the participants feel this information is a

significant influence on their decision to participate in

education. The lack of information is a unique barrier

that deters participation and is the link between the

learner and the provider (Cross, 1981).   Even though the

Chain-of-Response Model of participation requires that one

must have more opportunities than barriers and that one

have a positive attitude of oneself and education (Cross,

1981), it is still necessary that learners receive accurate

and up-to-date information. The dissemination of

information is of no effect if it is not received by the

future adult education student (p. 151). In order to

enroll in an educational program, a participant must be

given course schedules, catalogs, school locations, and

scholarship facts and availability. "The successful

disseminator of information will estimate motivational

forces all along the route of the Chain-of-Response Model

and will design the message as well as the program to

address the problems of the desired target groups" (p.

151).

　　　Although "the importance of evaluating educational

programs seems to have increased greatly during the past

few years," evaluation remains "one of the most

misunderstood concepts in education" (Fellenz, Conti, &

Seaman, 1982). The main purpose of the evaluation process

is to measure the overall project objectives and placements

of the program (p.342). Evaluation focuses heavily on

process evaluation and planned versus actual implementation

(Daniels, McIntosh, & Leonard, 1996). The Educational

Opportunity Center has the following grant objectives for

project year 1999-2000: (a) disseminate educational

information to at least 85% of program participants, (b)

place 35% of the college ready participants in a

postsecondary education program, (c) assist 35% of

participants that need a GED in GED completion, and (d)

assist 60% of participants achieve "college ready status"

(Educational Opportunity Center Performance Report, 1999).

The Department of Education and the grant recipient, Rogers

State University, complete a yearly evaluation to determine

if the overall project objectives have been meet. This

study did not address these broad program goals. Instead,

it examined the change in perception of the participants

after attending a short-term workshop and described how the

workshop affected the participant's decision on

postsecondary enrollment. This descriptive study did not

analyze nor measure programmatic goals, outcomes, or

objectives, but instead it focused on the perceptions of

the participants.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

1. What types of barriers to college participation are alleviated for the participants as a result of participating in the EOC workshop?
2. How aware are EOC participants of educational information about financial aid, GED classes, career interests, and college programs?
3. How likely are EOC participants to use the workshop educational information about financial aid, GED classes, career interests, and college programs?
4. How beneficial or useful is the information disseminated during the EOC workshop in enrolling in postsecondary education?

To ascertain this information a survey was administered and interviews were conducted. A survey was given at the beginning and the end of the EOC workshop that included questions about barriers to college participation, the awareness of participant's knowledge about educational information, and the likelihood of the participants to use of this information. The interview questions asked about the usefulness of the information disseminated during the workshop.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the duration of the workshop. The workshop is limited to the 2- day workshop provided by the EOC counselors. A workshop that varies in length may produce greater or lesser effective services, but it was not feasible to modify the standard operating

procedures of the EOC center, and the workshop duration was left at 2 days.

Definitions

Adult Learner: An individual that is enrolled and attending
   a postsecondary education program.

At-risk/disadvantaged adults: Low-income, first generation
   adults that will not attend postsecondary or adult
   education programs without some form of assistance.

Disseminated information: Information provided to the EOC
   participant that includes the following: scores on the
   basic skills and career assessment, financial aid
   information, college degree handouts, information on
   how to enroll and attend college, scholarship
   information, and college catalogs and applications.

Educational Opportunity Center (EOC): A federally funded
   grant program that assist disadvantaged, low-income
   individuals to enroll in postsecondary education.

First-generation adults students: Adults that are the first
   person in their immediate family to attend a
   postsecondary institution.

Low-income: According to by federal regulations, being at
   or below 150% of the national poverty level (U.S.
   Department of Education, 1999).

Participation: The act of enrolling and attending a

postsecondary education program (U.S. Department of

Education, 1999).

Postsecondary enrollment: According to federal regulations,

attending any adult education institution beyond high

school. These include vocational school, college,

proprietary schools, and trade schools.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

There are several social, psychological, and
educational factors that influence adult's decisions to
participate in education and in turn effect the services
provided by the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). One
such factor is the complexity of forces that cause or
hinder adults to participate in education. If EOC
personnel desire to assist individuals in attending adult
education, they must be aware of what influences their
clients' decisions to enroll and participate in adult
education.

Another factor is the unique set of demographics and
social status of the EOC clients. Due to federal mandates
for the Educational Opportunity Center, 80% of the clients
are low-income or fist-generation adults that receive some
form of welfare assistance (B. Rutledge, personal
communication, January 17, 1997). Because of their
socioeconomic status, most of the clients receive some form
of welfare assistance. The new welfare mandates affect
their life choices and educational success. Therefore, it
is critical that welfare reform is considered in this
equation.

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Last is the notion of empowerment that is the sole justification behind every Department of Education program and policy (Department of Education, 1999). Education is viewed as an avenue that can provide a citizen with the necessary foundation to lead a successful life (Wolanin, 1997). All of these components must be addressed holistically to understand the forces that propel or deter a low-income, at-risk adult to participate in adult education.

<div align="center">Participation</div>

More and more in the education arena participation research is being manipulated to target and market potential students and document their level of interest. Often potential learners resist attending adult education programs because teachers are often insensitive to and teach subjects that are not applicable to them. In addition the education system has generally failed them. Even though personal and situational barriers are mentioned, research showed that institutional barriers, negative educational experiences, and administration skepticism are the main reasons for not attending (Quigley, 1999). As a result of such information, new marketing strategies are based on needs assessments from potential learners and include "unlearning" components to overcome

previous negative associations with schooling.   An

adaptation of teacher training that offers attention to

cultural matters and awareness of possible negative school

circumstances has also become a part of many professional

development agendas (Quigley, 1999).

"In a free market economy, marketing becomes a

powerful instrument for matching products and services to

people's needs" (Michael, Hamilton, & Dorsey, 1995, p. 23).

This competitiveness requires that corporations as well as

educational institutions explore the changes in their

"customers" and their needs.   Only then can they adapt

their product and product delivery, which in turn ensures

institutional survival.   One example of this is

Pennsylvania State University.   In light of such economic

concerns, Pennsylvania State University along with others

has instituted distance educational courses that provide

flexible, convenient opportunities for self-enhancement,

higher education, and professional development.   These

courses allow independent learning and can eventually be

transferred into major course requirements (PennState

Distance Education, 1999).

In the past, most traditional educational programs

were linear in design.   However, an alternative to this

process is the systems approach model (SAM), which consists

of independent and interchangeable components that can meet

the changing needs of most learning programs. SAM consists

of the following five components: needs assessment,

instructional planning and development, administration and

budget development, program implementation, and evaluation

(Murk & Wells, 1988). Implementation of this strategy

offers greater flexibility and practicality for learners.

Organizations have thoroughly analyzed participation data

and used this information in the needs assessment,

planning, and development process components of SAM. Such

efforts allow administrators to successfully market

potential learners and anticipate the needs of learners.

Characteristics and Motivations
        of Adult Learners
        Although education institutions are presently

increasing the use of participation data to boost

enrollment and attract a variety of students, researchers

began studying this phenomenon quantitatively in 1965

(Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Early research most often used

surveys and questionnaires and asked respondents about

their possible reasons for learning and about what

motivates them to learn (Cross, 1981). This research

indicated that adults that participate in adult educational

activities have socioeconomic similarities. Learners have

an average income and often reside in an urban location in

the West. They may be either a man or woman. In addition,
they are high school graduates that are less than 40 years
old and have dependent children (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980;
Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; National Center of Education
Statistics [NCES], 1995).

An institutional orientation has also been identified
(Lowe, 1991). An institutional orientation is the degree
to which the individual's loyalty and commitment to the
sponsoring institution, which may be an agency,
organization or group, affects the decision to participate
in instruction provided by the institution. This
commitment is generated by a particular system of values
that causes an individual to pursue activities with the
institution (Becker, 1960). Most often the commitments are
strongest at educational programs in religious and
charitable organizations. Although inquiry has indicated
that an institutional orientation does influence
participation if the organization is viewed as significant
to the adult, the influence of this orientation varies with
the type of institution or education activity (Lowe, 1991).

Many other motivations influence adults to participate
in education. A religious orientation, which include
spiritual goals and serving a church, along with personal

motivations, which include personal fulfillment, also influence education participation (Burgess, 1971).

These early participation researchers through descriptive research have accurately provided a profile of the typical adult learner that has remained consistent over time. Nevertheless, motivation orientations fail to address the fact that participation occurs as a result of an interaction between the individual and the environment (Boshier, 1980). Therefore, to adequately comprehend this interaction an analysis of surrounding influences must be integrated with the characteristics of adult participators.

Influences on Participation

Through the use of factor analysis, several reasons have been uncovered that determined to influence education participation. Adults mostly participate for social, cognitive, and professional development reasons (Boshier, 1971; Burgess, 1971; Morstain & Smart, 1974). National surveys conducted by the NCES (1995) and United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Valentine, 1997) listed job related reasons as the main reason for attendance, followed by personal interest or personal development.

Positive and negative factors affect the social, cognitive, and professional development reasons for

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participation (Henry & Basile, 1994). Variables of both
participants and non-participants were scrutinized to
determine how they influence and predict participation.
Some of these variables included meeting people, general
interaction, paying tuition, information from brochures
sent to the workplace, major life changes, and
institutional deterrents. The greatest difference between
non-participants and participants were found in the
negative factors of paying one's own tuition, major life
changes, and institutional deterrents. A positive factor
was reading brochures about available educational
opportunities at work. Researchers were able to
effectively determine participation 66% of the time if the
adults did not have any of the negative factors and 76% of
the time if they had the negative factors (Henry & Basile,
1994).

Life transitions are significant events or turning
points in the life cycle of an adult. A correlation has
been found between adult education participation and life
transitions. These life transitions can trigger an adult
to participate in adult education, can motivate adults to
learn in order to cope with changes, and can be produced by
a learning experience (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). In
addition, the most frequent motivating transition was

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career (56%) and family (16%) (Aslanian & Brickell (1980).
Present studies document that life transitions that involve
changing family patterns, retirement, and employment
prospects are positively correlated with participation
decisions. Family and career transitions still account for
the largest percentage of the reasons individuals
participate in adult education. Life transition data also
provided some gender peculiarities. Most females were
motivated to participate because of changing family
patterns and most males were motivated by employment
prospects (Blaxter & Tight, 1995).

Although socioeconomic characteristics are similar for
participating adults, research does not support a
relationship between motivation orientations and
demographic data such as sex, age, occupation, and
education (Governanti & Clowes, 1982). Motivational
relevance or selective attention integrated with subjective
ways people define their situation prevent researchers from
explaining human behavior in terms of cause and effect
relationships. "The event of participation is not an
isolated event in a person's life rather an integral part
of the person's life situation and social context"
(Rockhill, 1983, p. 23).

Barriers that Deter Learning

It is necessary to know not only why a person participates but also why a person does not participate. However, it is often more complicated to determine why an individual chooses not to participate in adult education (Cross, 1981). Johnstone and Rivera (1965) determined that 43% of adults reported that they failed to attend for financial reasons. After cost, time constraints and family responsibilities were inventoried most often. These barriers are known as situational barriers or barriers that arise from situations in an adults life at any given time (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Situational barriers often are the most cited reasons for not participating in adult education. However, even though cost is often cited as a barrier to participation, the actual cost of participation is not known, and willingness to pay influences this decision. In addition, males are more willing to pay for education than females; this may possibly be related to males viewing education as an investment in their careers (Cross, 1981).

Dispositional barriers relate to a learner's attitude and self-perception. They are not reported as often as situational barriers. Nonetheless, the true importance of dispositional barriers is probably unknown. The social

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desirability issue makes it more acceptable to state that one is too busy or does not have the money to participate than to say one lacks the ability or does not have an interest.

Institutional barriers are rules and regulations of the institution that deter participation. Scheduling problems, problems with location or transportation, and lack of interesting courses create these barriers (Cross, 1981). Informational barriers or the lack of knowledge about education and educational programs were also documented (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Information is an important liaison between a learner and the educator. Not only must the information be accurate and anticipate motivational forces, but also it must be received by the potential student (Cross, 1981). All barriers are both powerful and preventive and greatly hinder adults from deciding to participate in adult education. Even so, a learner's perception of barriers is more important than the actual barriers (Rubenson, 1977).

A cluster analysis of barriers identified types of adults in relation to six deterrents of participation. This study revealed critical information about the nature and interplay of barriers (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). Two types were most often females and they were deterred by

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personal problems (Type 1) and educational cost (Type 3).

Family responsibilities, childcare, health care, and low-

incomes contributed to these barriers. The groups who had

lack of confidence (Type 2) and who were not interested in

organized education (Type 4) were mostly men. Low

educational attainment and success was the basis for a lack

of confidence, and those not interested had the highest

incomes which may have contributed to education not being a

priority. The group of those not interested in available

courses (Type 5) was made up of both male and female. This

group was highly educated and had middle range incomes.

This typology has substantial theoretical value by

providing information about barriers that deter male and

females from participating in adult education.

Often administrators of educational programs perceive

the barriers of potential students differently than the

learner (Sherman, 1990). In a telephone survey, non-

participating adults ranked lack of time, wrong times, and

cost as the top reasons for not enrolling. In contrast,

administrators at educational agencies ranked

transportation and location as main reasons for non-

participation. Research in business and industry indicated

time services were offered and fees and other cost as

barriers (Sherman, 1990). The business and industry list

mirrored the participants' list.   This demonstrated that

companies might have some insight into participation

barriers that educators do not.

Models of Participation

Information about the characteristics and barriers of

learners has generated several models of participation.

Most models are inclusive and consider multiple elements

that may affect human behavior.   Several participation

models emphasize the positive and negative forces that act

on the individual and conclude that the sum of these forces

determines whether an individual participates or does not

participate in adult education (Miller, 1967; Rubenson,

1977).   Miller's Force-field Analysis model was based on

Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs.   Miller argued that

before any motivation for participation in adult education

could emerge, basic needs of survival and safety must be

met.   Unmet basic needs serve as negative forces that deter

participation.   Miller's model offers insight into the

importance of socioeconomic status and adult education

participation.   By using Lewin's (1947) concept of positive

and negative forces, Miller identified motivational forces

that increase or decrease adult education participation.

Miller argued that lower-class individuals cannot be

concerned about self-actualization, achievement, and

recognition until basic living priorities are met. The lack of these needs along with hostility to education, limited access through organizational ties, and weak family structure act as negative forces against participation. Because each class experiences different circumstances, Miller constructed a positive and negative force field for each socioeconomic level.

Rubenson's Expectancy Valence Model (1977) borrowed from Vroom (1964) and determined that the motivation of an individual results from a combination of positive and negative forces existing in the individual and the environment. These forces are a result of the individual's expectations and attitudes toward education. Rubenson named two different types of expectations: an expectation of personal success in the educational activity and an expectation of receiving a positive reward during or after participation. The term valence referred to the negative, positive, or indifferent attitude a persons puts on being successful. Both the expectations and the valence have a multiplicative effect, and the strength of these factors determines participation. Unlike Miller, Rubenson's model focused more on individual peculiarities and shifts away from demographic variables. A viewpoint that stresses

internal motivations may imply that the removal of external

barriers may not increase the probability of participation.

Several participation models not only considered

socioeconomic aspects but also included psychological

influences. Cookson's ISSTAL Model (1986) viewed social

participation as a lifelong pattern and a combination of

social demographics, personality, and preset life

situations. It also included an intellectual factor and

addressed the relationship between persistence and

intelligence test scores. This correlation was positive

which implied that dropping out is less likely for those

who are more intelligent and successful in the educational

activity. However, some research indicates that the

factors that effect participation and persistence are the

same (Tillburg, 1989). When barriers to participation are

removed, the barriers to persistence in the learning

activity are also removed.

The Cross Chain-of-Response (COR) Model (1981)

identified and interrelated various external and internal

variables that result in participation. Attitudes about

education, self-evaluation, life transitions, importance

placed on goals, opportunities/barriers, and information

are the basis for making a decision to participate in adult

education. The COR model was one of the first

participation models that included life transitions which accounted for 83% of a person's motivation to participate (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). In this model, opportunities and information about educational institutions and programs can overcome external barriers. In order to accurately predict participation, components of the COR model must be considered from the beginning of the chain to the end (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This model is cyclical because educational experiences influence both one's self-concept and how one feels about education.

Although the COR model has some external and environmental factors, it was often viewed as a psychological model (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). It focused on individual internal processes and beliefs and proposes that the key to understanding why adults do not participate is found at the beginning of the chain with attitudes about education and self-evaluation.

In these models both external and internal situations can motivate one to participate, but an abundance of negative impressions can be a deterrent that prevents participation (Henry & Basile, 1994). Boshier (1973) also stressed the importance of the individual's perception and interpretation of the environment. Incongruencies between the self, ideal self, and other learners can amount to a

sum that prevents participation or causes one to drop of

from an educational program.

These models yield insight into the motivations and

social influences that propel adults to participate in

learning and show the complex nature of why adults

participate in education. Each presents an explanation of

the individual and of how individuals react to their

environment. However the degree of this influence from

environmental, psychological, and sociological factors upon

the potential learner vary. Several of the models are

based upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs and assume

educational participation is not a priority if survival

issues are present (Miller, 1967; Rubenson, 1977). Through

these models, theorists have attempted to understand the

components of motivation (Howard, 1989). Information and

predictions derived from these interactive models can

assist adult educators in creating educational programs

that provide curriculum and areas of study that promote

quality learning.

Welfare Reform

Because the Educational Opportunity Center program is

a federal program and has mandates to serve low-income,

first generation adults, it is closely related with the

Department of Humans Services and other new welfare reform

programs. Clientele for each of these programs include at-
risk, disadvantaged participants on welfare. In order to
eliminate redundancy services, many federal organizations
are located in the same facility to more effectively serve
a participant (M. Eastwood, personal communication, May 15,
1996). For example, a welfare recipient may be referred to
a workforce center for job training or an educational
program. Before receiving job training, a thorough
assessment is completed by the Educational Opportunity
Center. While in job training or an educational program,
assistance is available for them through Student Support
Services. Student Support Services can provide tutoring
and pay for textbooks. Often individuals in these programs
need this holistic approach, which may include
psychotherapy, family counseling, and other health needs.

Welfare and Educational Opportunity Center Clients

Knowing the characteristics of the welfare and EOC
population can provide insight to educators for the
development of more effective program components and
structure and for the generation of long-lasting solutions
for improving the livelihood of low-income individuals.
Most often individuals in the program are single mothers
that have never been married, have more than one child, are
chemically dependent or were chemically dependent at one

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time, are high school drop-outs, and are over the age of 30 (Riemer, 1997). In addition, they are low-income individuals that live 40% below the poverty level (M. Eastwood, personal communication, May 15, 1996). The 1990 U.S. Census indicated that 15% of those in the United States were classified as low-income individuals. Five percent of low-income individuals have a work disability; most (55%) are Euro-Americans, and African-Americans (39%) comprise the second largest group (U.S. Census, 1990). Along with the above factors, these individuals can be classified as the "hard-core unemployed" because they have not been able hold a job for more than 6 months (Riemer, 1997). The description of this population indicates that there may be a need for secondary education, job training, chemical dependency counseling, career advisement, and childcare. However, these services are often not available or affordable (Badway et al., 1999).

The characteristics of this population adversely affect the type of service received from different governmental agencies. Most welfare clients are regularly discriminated against and looked down upon by the larger community (Riemer, 1997). Most people operate on the hypothesis that low-income individuals need to learn how to work, how to behave, and how to accept authority (Riemer,

1997). When interviewed, individuals say that "people are homeless because they don't pay bills. They buy their kids designer sneakers and pay their habit. It's not because of insufficient housing" (Riemer, 1997, p. 90). Such statements support the assumptions that the disenfranchised for some reason have not learned critical life skills, that they choose to depend upon the government, and that a class on job readiness and life skills can alleviate the problem. Beliefs about impoverished, disadvantaged individuals continue to prevail and shape society (Riemer, 1997).

Welfare Recipients and Job Climate

One critical issue affecting welfare recipients is the treatment they receive once working on a job. It appears that they never lose their identity of inner-city poor and have a low status at work (Riemer, 1997). Often corporations have organizational classification systems that alienate previous welfare recipients from "regular employees." For example, all individuals in one corporation hired through a welfare link remained hourly employees while everyone else except for minorities was a salaried employee (Riemer, 1997). The corporate administration held the view that anyone hired from welfare rolls, as well as minorities, lacked the cultural and

social skills required to be a salaried employee and did not receive paid vacation or sick leave.

Unpaid sick time can be a strategy to keep workers timely and coming to work 5 days a week. This can create a cultural and social hierarchy within the corporation (Bourdieu, 1990). Welfare clients' differences in terms of race, economic condition, and educational level can be seen as deficits and used as a rationale for relegating them to a second-class status at work (Riemer, 1997).

Due to the social structure in the work place, training received from a welfare reform program does not always allow participants to upgrade their job status (Riemer, 1997). It is discouraging to individuals who have made a positive step to self-sufficiency to realize that without addition education they remain economically deficient. Most welfare participants that are hired in entry-level positions remain marginalized and poor (Bourdieu, 1990; Grubb, 1999; Riemer, 1997).

Federal Welfare and Education Programs

Welfare-to-Work. Welfare-to-Work legislation in the U.S. Department of Human Services was designed to decrease the welfare rolls. Due to the variety of populations across the nation, legislation was written so that individual states could adapt their programs as they saw fit. They

were mandated to limit lifetime welfare participation to a total of 5 years and have a percentage of enrollees working a minimum number of hours per week. If these mandates were not achieved, state offices would be penalized by a reduction of the amount of funds they receive from the federal government (Department of Education, 1996). In addition, welfare reform programs were mandated to cooperate with existing social agencies and grant-funded programs such as the Employment Service and Department of Education Programs like the Educational Opportunity Center.

School-to-Work. To assist welfare agencies, other governmental programs were created to provide career services and make job searching more efficient. Such programs have literally made the federal government a "career counselor" (Barkume, 1998). Starting in high school when some students have no idea what career they want to pursue, federal, state, and local grants provide students with hands-on experience in a variety of fields in the School-to-Work program. The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor link businesses and educational institutions by creating a connection between the classroom and the workplace through student internships. Benefits of this program are as follows: completed internships may lead to full-time employment,

valuable contacts are made through mentorship, and students are introduced to networking (Barkume, 1998).

One-Stop Career Centers. One-Stop Career Centers provide a central location for employment and training services. Job seekers can apply for unemployment benefits, register with the unemployment service, apply for welfare benefits, and solicit career counseling. These centers are equipped with computers for Internet access, computer training, and word processing for writing resumes and cover letters. One-Stop Career Centers provide free services that assist in job seeking by allowing job-related photocopying, faxing, and telephone calling. Career libraries and resource rooms contain books and videos on various employment topics and trends (Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, 1999).

America's Career Kit. Through America's Career Kit, the U.S. Department of Labor is expanding career services through the Internet. Three databases are included on this governmental website which offers services to job seekers and employers. America's Job Bank is the national database of job listings, America's Talent Bank is the national database of resumes posted by job seekers, and America's Career InfoNet is a link through America's Job Bank that supplies a source of information and career exploration

(Barkume, 1998). These federal programs are the present
services offered by the government to change the welfare
system and improve the lives of low-income, disadvantaged
populations.

Programs Outcomes

Since the welfare reform process has been in effect
for several years, researchers and evaluators have been
able to critically analyze the objectives and effect of the
programs. Information has been collected in reference to
career guidance, training, and wages. Overall, welfare
reform programs use their modest resources in a cost-
effective way and encourage more enrollees to enter
employment or start work sooner than they would have
without the reform objectives (Burtless & Friedlander,
1995).

However, Welfare-to-Work programs do not always find
their graduates better jobs or jobs with better job
security. In addition, often the jobs produced little or
no improvement in recipients' financial situations
(Burtless & Friedlander, 1995). Such individuals are known
as the working poor because although they are employed,
they are unable to live above the poverty level without
childcare benefits and sate assistance (Riemer, 1997). In

addition, 40% of the individuals return to welfare after
exiting the program (Burtless & Friedlander, 1995, p. 150).
Department of Education Programs and EOC

The new welfare reform act has presented a challenge
to providers of education and training. Colleges and
universities have been forced to create innovative
approaches to adapt their curriculum and instruction to new
welfare mandates. One crucial problem is the emerging
variation among and within states. In some states there
are very few regulations with regard to training, and in
other states an extensive decrease in education and
training opportunities is evident. In both New Jersey and
Michigan, state policy forbids training for any welfare
participant, but in Connecticut, welfare participants
receive training after completing five prior steps (Grubb,
1996). Wisconsin has outlined a specific function for the
Welfare-to-Work program and allows 12 hours per week of
training and unsubsidized employment. This program
uniquely combines education and training that provides
student support and may yield long term results (Grubb,
1999).

States that more frequently combine and promote
education and training are those with strong institutions,
with a history of using them in economic development, and

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with cutting edge administrators (Grubb, 1999). The state

of Oklahoma has created programs with a variety of

educational programs and job search assistance. Oklahoma

has mandated that the state vocational institutions

participate in the new welfare-to-work programs; this

mandate allows EOC and welfare participants to easily

enroll and attend vocational programs (Oklahoma Employment

Security Commission, 1999).

A number of educational institutions train welfare

recipients for local corporations. In Kansas City, Sprint

provides work experience placements, and a community

college provides developmental education and job skills

(Grubb, 1999). These programs last approximately 30 weeks

and provide remedial preparation and occupational skills

training. However, only a few states participate in these

linkage agreements.

Several states have produced a case management

approach where counselors in the educational institution

provide academic and career advisement. However, other

states have simply decided not to incorporate education in

their welfare reform, work-first policies. It is

anticipated that other programs will appear and welfare

recipients will continue to be oriented to a variety of

education and training opportunities (Riemer, 1997, p. 94).

Adult Learning

Andragogy

As people age, their experiences change their body, mind, and soul. The human development process consists of growth and maturity. Malcolm Knowles (1980) cleverly considered this human development process when he discussed his concept of andragogy. Knowles originally defined andragogy as the "art of science of helping adults learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art of science of teaching children" (p. 43). However, after andragogical principles assisted secondary teachers in improving learning, he changed and broadened his definition to a set of presuppositions about learners. This model can be used in conjunction with the pedagogical model.

There are four assumptions of andragogy (Knowles, 1980). As individuals mature, their dependent personality becomes self-directed, life experiences become learning resources, their need to learn is influenced by social roles, and they desire immediate application of learned material. These presuppositions are unique to the mature learner and must be considered when teaching adults. When people become adults, they began to see themselves differently; they are no longer just learners but are a contributing part of society. In turn, their self-concept

becomes self-directed. However, because these individuals mature at different rates, it is crucial that teachers pay close attention to the development rates of their learners and be aware of what areas in which they may be self-directed and what areas require greater dependency.

Previous education and life experiences affect the learning process (Knowles, 1980). Adult learners use these experiences as resources when learning a task. In addition, experiential techniques such as laboratory, simulation exercise, and field experience produce learning with more meaning than those without application exercises. Moreover, adults usually learn best when they have the responsibility of creating an atmosphere that helps them discover their "need to know" (p. 44). Because adult learners see learning as the fulfillment of a life destiny, they desire to apply information learned to real-life situations.

The concepts of andragogy greatly affect the role of the educator and cause the educator to create curriculum and programs that are competency based, meet the needs of the learners, produce a supportive learning climate, and consider the resources of potential learners (Knowles, 1980). A climate that allows learners to take

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responsibility for their learning yields a learning process that is life changing and meaningful.

Knowles lists seven steps as a part of the program development process: producing a learning climate, participative planning, diagnosis of needs for learning, formulating learning objectives, developing activities, operation of the activities, and evaluating learning needs (Knowles, 1980, p. 59). Creating the appropriate learning environment includes paying attention to the learner's classroom environment. Comfortable chairs, informal meeting rooms, and appropriate decorations for adults are necessary. In addition to the external environment, the psychological atmosphere should be warm, respectful, and supportive. The educator is crucial to producing an emotional climate; the teacher's attitude can elicit negative or positive responses. Assessing what the learners desire to learn and allowing them to decide produces students that are motivated to learn. The teacher should serve as a "procedural guide, content resource, and a catalyst" (p. 48). Self-evaluation where the teacher assists the adults in accomplishing their academic goals is preferred to traditional teacher evaluation in which test or quizzes evaluate performance. These planning steps are dependent upon mutual collaboration between the teacher and

the learner. This mutual cooperation allows learners to take charge of their learning by determining their academic needs and goals.

Because the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) provides services to adults who are 18 years and older, andragogical principles influence the clientele. For the services to be effective, the adults must be allowed to be self-directed. However, as is often the case with governmental programs, an abundance of mandates prevent counselors or educators from allowing the students to direct their goals. However, the agenda for the EOC workshop includes several andragogical components that assist individuals during the learning process. A diagnosis of needs and the setting of educational goals is very important in program planning. Therefore, after the clients take the required academic and career assessments, they are assisted in a job search where they decide on which career and educational goals they wish to pursue. This element allows the participants to use the resource library and the information from their assessment to determine their career path. The clients decide what their needs are and with the help from the counselor how they can fulfill these needs.

EOC counselors also seek to produce an environment that is respectful and supportive. Counselors begin the workshop with icebreakers, call participants by name, and arrange the classroom to provide a warm and accepting atmosphere. Although several components of the andragogical program model are not included such as rediagnosis and participative learning, the workshop does provide a supportive learning climate and allows the client to diagnose their educational and career needs (B. Rutledge, personal communication, January 17, 1997). These activities are crucial in assisting the client in postsecondary enrollment by providing them support through educational goal setting. In the EOC workshops, clients are encouraged to learn and achieve their own goals in order to apply the information immediately. They are facilitated by the content resource of the counselors rather than being directed by the counselors.

Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning has been defined several ways by different researchers. Allen Tough (1967) identified learning projects as a deliberate act to learn specific knowledge that lasted at least 7 hours. Tough (1967, 1978) found that 70% of all learning projects were self-directed

and that 90% of adults planned at least one activity per year.

Self-directed projects are often complicated, contain skill development in at least 5 areas, and average 100 hours per project (Tough, 1978). In addition, self-directed learning is a process and contains several steps (Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1979). These steps include the learners making distinct decisions about where, how, and when the learning will take place.

Although self-directed learning usually occurs without the assistance of an educator, there are self-directed opportunities in the classroom. Knowles (1975) included in his concept of andragogy the importance of self-directed learning. Self-directed learning does not have to be an isolated process. It can but can be done with the cooperation of a teacher and classroom resources. Adult educators can provide self-directed learners assistance by providing information resources (Tough, 1967) and by facilitating the process (Knowles, 1975).

Most of the participants of the Educational Opportunity Center do not voluntarily attend the workshops. Often a caseworker or prison official has mandated that they attend (B. Rutledge, personal communication, January 17, 1997). However, the counselors can serve as a

facilitator in the process of self-direction and provide
the clients with information resources about educational
and career opportunities. However, there are a significant
number of individuals that attend as volunteers.

Empowerment

In order to have a successful life, one must have the
basic needs of existence met. Education has always been
viewed as the avenue to increase the chances of success and
the path to ensuring intellectual, physical, and monetary
needs (Kreindler, 1996). However, in a society where
politics manipulates human welfare and dictates policies,
an individual can feel both powerless and hopeless.
Education is not always accessible or an option to certain
populations and therefore may hinder them from optimally
functioning in society.

However, despite the importance of education, the
traditional educational system remains biased and
inaccessible to many citizens. In addition, traditional
education is often contradictory because although it can
result in great benefits, it is never neutral (Freire,
1970). Traditional education is political in nature; it
ignores racism, sexism, and exploitation of workers and by
doing so support the status quo (Freire, 1970). Promoting
the status quo creates conditions of oppression or a

"culture of silence". Freire alleged that because

educational policies and programs are made by a select few

who are in charge, traditional education contributes to the

marginalization of minorities and the poor. To break this

"culture of silence" and become liberated, the community

must become unified and educated. Liberatory education

enables learners to reflect on their experiences, which in

turn can awaken them to collectively transform their

society. This process of empowerment cannot be given to

anyone but comes from the emerging praxis in which co-

learners are engaged in the "pedagogy of dialogue" (Freire,

1970).

Education in the United States is not a reflection of

the needs of the students but is a "national average"

(Horton, 1990). This reflection causes education to become

a hindrance to both poor and low-income citizens and forces

them to accept their curriculum regardless of their

personal differences (Adams, 1975). Such a system exploits

the poor and benefits the rich.

These fallacies of education greatly influence the

clients of the Educational Opportunity Center who are of

low socioeconomic status. The political control of the

education system hinders the optimal results of education,

empowerment. The individuals live below the poverty level

and are subject to political welfare mandates in every area of their life. Most receive some assistance from the government and are therefore under governmental control (B. Rutledge, personal communication, January 17, 1998). Such controls influence their chance for education, the type of education they can receive, and the length of time they can receive it.

However, despite the political forces that control education, empowerment is a consequence of liberatory learning (Freire, 1970). This power can be created as individuals act, reflect, and become critically conscious human beings. Liberatory education produces self-determination and empowerment, and it can result in cultural transformation. Liberation encourages individuals to challenge the world and not simply adapt to it (Freire, 1970).

Although the goals of America's traditional education system's goals greatly differ from that of liberatory education, it nonetheless can provide adults with empowerment by providing greater opportunities to achieve in the society. In America, only those that are educated can began to have a chance to experience that American Dream. Education does not guarantee success, but it opens up the door.

There are numerous factors that effect EOC client's lives and their decisions to participate in adult education programs. These participants do not live in a vacuum and are influenced by political and community forces. These forces affect them socially and psychologically and create needs that must be meet. If the Educational Opportunity Center is to provide a service that is beneficial to its participants, EOC staff must possess a realistic understanding of the importance of education as empowerment, of the decision-making process of those that participate, and of the governmental controls that dominate their lives. Only then can the services and regulations be most effective to the clients.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

To identify the effect of services on adult education

participation by the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)

this study utilized a descriptive design. "Descriptive

research involves collecting data in order to test

hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current

status of the subject of a study" (Gay, 1996, p. 249).

Descriptive study designs usually assess attitudes,

opinions, demographic information, conditions, and

procedures (p. 249). Surveys, interviews, and observations

are the most common way that descriptive data is collected.

Thus, descriptive studies are often categorized by how the

data were collected. There are two types of descriptive

research, self-report and observation. This particular

study can be classified as a self-report study because in a

self-report study "information is solicited from

individuals using, for example questionnaires, interviews,

or standardized attitude scales" (p. 251). Both surveys

and interviews were conducted in this study.

The goal of the EOC is to cause change by providing

participants with information and assessment in a workshop

format. In order to describe the possible change that

could occur during an EOC workshop, experimental research techniques were incorporated into the design. The pretest-posttest experimental design "involves at least two groups, both of which are formed by random assignment; both groups are administered a pretest of dependent variable, one group receives a new, or unusual, treatment, and both groups are post-tested" (Gay, 1996, p. 403) (see Table 1).

Table 1   Pretest-Posttest Design and the Variation of the
            Pretest-Posttest Design

Pretest Posttest Design	Variation of Design
Y(before)-X -Y(after)	Y(before)-X- Y(after)
Y(before) - Y(after)	Y(before)-X
	X- Y(after)
Y=pre or post test group	
X=treatment group	

A variation of the pretest-posttest designed was used to identify the effect of the EOC services on adult education participation. In this study, the treatment was the Educational Opportunity Center's 2-day workshop, a survey was used as the pretest and posttest, and three groups were used. Because the only accessible participants were individuals that were attending the EOC workshop, every group received the treatment or workshop (see Table

1). One group received the survey before the workshop. Another group attended the workshop and then completed the survey. A third group completed the survey before and after the workshop.

The EOC workshop is a relatively short-term workshop with a diverse population. Borrowing from experimental techniques and using a modified pretest-posttest design provided control for the effects of a pretest and allowed measurement of the effect of the EOC services on the workshop participants. A total of 307 individuals received the training and were given the survey in the three groups.

Sampling

The first and most crucial step in sampling is to define the population. "The population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to be generalizable. The defined population has at least one characteristic that differentiates it from other groups" (Gay, 1996, p. 112). The population in this study was the entire group of participants in the Rogers State University Educational Opportunity Center program, which has 3,050 participants. This target population resides in 29 counties in Oklahoma that are both rural and urban. A high percentage (25%) of

all the residents in these counties do not possess high school diplomas, and 61% of all residents have an educational attainment level below the baccalaureate level (U. S. Census, 1990). In addition, residents in the target area have a diverse ethnic background that consists of the following: 37% African Americans, 1% Asian Americans, 47% Euro-Americans, 2% Latino American, and 11% Native Americans. The individuals in this population that attend the workshop are referred by the following agencies: Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, JTPA programs, colleges, and vocational institutes.

"Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they are selected. Individuals selected comprise the sample" (Gay, 1996, p. 111). A sample should be a representative of the population (p. 113). Cluster sampling and stratification of the population were used to insure that the diverse ethnicity, educational attainment levels, and referral agencies were represented in the sample.

Cluster sampling is "sampling in which groups, not individuals, are randomly selected and each group has an intact group of similar characteristics" (Gay, 1996, p. 119). It is useful when the population is both large and

covers a large geographical area. Each cluster contained one EOC workshop. Because the Educational Opportunity Center's target population resides in 29 counties, cluster sampling allowed a group of participants to be surveyed at one time. In this study, 24 clusters were selected, and each cluster averaged 16 people.

Stratified sampling selects participants from subgroups or strata (Gay, 1996, p. 117). EOC participants are referred from various agencies and may be required to attend the workshop or be sanctioned. Individuals on welfare may loose their benefits if they do not attend the workshop, and incarcerated individuals are required by state law to receive "EOC-like" services that include basic skill and career assessments. Individuals referred by prisons, the Department of Human Services, and colleges may be affected differently by the EOC workshop services. Therefore, stratified sampling was also used to assure that the sample represented the population. The five strata of the study were Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, JTPA programs, colleges, and vocational institutes. These strata represent each type of agency that refers clients to the Educational Opportunity Center. Clusters from each stratum were selected.

Before using the cluster and stratified sampling procedures, a specific number for the sample size was determined. Generally, the appropriate number of participants depends upon the purpose of the research. "The larger the population size, the smaller percentage of the population required to get a representative sample" (Gay, 1996, p. 125). "For descriptive research, the corresponding general guideline is to sample 10 to 20% of the population" (p. 124). This study contained 307 participants which is approximately 10% of the designated population.

Instrumentation

"A research study is only as well done as the measurement that generates the required guidelines," (Wiersma, 1995, p. 307). Therefore it is crucial that great caution be used when creating a survey for a study. "Surveys are an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables" (Gay, 1996, p. 286). Surveys are often created and used when specific information is sought to evaluate the services of an education program. Data from the questionnaire can answer the designated research questions.

There are several guidelines to follow when creating a

survey. A general rule for writing a survey include

creating an attractive, brief survey with structured

questions and easy to respond to questions (Gay, 1996, p.

256). In addition, the list of answers to questions should

contain all possible choices of the respondents.

In light of these guidelines, the EOC questionnaire

used brief questions and included five answer categories to

accommodate all possible responses. "Individual items

should also be constructed according to a set of

guidelines" (Gay, 1996, p. 256). The EOC survey questions

were directly related to the legislation mandates of the

federal government. Each of the services required by the

Federal Department of Education was addressed. In addition,

leading questions, touchy questions, questions that assumed

facts unknown, and questions that would identify an

individual were avoided (Gay, 1996, p. 257).

The EOC survey contained a total of 30 questions in 4

different sections (see Appendix B). Each section was

designed to answer one of the study's research questions.

The first category addressed socioeconomic factors.

Questions about the participant's age, gender, ethnicity,

educational attainment, and annual household income were

asked. Answers to these questions are useful because many

models of participation include sociological and economic factors.

Questions in the second section were answered using a Likert scale with the option of Extremely Aware, Moderately Aware, Neutral, Somewhat Aware, and Not Aware All. Ten questions asked how aware the participant was of financial aid information, area college programs, basic skill levels, career interest, GED classes, and counseling opportunities.

To determine how likely participants will use the information from the workshop, 10 additional questions were asked. The following Likert scale was used: Extremely Likely, Moderately Likely, Neutral, Somewhat Likely, and Not Likely at All. The questions in this section were identical to those in the previous section except that "how aware" was replaced by "how likely."

This section contained three additional questions. These questions were included to determine if any barriers were alleviated during the workshop. Participants were asked how likely finances, family or day care concerns, and work obligations would keep them from enrolling in adult education.

The participants were also asked if they were referred by an agency or if they volunteered to participate in the

workshop.   Individuals that were required to attend may answer differently than those that volunteered.

"Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is suppose to measure" (Gay, 1996, p. 138). How one validates a survey varies and the appropriate form of validation depends upon the instrument and experiment (Gay, 1996). In addition, validity relates to the intended use of the survey and the appropriateness of the interpretation results (Wiersma, 1995).

The two types of validity that are relevant to the survey for this study are construct validity and content validity. "Construct validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended hypothetical construct" (Gay, 1996, p. 140). Construct validity involves the theory underlying the instrument. To provide construct validity, the survey questions were written to reflect the federal mandates and workshop components.   The rationales for each question included at least one of the following as justification: Department of Education legislation, EOC services offered, or adult education literature (see Table 2).

Table 2   Survey Question Rationale

Questions	Rationale
How aware are you of financial aid information?	Service Legislation # 1: To provide information with

How likely are you to use financial aid information? How aware are you of the financial aid form? How likely are you to fill out the financial aid form?	respect to financial aid and academic assistance available for individuals to pursue a program of postsecondary education. Service Legislation # 5: To provide assistance in completing admission and financial aid applications.
How aware you of area college programs? How likely are you to apply for a college program? How aware are you of how to fill out a college application? How likely are you to fill out a college application?	Service Legislation # 2: To provide assistance to such persons in applying for admissions to institutions at which a program of postsecondary education is offered. Service Legislation # 4: To provide academic advice and assistance in course selection. Service Legislation # 5: To provide assistance in completing admission and financial aid applications. Service Legislation # 6: To provide assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations.
How aware are you of what basic skill level you are? How likely are you to use information about your basic skill level? How aware are you of GED information and GED classes? How likely are you to use information on GED and GED classes?	Service Legislation # 7: To provide guidance on secondary school reentry to a general educational diploma (GED) program or other alternative education programs for secondary school dropouts. Service Legislation # 8: To provide personal and career counseling, tutorial services and career workshops.
How aware are you of your career interest? How likely are you to use career interest information? How aware are you of different jobs and job availability? How likely are you to use	Service Legislation # 8: To provide personal and career counseling, tutorial services and career workshops.

information about jobs and job availability? How aware are you of career counseling opportunities? How likely are you to use career counseling opportunities?	
How aware are you of personal counseling opportunities? How likely are you to use personal counseling opportunities?	Service Legislation # 8: To provide personal and career counseling, tutorial services and career workshops. Cross Chain-of-Response Model (1981) Workshop Agenda
How likely will finances keep you from enrolling? How likely will family or day care keep you from enrolling? How likely will work obligations keep you from enrolling?	Barrier Data; Valentine and Darkenwald (1980); and Sherman (1990) EOC Project Goals
Socioeconomic Questions such as age, race, educational attainment, and annual household income.	Participation Models: Chain – of-Response Model (1981), Miller Force Field (1967), and Rubenson Expectancy Valence Model (1977), Barrier Data
Where you referred by an agency or volunteered?	Service Legislation # 3: To provide a public information campaign designed to inform the community regarding opportunities for postsecondary education. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) Blaxter & Tight Some individuals are mandated to attend by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Corrections.

Content validity is the degree to which a survey

measures the intended content area and is determined by an

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expert judge (Gay, 1996, p. 170). To receive expert

judgment and opinion on the survey, the questionnaire was

mailed to every Educational Opportunity Center

administrator and counselor in the state of Oklahoma. EOC

personnel were asked to comment on the survey's questions

and contents. Out of 30 surveys sent, 22 were returned.

Ninety-five percent of the comments agreed that the survey

asked appropriate questions and questions that would

evaluate the effect of services of the Educational

Opportunity Center. The only concern was the reading level

of the survey. All comments were taken into consideration

and the survey was adapted to be read easily by someone

that might have a low reading level. It is crucial to keep

in mind that surveys and test are valid for a particular

group and for a particular purpose (Gay, 1996). Therefore,

this survey was designed to be used by the EOC workshop

participants, was based on regulations governing EOC and on

adult learning principles, and was reviewed by EOC

personnel.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

The first step of this study was to create the survey

by evaluating the federal mandates, legislation, and EOC

workshop agendas. After the survey was written, copies of

the survey were mailed to all EOC personnel in the state of

Oklahoma. Once the comments from the EOC personnel were received and adjustments were made to the survey, copies were made for distribution to the Educational Opportunity Center Counselors.

Because it was necessary to include participants from each strata, EOC counselors were selected that work in the following locations: Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, JTPA programs, colleges, and vocational institutes. These locations represent the different strata.

After five counselors were selected, an initial phone call was made to notify the EOC counselors of the study and to introduce the overall purpose of the study and to schedule with them an information session. At the information session, the counselors were given a list of the research questions, copies of the survey, a short script, and consent forms. The counselors were instructed that they would administer the survey in three different ways. The surveys were color-coded to indicate when they would be given to the clients. A pink survey was used with the group that received the survey before they did the workshop. A blue survey was used with the group that completed the survey after they had completed the workshop. A gold 2-sided survey was used with the group that

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completed the survey both before and after they did the

workshop. Each counselor was given one color. In

addition, the counselors were told to read the short script

that follows: "EOC is trying to determine the effectiveness

of our services to our clients. In order to determine our

effectiveness we are giving a survey to clients in the

workshop if they agree to participate. If you agree to

participate please read and sign the consent form and

follow the direction on the survey to complete it. Thank

you to everyone who is willing to participate" (see

Appendix C). This information session occurred during a

staff meeting at Rogers State University.

It was determined from previous EOC workshops that it

would take approximately 3 weeks for the EOC counselors to

serve about 300 clients. Therefore, the counselors were

given enough surveys to use in conjunction with their

workshops for the next 3 weeks. EOC counselors were then

instructed to mail the results back to the Rogers State

University campus.

After the information session, the EOC counselors

administered the surveys in conjunction with their

previously scheduled workshops for the next 3 weeks. At

the end of the 3 weeks, all 5 counselors returned the

surveys to Rogers State University. After the completed

surveys were received, the answers were statistically

analyzed.

Interviews

Interviews were also conducted with 15 participants.

"A typical interview is a one-on-one session in which the

researcher asks a series of open-ended, probing questions.

In addition to serving triangulation objectives, interviews

have a unique purpose, namely to acquire data no obtainable

in any other way" (Gay, 1996, p. 223). Interview questions

were written to answer the research question that inquired

about how beneficial the disseminated workshop information

was. The following 5 questions were asked to 15

participants after they finished an EOC workshop:

1. What was most helpful to you in the workshop?
2. What was least helpful to you in the workshop?
3. What information from the workshop will you
   use the most?
4. What information from the workshop will you
   use the least?
5. If you were running the workshop, what would
   you change?

One of the counselors that administered the surveys

also conducted the interviews. An information session was

held with the counselor. The counselor used the same

script to introduce the interview as was used for the

survey. Also, the counselor was instructed to collect the

same demographic information that was collected on the

survey and to observe and document any non-verbal

communication. The counselor selected interviewees from

all of the strata so that each institution was represented.

Each interview was tape-recorded. After the interviews

were conducted, the counselor returned the recorded

sessions on tape and any notes on non-verbal communication.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Demographic Data

There were a total of 307 participants in this study.
Individuals in this study spanned a wide range of
socioeconomic and demographic variables. The majority of
the participants were female; however, there was a large
percentage of males in this study (see Table 3). This can
be attributed to the large male prison population that was
surveyed. The ethnic distribution was comprised of mostly
Whites, and the second largest ethnic group was African
Americans. However, due to the large Native American
population in Oklahoma, a large number of Native Americans
were surveyed (see Table 3). This ethnic distribution
closely resembled the target area statistics of the
Educational Opportunity Center (U S Census, 1990).

The average age of the individuals in the study was
32. Participant ages were broken down into categories by
meaningful life experiences (see Table 3). For example,
individuals between 17 and 24 are usually pursuing
postsecondary education or beginning entry-level job
positions. In the late twenties, most individuals are
acquiring career promotions and enhancing their skills
through on the job training. Through the thirties the

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majority of individuals are acquiring material goods and

raising a family. Each of the categories contained about

25% of the participants. Most of the individuals were

below 39; 75% of the participants ranged from 17 to 39.

The remaining 25% of the individuals were over 40 years

old.

Table 3: Frequency of Demographic Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	180	59.41
Male	123	40.59
Total	303	100.00
Race		
African American	111	36.88
Hispanic	14	04.65
Native American	40	13.29
White	134	44.52
Other	2	00.66
Total	301	100.00
Age		
17-24	79	25.73
26-29	63	20.52
30-34	50	16.29
35-39	38	12.38
40-62	73	23.78
Total	303	100.00
Education		
Less than High School	99	33.45
High School or GED	125	42.23
Some College	47	15.88
Apprenticeship	3	01.01
Associate Degree	12	04.05
Bachelor Degree	8	02.70
Graduate Degree	2	00.68
Total	296	100.00

```
Income
 Under $10,000              189              69.74
 $10,000 to $19,000          37              13.65
 $20,000 to $29,000          24              08.86
 $30,000 to $39,000          12              04.43
 $40,000 and up               9              03.32
 Total                      271             100.00
```

The educational attainment level differed from those in the EOC target area. Individuals with a high school diploma or less than a high school degree comprised 96% of the participants. This percentage was much greater than the percentage of individuals living in the EOC target area. According to the Census Bureau (1990), 61% of adults in the EOC target area have an educational attainment of a high school diploma or less.

Less than 5% of the workshop participants have completed a bachelor degree, graduate degree, or apprenticeship (see Table 3). The percentage of individuals with low educational attainment was very high because EOC staff seeks and actively recruits individuals that need secondary or postsecondary placement.

Due to the lack of educational attainment and abundance of clients that are on welfare, the participants were expected to have a low-income. Nearly three-fourths of participants had a household income of less than $10,000

last year. This monetary amount is well below the poverty

level, which is $16,000 for a household of four (U S

Census, 1990).

Overall, the demographic and socioeconomic information

of the participants mirrored those in the target area and

in some cases were more severe (U S Census, 1990). The

majority of EOC participants had low educational attainment

and lived below the poverty level. Of the participants

surveyed 66% were referred by an agency and 34%

volunteered.

<div align="center">Survey Items</div>

Central tendency measurement provides the researcher

with a convenient way of describing a data set with a

single number and represents the average or typical score

attained by a group (Gay, 1996, p. 458). Central

tendencies were examined for each of the survey question

items in this study. To compute central tendency each item

on the Likert scale was given the following value: 1 =

Extremely Likely or Extremely Aware, 2 = Moderately Likely

or Moderately Aware, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Aware or

Somewhat Likely, and 5 = Not Aware at All or Not Likely at

All (see Table 4).

The first 10 questions on the survey addressed how

aware the participants were of financial aid information,

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career interest, and counseling opportunities. The first

two questions addressed how aware the participants were of

financial aid information and their awareness of how to

complete the financial aid form. Although the means for

both questions were close, the medians were different.

Most of the participants (57%) were "Moderately aware" or

"Somewhat aware" of financial aid information. However,

64% of the participants were "Somewhat aware" and "Not

aware at all" of how to complete the financial aid form.

This distribution produced a much higher median and

demonstrated that the clients had more knowledge about

financial aid than how to fill out the actual financial aid

form.

Table 4 Central Tendency Data for Survey Questions

Question	Mean	Median
Aware of:		
Financial aid information	3.14	3.00
Filling out financial aid form	3.34	4.00
Area college programs	3.35	4.00
Filling out college application	3.31	4.00
Basic skill levels	2.88	3.00
Career interest	2.30	2.00
Jobs and job availability	2.69	3.00
GED information and classes	2.80	3.00
Personal counseling opportunities	3.25	3.00
Career counseling opportunities	3.27	3.00
Likely to use:		
Financial aid information	2.49	2.00
Filling out financial aid form	2.58	2.00

Area college programs	2.53	2.00
Filling out college application	2.61	2.00
Basic skill levels	2.17	2.00
Career interest	2.07	2.00
Jobs and job availability	1.93	2.00
GED information and classes	3.13	3.00
Personal counseling opportunities	2.57	2.00
Career counseling opportunities	2.38	2.00

The third and fourth questions addressed the clients'
awareness of area college programs and awareness of how to
complete a college application. These survey items had an
identical median. The majority of the participants were
"Somewhat aware" or "Not aware at all" of college programs
and of how to fill out an admission application.

The fifth and sixth questions asked about basic skills
and career interest. When asked about their awareness of
basic skill assessments and their career interest, 45% of
the participants were "Extremely aware" and "Moderately
aware" of their basic skill levels, and 61% were "Extremely
aware" and "Moderately aware" of their career interest.
The majority of the time in the workshop, about 6 hours, is
spent on assessing the basic skills and career interest of
participants.

The seventh and eighth questions asked about job
availability and GED information. In addition, clients
reported that they were aware of available jobs and GED
information and classes. Approximately 50% were "Extremely

aware" or "Moderately aware" of jobs available in the area and of GED classes offered.

The ninth and tenth question addressed the participants' awareness of personal and career counseling opportunities. The majority of the participants were "Somewhat aware" or "Not aware at all" of personal or career counseling opportunities.

The answers to these 10 questions one through ten describe a unique set of circumstances. Although participants were aware of financial aid information, they were not aware of how to complete the financial aid form. In addition, participants expressed that they were also not aware of how to complete a college application. The participants were aware of their basic skill levels, career interest, and available jobs, but were not aware of the college programs in the area and the availability of counseling opportunities. This lack of information about adult education opportunities and academic advisement and counseling opportunity can contribute to low adult education participation (Cross, 1986).

The central tendencies for the same questions were analyzed in relationship to likelihood of use (see Table 4). These questions inquired about the likelihood of participants using information covered in the workshop.

All of the participants said that they would be "Extremely likely" and "Moderately likely" to use information received at the workshop or pursue adult education opportunities for every question except for one. Thus, participants would be to use financial aid information, to fill out the financial aid form, to apply for college, to fill out a college entrance exam, to use information about basic skill levels, to use information about job availability, and to use information about career interest, and to use counseling opportunities.

However, the participants are divided in how likely they are to use information about GED or GED classes. Most of the answers were in one of the two categories: "Extremely likely" or "Not likely at all." Ninety-five of the clients responded that they would be "extremely likely" to use GED information. These individuals were part of the 99 individuals that do not have a GED. Interview data supported this analysis. Although the participants were likely to use the majority of the information and services provided during the workshop, they were not aware of how to complete financial aid or college application forms, available college programs, and counseling activities.

Three survey questions dealt with whether the workshops was able to alleviate barriers to participation.

These questions asked how likely the barriers of finances, family and daycare, or work obligations would be in keeping a participant from enrolling in an adult education program. It was anticipated that after having an experience in which participants received information about financial aid and available educational resources, they would be less likely to allow finances, daycare, and work to prevent them from participating in postsecondary education. The data showed that finances were listed as the barrier that would most likely keep a participant from enrolling (see Table 5). Work obligations and family or day care followed.

Table 5   Percentage of Responses for Survey Items

Question	Extreme	Moderate	Neutral	Somewhat	Not
Aware of:					
Fin. aid info.	14.4	24.5	11.4	32.2	17.4
Fin. aid form	12.5	21.5	12.0	27.0	27.0
College Prog.	12.6	21.7	12.1	25.5	28.0
College App.	17.2	18.0	13.6	19.1	32.1
Basic skills	18.1	27.8	18.1	20.3	15.8
Career inter.	31.4	31.4	18.1	14.4	04.7
Area Jobs	18.3	30.6	23.9	18.5	08.7
GED info.	29.7	18.2	17.6	12.0	22.4
Per. Coun.	15.2	18.8	18.6	20.8	26.6
Career Coun.	16.0	18.7	15.7	21.8	27.8
Likely to use:					
Fin. aid info.	37.8	19.1	13.5	15.7	13.8
Fin. aid form	32.7	21.6	15.5	15.0	15.2
College Prog.	34.4	21.7	14.4	15.0	14.4
College App.	31.7	21.9	16.9	12.6	16.9
Basic skills	35.9	30.5	18.8	10.9	03.9
Career inter.	43.6	28.2	15.1	09.2	03.9
Area Jobs	48.2	24.2	17.3	07.2	03.1
GED info.	26.7	12.9	18.0	05.3	37.1
Per. Coun.	29.6	25.1	17.3	14.8	13.1

Career Coun.	34.1	27.3	15.6	12.5	10.5
Barriers:					
Finances	31.3	17.7	16.0	15.5	16.6
Work	13.0	12.8	14.9	10.1	47.3
Family and Daycare	15.8	12.0	22.6	13.6	34.2

Group Differences

"Pretest sensitization refers to improved scores on a posttest resulting from subjects having taken a pretest" (Gay, 1996, p. 347). When a pretest and posttest are given with only a short time between them, pretest sensitization is more of a threat (p. 348). To control for this internal validity threat, three groups that participated in the workshop were used in the study. One group was only pretested. One group was only posttested. One group received both the pretest and the posttest. All three group means were compared to make sure that the groups were the same and not affected by pretest sensitization. The means for the various groups were compared by using a t test.

"The t test is used to determine whether two means are significantly different at a selected probability level" (Gay, 1996, p. 477). There are two different t tests, an independent sample t test and a nonindependent sample t test. In the independent test the groups are not related

except that they are from the same population. The

nonindependent t test is done with some type of matching or

when the two samples are one group at different times (p.

478). In this study three different t tests were done.

Two were independent t test, and one was nonindependent.

In order to determine if the sampling techniques

elicited an adequate representation of the population and

to insure that the groups were the same, two sets of

independent t tests were done. The first set of t tests

was done with the survey scores from the group that only

received the pretest and with the pretest-posttest group.

The second set of t tests was done with the survey scores

from the posttest only group and from the posttests of the

pretest-posttest group. The information received from

these two t tests indicated that there was not a

significant difference in the means of the two groups on

most of the questions (see Table 6). Consequently, it was

judged that the pretest-posttest group upon which change

was measured was not different from the rest of the

workshop participants.

Table 6 t test of Survey Items by Groups

Question	t	df	p

Pretest Groups

Aware of:

Financial aid information	0.47	146	0.59
Filling out financial aid form	0.32	146	0.33
Area college programs	0.35	145	0.44
Filling out college application	0.44	143	0.44
Basic skill levels	0.04	142	0.00
Career interest	0.27	143	0.47
Jobs and job availability	0.62	140	0.23
GED information and classes	0.25	143	0.99
Personal counseling opportunities	1.61	144	0.52
Career counseling opportunities	0.38	143	0.45

Likely to use:

Financial aid information	0.60	144	0.43
Filling out financial aid form	0.48	143	0.97
Area college programs	0.43	142	0.45
Filling out college application	0.13	141	0.60
Basic skill levels	1.28	142	0.45
Career interest	1.05	142	0.58
Jobs and job availability	1.66	143	0.61
GED information and classes	2.00	143	0.83
Personal counseling opportunities	1.19	142	0.28
Career counseling opportunities	0.51	139	0.72

Posttest Groups

Aware of:

Financial aid information	1.24	217	0.05
Filling out financial aid form	0.81	217	0.33
Area college programs	0.35	215	0.45
Filling out college application	0.16	214	0.38
Basic skill levels	0.38	214	0.07
Career interest	0.94	213	0.91
Jobs and job availability	1.26	212	0.43
GED information and classes	1.50	210	0.98
Personal counseling opportunities	0.46	213	0.60
Career counseling opportunities	1.03	216	0.87

Likely to use:

Financial aid information	1.41	214	0.04
Filling out financial aid form	0.64	214	0.75

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Area college programs	1.62	214	0.56
Filling out college application	1.38	211	0.78
Basic skill levels	0.08	211	0.57
Career interest	0.95	212	0.67
Jobs and job availability	0.51	212	0.86
GED information and classes	1.07	209	0.64
Personal counseling opportunities	0.91	212	0.78
Career counseling opportunities	1.30	209	0.67

A third set of nonindependent $\underline{t}$ test was used to analyze the relationship between the responses of the pretest-posttest group. These analyses provided a measure of the change that resulted in the participants as a result of the workshop (Gay, 1996, p. 368). "Most behavioral research is conducted at the .01 or .05 levels of significance. However, in exploratory research, the .10 or .20 levels may be appropriate" (Roscoe, 1975, p. 182). Since this was a descriptive study seeking to uncover areas of change in the responses of low-income, at-risk EOC participants, the significance level of .15 was used in order to identify as many areas of change as possible. Using this level of significance, seven items in the awareness area showed a significant change in their mean scores for the posttest as compared to their pretests in the following areas: basic skill level, career counseling opportunities, job availability, filling out financial aid form, personal counseling opportunities, career interest,

financial aid information. Since the items were scored

with low values indicating an awareness of the material and

high values indicating a lack of awareness, the decrease in

the means for these items indicates an increased awareness

of the material in the item.

Only one item showed a significant change in the area

related to the likelihood of using the information

presented at the workshop (see Table 7). This item asked

about how likely would a participants fill out a college

entrance application. This was a critical item because

completing the entrance application is the preliminary step

to enrolling or participating in adult education. Which

demonstrates that after the workshop, participants were

considering postsecondary enrollment, the main performance

goal of the Educational Opportunity Center.

Table 7. t test for Pretest and Posttest Group Change from Workshop

	Pretest	Posttest	t	df	p
Aware of:					
Basic Skills	3.05	2.69	2.37	60	0.02
Career Coun.	3.34	3.00	2.28	60	0.03
Area Jobs	2.79	2.41	2.19	60	0.03
Fin. Aid form	3.39	3.11	1.88	60	0.06
Per. Coun.	3.41	3.13	1.67	60	0.10
Career inter.	2.33	2.08	1.59	60	0.12
Fin. Aid info.	3.23	2.95	1.59	60	0.12

GED info.	2.72	2.98	1.20	60	0.24
College Prog.	3.33	3.16	0.96	60	0.34
College App.	3.26	3.15	0.83	60	0.41
Likely to:					
College App.	2.54	2.33	1.50	60	0.14
GED info.	3.26	4.11	1.02	60	0.31
Career inter.	1.98	2.10	0.76	60	0.45
College Prog.	2.33	2.21	0.72	60	0.48
Basic skills	2.20	2.13	0.48	60	0.64
Area Jobs	1.98	1.95	0.22	60	0.82
Fin. Aid. Info.	2.25	2.21	0.21	60	0.83
Per. Coun.	2.28	2.31	0.20	60	0.84
Career Coun.	2.13	2.16	0.20	60	0.84
Fin. Aid form	2.46	2.44	0.09	60	0.93
Barriers:					
Finances	2.69	2.89	1.23	60	0.22
Family and Day Care	3.97	4.08	0.89	60	0.37
Work	3.89	3.79	0.75	60	0.46

Interview Data Analysis

Interviews were conducted to determine how beneficial or useful the information disseminated during the workshop was in encouraging postsecondary enrollment. Of the interviewed participants, eleven were female, and four were male. The ethnicity composition was six African-American, one Native-American, and eight White participants. One of the individuals had some high school, ten of the interviewees had completed high school, three have had some college, and one did not provide educational information. The educational attainment composition of the interviewees was similar to those that completed the survey. The

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average age of the interviewees was 36, and 60% of the individuals had a household income below $29,000. Both the average age and income was slightly higher than the individuals that completed the surveys.

Most of the interviewees were reluctant about the interview, and this restricted the quality and quantity of information gathered in the interviews. Eight of the ten interviewees stated that they were uncomfortable but would provide the information requested. In addition, the individuals spoke lightly and briefly without a lot of inflection. However, such a reaction can be expected from this population. Disadvantaged, low-income individuals have often been unsuccessful in education and career endeavors and are not comfortable discussing such matters. In addition, they are often mandated to follow orders by their caseworkers and seldom asked to give their opinion (Riemer, 1997). Governmental agencies usually do not seek their opinion but instead require unquestioned obedience or a loss of benefits.

Data collected from the interviews was analyzed to detect any patterns. Several trends were detected in the interview sessions. A prevailing theme concerned the assessments that were given during the workshop. The participants expressed that the assessments provided them

with a portfolio of their basic skills and career interest and that this part of the workshop provided the most concrete assessment of their present skill level and career interest.

Of those assessments, the career testing was designated the most helpful. Of the 10 participants interviewed, 9 of them stated that the career assessment and career exploration activities were the most helpful. They felt that the "career information is what you need to find a better job."

This theme was also evident in the survey responses. Although the participants in the survey indicated they had some information about their basic skills and career interest, their awareness increased after they received the assessments.

Several specific comments were made about the career aptitude test. Five of the participants expressed that the career aptitude test made them aware of their abilities. A white male with a high school diploma stated, "The career information was helpful and told me about my abilities." Another appreciated that "the career information told me what I was best at." Overall it appeared that the career assessments were perceived as more beneficial the basic skill assessment.

Statements regarding the financial aid information and the enrollment information generated mixed reactions. The participants gave opposing statements. Half of the clients reported that the financial aid and enrollment information was a needed part of the workshop, and half reported it was a waste of time. This contradiction of answers was a result of the educational or career goals of the particular participant. The participants that expressed the usefulness of the financial aid and enrollment information were interested in attending a postsecondary institution. However, the participants who stated the information was not beneficial were only interested in finding a job. "The financial aid information was not helpful if you were looking for a job."

The reaction to the GED information was similar to that for financial aid and enrollment information. Only the one individual that needed to complete high school stated that the GED information was beneficial. Those who had completed high school or already obtained a GED felt that "I already have my diploma; it was a waste of time."

Overall the participants concluded that the workshop was a helpful experience; 8 of the 10 participants suggested that the EOC counselors not make any changes. "The workshop gave good information and helped me to find

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out what I like to do and what I was best at." An African-American female with some college said, "The entire workshop was helpful and gave me an idea about my skill levels." Therefore, "no changes should be made."

However, there were several suggestions to improve the workshop. These included shortening the length and only giving GED information to those that need it. Participants stated that the workshop was too long and that the testing environment was not conducive to such long testing. The diversity of the individual's education background and career goals prove to make the workshop less beneficial because it included elements that were not helpful for everyone.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

There is a national agenda to decrease the welfare rolls and create a society where everyone is employed. The federal government has aggressively reformed welfare programs and created new career assistance programs such as School-to-Work and Welfare-to-Work. In this effort existing federal educational programs are mandated to collaborate with new welfare reform programs. Adult education is seen as crucial to this effort because it provides the necessary knowledge and employment training that results in an occupation with a salary above minimum wages. One such existing federal educational program is the Educational Opportunity Center. The Educational Opportunity Center is a federally-funded grant program that assists low-income, at-risk individuals enroll in postsecondary education. Through 2-day workshops participants receive information about financial aid, job availability, college programs, and career options. In addition, they take a basic skill inventory and a career assessment. From the information received from the career assessment, the basic skill inventory, and the college

information, participants are assisted in setting educational and career goals.

Since 1965, the EOC has been placing at-risk adults into some type of postsecondary education. The national EOC postsecondary placement rate is 35%. However, there has been no attempt to identify the effect of services provided by the Educational Opportunity Center on postsecondary enrollment. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe what specific components of the EOC workshop influence participants to enroll in postsecondary education.

This study utilized a descriptive study design to identify the effect of EOC services on postsecondary enrollment. Experimental design techniques were utilized to create a modified pretest-posttest arrangement for data analysis. A survey was given to EOC participants that asked them about how aware they were of the information presented during the workshop and how likely they were to use the information presented in the workshop. One group of individuals received the survey before they completed the workshop. Another group received the survey after they completed the workshop. A third group received the survey both before and after the workshop.

Interviews were conducted with some of the workshop participants. They were asked several questions about how beneficial they felt the workshop information was and how they would change the workshop if they had the chance.

Overview of Findings

This study found that although the participants were "moderately aware" and "extremely aware" of financial aid and area college programs, 64% did not know how to complete a financial aid application and 49% did not know how to fill out a college entrance application. The majority of EOC workshop participants were not aware of available personal or career counseling opportunities.

Participants were likely to use all of the information in the workshop except for the information about General Education Diploma (GED) classes. Only those that needed a GED stated that they would use this information. About one-third (31.3%) of the participants were "extremely likely" to allow finances to prevent them from enrolling in postsecondary education and several were "extremely likely" to allow work (13%) and family or daycare (15.8%) to prevent them from enrolling.

A t test was used to compare the means of the pre and post-survey scores of the participants. Seven of the items had significant differences. All of these items asked

questions about the participants' awareness of educational

information. Participants significantly increased their

awareness of (a) financial aid information, (b) how to fill

out the financial aid form, (c) information on their basic

skill levels, (d) information about their career interest,

(e) information about GED classes, (f) information about

personal counseling opportunities, and (g) information

about career counseling opportunities.

Although the participants were reluctant to be

interviewed, they stated that only the information that

related to their needs was beneficial. Individuals that

were interested in seeking immediate employment did not

need the college information, and individuals seeking to

enroll in postsecondary education did not need GED

information or job availability information. In addition,

they felt that the basic skill assessment and career

inventories provided them with a unique portfolio of

themselves. Those interviewed concluded that the workshop

was a helpful experience, but the workshop was too lengthy

and not specific enough for their needs.

Disseminated Information

Conclusions were drawn based upon the combination of

the quantitative and qualitative data. These were in the

areas of disseminated information, low-income and at-risk

adult learners, adult education barriers, self-concept, and

EOC workshop formation.

> Although participants begin the workshop
> ready to use the information, they do not
> know how to use the information.

> The workshop provides the clients with a
> plethora of information that results in a
> workshop that is not targeted to all of the
> participants' specific needs.

> Participants will use information that is
> relevant to them.

The study found that the individuals were "extremely

likely" or "moderately likely" to use all of the

information presented during the workshop. However, they

were still unaware of how to complete the financial aid

form or the college entrance application. One of the

assumptions of andragogy is that adult learners desire

immediate application of learned material (Knowles, 1980,

P. 39). Adults are self-directed and desire to learn

information that meets their needs and can be applied to

their specific situation (Knowles, 1980, P. 162). This

adult learning principle is reflected by the participants

not being aware of how to complete the application in areas

where they did not apply the information presented in the

workshop.

The financial aid form and the college entrance

application are two forms that must be completed if an

individual is going to participate in postsecondary or adult education. Without these forms, one will not be enrolled in classes. Therefore, it is critical that participants are given an opportunity to complete these applications during the workshop process. Adults learn better when they use hands-on techniques that allow application processing. Experiential techniques such as laboratory, simulation exercise, and field experience produce learning with more meaning than those without application exercises (Knowles, 1980).

EOC staff should keep both the financial aid form and area college applications on site and assist the participant in completing either a paper form or computerized form of the entrance applications and provide them with answers to their questions and concerns. The federal financial aid form is now accessible on the Internet, and many college applications are also available on the Internet. Participants could log on to the Internet, complete both the financial aid form and college application form, and transmit them. Not only would this process provide them with the immediate application of their learning, but it would also place them one step further in the enrollment process.

In addition, this process would reduce some of the educational and institutional barriers that participants often face. Finding an admissions office and completing the application by a specified date are often deterrents that prevent someone from enrolling in adult or postsecondary education. They often do not have transportation and have personal situations that prevent them from meeting deadlines.

In the present Information Age, the consensus is that the more information one receives the better. Billions of facts are available at the click of a button on the computer. The tendency is to overload agencies and people with a variety of unrelated and non-directed information. The EOC workshop follows this approach and provides the client with as much information as possible about education and careers in a short time.

This "information dump" results in a workshop that is very long and provides every client with the same type of information. This particular presentation is undesirable to adult learners. This was evidenced in the interviews when job seekers said the college information was not beneficial and the adults that wanted to attend college said that the information about job availability was not helpful. Likewise, 95 individuals said that they were

likely to use the information about GED classes. These
were the same individuals that stated that they had not
completed high school or a GED. These responses
demonstrate that adult learners only want to know what can
be applied to their specific situation (Knowles, 1980).

To streamline the disseminated information and
decrease the time spent in the workshop by the client, EOC
staff should begin screening participants. If participants
were divided into groups after completing a short needs
assessment, they could be placed in a workshop group with
individuals that need the same information that they need.
EOC workshops could be tailored for individuals that need a
job, individuals that need a GED, and for individuals that
desire to attend postsecondary or some other type of adult
education program.

Technology allows information to be presented in mass,
but it can also provide a greater level of detail.
Computers could be used to administer the needs assessment
and allow groups to receive specific goal-related
information simultaneously.

Low-income and At-risk Adult Learners

Low-income, at-risk adults are reluctant and
uncomfortable discussing education and educational
activities.

Most individuals that attend EOC workshops have lived

a life without much success. They have failed at work, failed at home, and failed at education. The majority of participants are "hard-core unemployed," live in poverty, and are chemically dependent or have been chemically dependent in the past (Riemer, 1997). In this study, 31% of the individuals have dropped out of high school and do not have a high school diploma. Unsuccessful attempts at education generate negative attitudes toward education and result in barriers to participation (Rubenson, 1977). Low educational attainment and low educational success are the basis for lack of confidence in educational settings (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). This lack of confidence produces a reluctance to discuss educational experiences.

Most of the participant's lives were controlled in some way by the government. The Department of Human Services may insist that they attend in order to continue receiving benefits, or the Department of Corrections may have ordered them to attend the workshop so that they could be placed in the prison educational system. They are regularly denied an opportunity to provide suggestions to someone about a program in which they participate. All of these factors create a milieu that reinforces reluctance to openly speak about their workshop experience.

However, participants were less apprehensive when filling out the survey. Better information in this study may have resulted if the interview questions had been added to the survey. This would have allowed the individuals to answer the questions at their own pace without the restraints of time and not having to verbally express what may have been a painful experience.

Adult Education Barriers

The workshop reduced the barriers that prevent participation in adult education.

Low-income, at-risk adults are less likely than adults that are not at-risk to allow work to prevent them from participating in adult education.

Findings from this study showed that at the end of the workshop the percentage of participants that would allow finances, daycare and family, or work to prevent them from participating in adult education was lower than what could be expected from previous participation studies (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Although the Johnstone and Rivera study was with those participating in general education activities, it is important to notice that EOC participants were 12% less likely than other adults to allow finances, family, and work to prevent them from participating in adult education.

Low-income, at-risk adults, who are usually the first

in their families to attend an adult educational

institution or who are first-generation college students,

often have many financial barriers and do not have

information about the variety of scholarships and financial

aid that is available (Willyard, 2000, p. 209). The EOC

workshop provides participants with financial aid

information about the type of economic assistance that is

available.

To greater reduce the percentage of individuals that

are likely to allow finances to prevent adult education

participation, EOC staff should add a short counseling

session at the end of the EOC workshop. At this time the

counselor can help clients apply for scholarships and

grants that are available to their specific needs. In

addition,

> Scholarships could be designated that are
> specifically geared to meet the particular
> needs of first-generation students and that
> will financially enable them to attain their
> educational goals. Funds could be made
> available to allow students to reduce
> commitments outside of college such as full-
> time employment so that college is the students
> primary consideration. (Willyard, 2000, p. 210)

Participants were less likely than those in the

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) study to allow work to prevent

them from participating in adult education or postsecondary

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enrollment. Most often work or time constraints are the

second reason why adults state they do not participate in

adult education (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Valentine &

Darkenwald, 1990). However, because the majority of EOC

participants are the "hard-core unemployed" or because they

may be working in low-wage, manual labor jobs that they

will hold for only 6 months (Riemer, 1997), work is not as

much of a deterrent. Therefore, they are less willing to

allow employment to prevent them from pursuing adult

education activities.

Self-Concept

The EOC workshop provides a positive educational
experience that can enhance an individual's
self-concept.

The EOC workshop provides the participants with an
opportunity for empowerment.

"It is not so much what happens to people but how they

interpret and explain what happens to them that determines

their actions, their hopes, their contentment, and

emotional well-being and their performance" (Willyard,

2000). Participants that attend the EOC workshop have been

repeatedly told that they are inadequate in life; because

of this inadequacy the state welfare or state correctional

facility often provides them with guidance, financial

assistance, or rehabilitation (Riemer, 1997). Not only

have they been told that they are failures, but they also have experienced failure. Many of their current hopes are negatively effected by their past struggles (Willyard, 2000, p. 4).

However, the EOC workshop provided the individuals with a different view of themselves. The majority of the participants that were interviewed stated that they thought the career and basic skill assessment was beneficial because it provided them with a portfolio of their skills and interest. Regardless of an individual's intelligence, the career assessment instrument is designed to focus on strengths and not deficiencies (Edits, 2000). This may be for the first time in their lives that such an instrument provided the participant with a list of positive skills. Information from the surveys showed that the participants were "extremely likely" to use this information when enrolling in adult postsecondary education.

The EOC workshop provides the participants with a path that may lead to less governmental control of their lives. By providing the participant with the tools that they need to successfully enroll in adult education, EOC is providing the individual with a chance for liberation. Obtaining a job, getting a degree, and becoming self-sufficient can

produce a life that does not need direction from outside entities.

Any educational program or apprenticeship that allows low-income or at-risk individuals to obtain employment above the minimum wage is a step toward freedom or empowering. "Empowerment is an appealing term because it reflects the essence of democracy--an informed public taking responsibility for its own actions" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 21). Empowerment can be related to societal issues, but in addition "it is connected with an attempt to use adult learning as a tool to allow individuals and groups to participate equitably and democratically in a local, national, and global society" (p. 21). Through the dissemination of information and skill assessments, this form of personal empowerment provides hope and encouragement to EOC participants.

Most of the interviewees expressed an appreciation for being able to know more about themselves. Before the workshop, they were not only unaware of any skills they may have, they were unaware of what career they would like to pursue through education or on-the-job training. Participants were glad that the workshop sought to find out about what they needed and their career interest. This made the workshop relevant and important for them. As a

result of the workshop, the clients are able to decide what they want to learn and what job they want to pursue when they are assisted in a job search. This atmosphere helps them "discover their 'need to know'" (Knowles, 1980, p. 44).

Empowerment is created as individuals act, reflect, and become critically conscious human beings (Freire, 1970). The EOC workshop serves as an agent of this process, and it provides the individuals with information that they can process and reflect upon. Using the information obtained from the EOC workshop can be a start to a different path for the participants. In short, the workshop offers the participants hope for a better way of life.

EOC Workshop Format

This study was designed to find out the components of the EOC that contributed to participants enrolling in postsecondary education. However, most of the findings were related to the particular and distinct characteristics of the EOC client. EOC participants have been subjected to educational institutions that "reinforce the existing social class inequality and socialize students into values dictated by the powerful" (Schaefer, 2000, p. 337). The EOC workshop situation is both created and defined by

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federal government standards, run by the legal power

establishment, and staffed by well-educated people. The

majority of EOC staff have been successful in the

traditional educational setting and have been able to

negotiate the traditional education and political system.

Although these programs are mandated to work with low-

income, at-risk, marginalized populations, they are run in

a bureaucratic system. The government has not solicited

input from the participants in the development or

implementation phase.

If welfare-reform programs and educational programs

are to be effective they must seek input from their

clientele. Programs that have been successful start with

the people and where they are (Adams, 1975). To be truly

centered , programs need to avoid

> Trying to make the people start from where we
> were as teachers instead of us trying to start
> where they were. It was our obligation
> to find out where they were, and the only way
> was to ask them or observe them. It is their
> perception of where they are, not our perception
> of where they are that is important (Horton,
> 1989, p. 12).

A bureaucratic environment is not user-friendly for

marginalized populations. Low-income, at-risk individuals

are expected to manipulate a system that they have shown

previously they are unable to navigate (Willyard, 2000, p.

4). The findings showed that the participants were receptive to information, however they were unknowledgeable of how to use the information. Creating programs from an educated, governmental reference and not from the participant's reference result in a blaming the victim syndrome. "Portraits of the underclass seem to 'blame the victims' for their plight while ignoring other factors that push people into poverty" (Schaefer, 2000, p. 198). Educators and administrators must broadly consider the social situations and psychological factors that have resulted in the present condition of the EOC participants.

The design of this research project was just as guilty of this failure to connect participant's needs and background as the creators and monitors of the EOC program. Participant input was not sought when outlining the research design or composing the survey. Interviews were imposed upon individuals that have very little control over their lives, which resulted in little or no information. This finding should have been anticipated.

Future research should solicit input from low-income individuals about the research design and survey implementation. Since low-income, at-risk individuals are more comfortable in larger group settings, a focus study group or group meeting may provide more information and

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input from the participants (Schaefer, 2000). This

approach could allow the research study to receive more

information about the workshop components and its

effectiveness on postsecondary enrollment and could provide

a more user-friendly environment for the participant.

<u>Recommendations for Adult Educators</u>

The effectiveness of the Educational Opportunity

Center workshop could be increased with the application of

adult education principles. There are several functions of

an adult educator,

> Helping the learners diagnose their needs
> for particular learning within the scope
> of the given situation, planning with the
> learners a sequence of experience that will
> produce the desired learnings, creating
> conditions that will cause the learners to
> want to learn, selecting the most effective
> methods and techniques for producing the
> desired learnings, and providing the human
> material resources necessary to produce
> the desired learnings. (Knowles, 1980, p. 26)

In order to assist the EOC clientele in diagnosing

their needs for particular learning, a needs survey should

be completed during initial contact with the client. Such

an inquiry can generate a workshop that is both specific

and targeted and can allow the participant to optimally

benefit from the workshop information.

Not only do the EOC counselors neglect to seek

information about the needs of the participants, they do

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not consult the clients in the planning of how to achieve their desired learning. Although the program is government funded and legislated, EOC counselors could still work within these parameters to allow participants input on workshop components, breaks, and the overall process. With the teacher serving as a procedural guide, the participants can outline objectives that are directly related to their needs. When participants are allowed to participate in this phase, they can take ownership of their learning, which becomes self-directed and increases knowledge (Knowles, 1980, p. 48).

Creating conditions that are conducive to learning is critical. EOC workshop participants have not been successful in the traditional educational system. Nevertheless, the workshop is conducted in a classroom with standard classroom procedures, and participants are seated in rows in hard, straight-back chairs. Individuals raise their hand to speak, ask questions, or use the restrooms and are only allowed breaks when authorized. However, adults learning increases when participants are at ease in a setting with adult-sized, comfortable chairs that are arranged informally (Knowles, 1980, p. 46).

In addition, the psychological climate in an adult

learning situation should be one of mutual respect and

support (p. 47).

> People tend to feel more "adult" in an
> atmosphere that is friendly and informal,
> in which they are know by name and valued
> as unique individuals, than in the traditional
> school atmosphere of formality, semianonymity,
> and status differentiation between the
> teacher and student. (Knowles, 1980, p. 47)

Implementing such changes which address the physical and

psychological needs of the learner along with an attitude

of interest from the counselors could produce a workshop

that is more effective for the participants.

One aspect of adult learning principles that is not

evident in the EOC workshop is the evaluation of learning.

Some form of evaluation should be included in the workshop

to validate the learning process. However, "nothing makes

an adult feel more childlike than being judged by another

adult" (Knowles, 1980, p. 49). Therefore, self-evaluation

is the recommended process. The most effective technique

for self-diagnosis is a human-relations laboratory

experience (p. 229). This laboratory could include the

completion of both the financial aid application and

college applications. In addition, the individuals could

re-visit the objectives planned and conclude whether they

have completed the objectives. Such an activity would also allow application of the information learned.

Applying these adult education principles could greatly increase the EOC workshop format and the participants' learning. Numerous scholars have documented the necessity of operating adult education activities with these principles (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1980; Mezirow, 1991). It is pertinent that this workshop provides the participants with the optimal benefit because the workshop serves as a foundation for many of their future accomplishments and their quality of life.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

In order to understand both the EOC participants needs and to increase effectiveness of the EOC workshop further research is needed. Additional study is needed to determine the effectiveness of recommended methods and techniques. Research that compares the difference in postsecondary enrollment with the following groups could possibly yield pertinent information: (a) a group that completes the financial aid application and entrance application during the workshop and (b) a group that does not complete the applications.

Since the workshop does not presently use an initial needs assessment, further research could institute a needs

survey and analyze the benefits or non-benefits of this procedure. In addition, effect of changing the workshop climate and room set-up on the participants learning could be studied.

Present data could serve as a database for further inquiry. The demographic variables of the participant could be compared with the answers to the individual questions to determine trends. This may yield information about the clients that effect their postsecondary enrollment process. Focus study groups could be done with participants to actively inquire about their needs and concerns. Due to the nature of the EOC workshop participant, it is crucial that these focus groups be done away from both the educational and governmental setting if rich data is to be collected.

Epilogue

Walter O. Mason, one of the founders of the Educational Opportunity Center, lobbied in Congress for over 30 years to insure the continuation of all TRIO educational programs. He dedicated his life to make sure that education was indeed an opportunity for everyone in the United States. Years after his death, there is still a large percentage of individuals that are not given an opportunity to participate in adult education programs.

Adult education has a responsibility to return to its once significant social goals, to foster democratic change, and to promote quality learning and not political control (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4). Myles Horton and Paulo Freire used education to empower individuals to change their social situations through education (Conti, 1977). In many instances, education is the only chance and hope for a better life or social change.

Knowledge is power; power is ability; ability gives hope. Information presented in the EOC workshop can be the seed that starts a garden of change in someone's life. The EOC client that returns to a workshop 3 years later with a diploma in hand is the ultimate manifestation of hope and the reason Walter O. Mason dedicated his life to providing educational access to individuals across the nation. The findings of this study show that knowledge presented in the EOC workshop will be applied by the participants if it is presented in a way that is based upon adult learning principles. This could then bring Walter O. Mason's dream to reality.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTION REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 6/12/01

Date: Monday, June 12, 2000   IRB Application No: ED00283

Proposal Title: REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY CENTER SERVICES
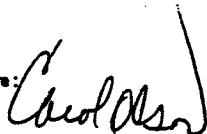
Principal
Investigator(s):

Dinah Manns   Gary Conti
12121 S 273rd E Avenue   206 Willard
Tulsa, OK 73116   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: Monday, June 12, 2000
_____   _____
Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance   Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Educational Opportunity Center Survey
Questionnaire

#_____

Age: _____   Gender: Female ____ Male ____

Ethnicity: African-American ____ Hispanic ____ Native-American ____ White ____ Other ____

Highest Education Level: Less than High School ____   High School or GED ____   Some College ____
                         Associate Degree ____   Bachelor Degree ____   Graduate Degree ____
                         Apprenticeship ____

Annual Household Income: Under $10,000 ____ $10,000-$19,000 ____ $20,000-$29,000 ____
                          $30,000-$39,000 ____ $40,000 and up ____

Use the following rating scales to determine how aware you are and how likely you are to use the following information and services:

Extremely   Moderately   Neutral   Somewhat   Not   Extremely   Moderately   Neutral   Somewhat   Not

	Extremely Aware	Moderately Aware	Neutral	Somewhat Aware	Not aware at all		Extremely Likely	Moderately Likely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Not likely at all
How aware are you of financial aid information?						How likely are you to use financial aid information?					
How aware are you of how to fill out the financial aid form?						How likely are you to fill out the financial aid form?					
How aware are you of area college programs?						How likely are you to apply for a college program?					
How aware are you of how to fill out a college application?						How likely are you to fill out a college entrance application?					
How aware are you of what basic skill level you are?						How likely are you to use information about your basic skill level?					
How aware of you of your career interest?						How likely are you to use career interest information					
How aware are you of different jobs and job availability?						How likely are you to use information about jobs and job availability?					
How aware are you of GED information and GED classes?						How likely are you use information about GED and GED classes?					
How aware are you of personal counseling opportunities?						How likely are you to use personal counseling opportunities?					
How aware are you of career counseling opportunities?						How likely are you to use career counseling opportunities?					
						How likely will finances keep you from enrolling?					
						How likely will family or day care concerns keep you from enrolling?					
						How likely will work obligations keep you from enrolling?					

Where you referred by an agency or volunteered?   Referral ____   Volunteer ____

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

A. AUTHORIZATION

I,_____, hereby authorize or direct _____Dinah Manns_____, or associates
or assistants of his or her choosing, to perform the following treatment or procedure.

B. DESCRIPTION

The name of this investigation is the Review of the Educational Opportunity Center Services and
it is being conducted through Oklahoma State University. The purpose of this research is to
determine the effectiveness of the program services offered by the EOC program. You will be
asked to complete a survey about workshop services before and/or after the workshop services.
It is anticipated that this research will benefit future EOC participants and allow the EOC staff to
provide more effective services in the future.

All information is confidential and no information identifying you will be maintained. The
tracking number at the top of the survey is only listed to match the post and pre survey.

If you wish to contact anyone regarding this research you may contact
   Dinah Manns, Rogers State University, 1701 W Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore, OK 74017
   918.343.7757
An additional contact is
   Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, Oklahoma State University, 203 Whitehurst
   Stillwater, OK 74078, 405.744.5700

C. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I understand that participation is voluntary and that I will not be penalized if I choose not to
participate. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my participation in
this project at any time without penalty after I notify the project director.

D. CONSENT

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has
been given to me.

Date: _____   Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____

_____
Signature of person authorized to sign for subject, if required

VITA

Dinah T. Manns

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE EFFECT OF SERVICES OF THE EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY CENTER ON POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Hermitage High School, in
Richmond, Virginia; received Bachelor of Arts
degree in Psychology from The College of William
and Mary, in May 1988, in Williamsburg, Virginia;
received Master of Arts degree in Counseling from
Oral Roberts University, in May 1993, in Tulsa,
Oklahoma. Completed the requirements for the
Doctor of Education degree with a major in
Occupational and Adult Education at Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in May,
2001.

Experience: Employed Muskogee Development as Director
of Workforce Development for Adair, Cherokee, and
Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma. Adjunct Professor
at Connor State College.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Association of
Community Colleges, Ok Association of Financial
Aid Administrators, Oklahoma Division of Student
Assistance, Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor
Society, Workforce Oklahoma Employment and
Training Association