IMPROVING ADULT MOTHER-TONGUE LITERACY LEARNING THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE INSIGHTS OF MARCEL JOUSSE.

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts : Orality-Literacy Studies

University of Natal, Durban

1998

I, Frances Jill Eileen Frow,

declare that,

except for the quotations specially indicated in the text,

and such help as I have acknowledged,

this dissertation is wholly my own work,

and has not been submitted for a degree

in any other university

Signature :.... *F.J.E. Frow*.........

Frances Jill Eileen Frow

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge gratefully all those whose generosity of spirit and expertise have helped me complete and present this dissertation:

Professor Edgard Sienaert and the Centre for Oral Studies, University of Natal, Durban, for giving me a revivified framework for my perceptions of people and their interactions in this Universe;

Joan Conolly, for her wisdom, her patient encouragement, and for going way beyond the call of duty in co-supervising this dissertation;

My husband Peter, for his supreme demonstration of love and fortitude;

The Tutors and Learners of the Pinetown Highway Child and Family Welfare Society for their co-operation;

Geoff Erwin and Shariem Singh for their assistance with the scanning of pictures;

Mike Ellis, for his willingness to share his computer expertise;

My Father, for the Oral-Style stories about Freddie Fish;

My Family and my Friends for their constant interest, prayers and support;

Ieshoua[1], the original Word and the original Breath.

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[1] Ieshoua: Aramaic for Jesus, used by Marcel Jousse.

Abstract

Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy learning is a universal problem as readily available statistics indicate. In this study, I explore various aspects of adult Mother-Tongue Literacy learning, including:

- a profile of a Learner typical of those who attend the Pinetown Welfare Society Adult Literacy Programme;
- some indication of the success of literacy programmes around the world;
- the kinds of problems experienced by Learners in the Kwadabeka Literacy Project attached to the Pinetown Welfare Society;
- some relevant theoretical concepts which underpin adult learning, and particularly the learning of literacy in adults;
- the perceptions of Marcel Jousse on the effect of non-literate and semi-literate milieux on the capacities of Learners;
- suggestions as to how an improved understanding of the capacities of Learners can influence the choice, design and presentation of Literacy teaching and learning materials;
- examples of those aspects of current programmes which answer the needs identified by Marcel Jousse.

In the conclusion, I suggest:

- how the theories of Marcel Jousse can be further explored and applied in the area of Mother-Tongue Literacy learning, and to a definition of literacy;
- how the needs identified by Marcel Jousse can be further accommodated;
- what kinds of materials need to be introduced to make Mother-Tongue Literacy less problematic and more accessible to its Learners;
- how an evaluation of the Pinetown Welfare Literacy Programme might assist in improving Mother-Tongue Literacy learning.

Contents

List of Illustrations.

Introduction: *Mrs Masango's story ...*

Mrs Masango[1] has never attended a formal school. Since she did not have brothers, her father required her to look after the family cattle. Day after day out in the veld[2] with the other herd children, she learnt the names of birds, the spoor of wild animals, how to find underground springs, and the right grass for the cattle. She developed an intimate knowledge of many aspects of nature and particularly of the weather, which she 'read' by looking both at the clouds, and at the behaviour of insects and plants.

The time of year the children enjoyed most was the late summer, when the crops were all harvested, and the family would gather around the fire, roasting mealies[3] and telling stories. It was from participating in these lively narratives, that she learnt the history and the mores of her people; the genealogy of her forefathers and the legends and myths that surrounded them. At this time of year the children were not punished if they were discovered holding a riddling contest, and they were encouraged to learn the songs and dances of their clan, in preparation for the time when they could join in the festive ceremonies.

When she was older, she took on domestic duties at home, and tilled the soil alongside the other women, sowing and reaping rhythmically often to the ritual accompaniment of chants and songs. She became adept at beadwork too, weaving intricate meanings into the bright patterns. She was altogether a very useful, productive member of the village.

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[1] Mrs Masango is a nom de plume for a 'constructed' personality. There are many 'Mr/s Masangos' in the literacy programmes run by the 'Pinetown Welfare Society'.
[2] Veld: Afrikaans for field or countryside.
[3] mealies: corn on the cob.

It was only when she married, and came to live in peri-urban Pinetown, that she became aware of how different she was from most of the city people. She was different because, although she knew so much about so many things, she could not read the 'billboards', or the advertisements that were slipped under her door; she could not even sign the homework books the children brought to her. She could neither understand, nor express herself in a literate mode.

In her childhood village she was accustomed to playing a significant role, and to knowing and understanding all that was happening around her. In her new surroundings, she felt isolated and afraid. Because much of the information came and went in a written form, there was a lot she could not understand, and often, there was no opportunity to express an opinion.

Worst of all was the feeling of inferiority. Her neighbours had grown up and been to school in Pinetown. They could write and read. She discovered that they seldom told stories any more; they had forgotten the riddles of their childhood, and the wise sayings of the elders. They could not 'read' the weather by looking at the sky, or decipher the messages in the beadwork, which she wore; and yet she felt inferior to them. Occasionally, she felt important, when they asked her to sing to them or asked her advice on a herbal remedy, but usually she felt stupid in their company.

Her husband and her children tried to teach her. With great enthusiasm she joined an adult literacy class; but she found it very, very difficult to learn to read and write.

For one thing, she felt a little bit old to start learning in such a different way. And there were so many other things that worried her constantly: here in the town one had to buy all the food, and pay for school uniforms and make sure there was enough left over for weekly bus tickets. To her surprise, the other Learners in the literacy class were not very encouraging, either. Some seemed to resent it if she mastered something before they did. She also found she had to be careful in whom she confided.

Her anxiety was probably her gravest hindrance. She came to the class feeling inferior, she was desperate to be able to read, and these strange written signs were unlike anything she had ever known in her childhood.

Her fingers were supple from doing her beadwork, but somehow felt clumsy when holding a pencil. Mrs Masango was anxious and self-conscious as she sat in the quiet group. This learning was very different from the joyful discoveries when out on the hills, or the throbbing story-times around the fire.

She wondered how these signs, these marks on paper, had any connection with what she already knew.

She stayed in the literacy class for as long as she could bear; but after a few weeks, she quietly left, feeling a deep sense of failure.

Mrs Masango is not alone in her despair and sense of failure as Chapter One demonstrates.
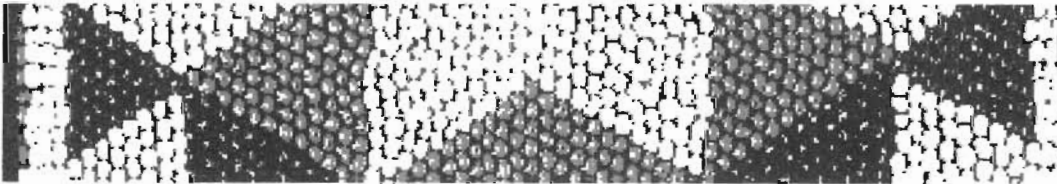
No. 2 Zulu Beadwork. A waistband from Nkandla area.

Chapter One: *Illiteracy: a Global and a Local issue*

In this chapter, I will address issues relating to the incidence of illiteracy both globally and locally.

Literacy Programmes World-wide ...

A World Bank Survey reviewing literacy programmes world-wide over the last thirty years, estimated an average effectiveness rate of less than 12.5%. The survey showed that :

- "on average, 50% of those who enrol in adult literacy programmes drop out within a few weeks;

- of those who remain, on average, 50% fail to complete the literacy programme successfully;

- of those who do complete, about 50% lose their skills within a year for lack of follow - up" (Archer and Cottingham 1996:10).

Literacy Programmes in South Africa ...

In South Africa, we face enormous challenges in the area of learning. One of these challenges is to find ways of helping adults to become literate. There are many adults who have grown up in remote rural areas and were busy with other ways of learning in their early childhood.

There are others who wanted to go to school, but were not able to get an education because of the various apartheid[4] policies. An illiteracy pattern amongst generations of mainly black people, has been aggravated by classroom boycotts, a lack of resources, overcrowding and teacher shortages in the existing schools. Nearly three million adults are totally unschooled and a further four and a half million have very little primary education. This means that eighteen per cent of our total population in South Africa may well feel as Mrs Masango does - marginalised, powerless to have any real effect on the shape of their environment, and not able to be part of their own children's formal education. Only 350,000 of all the adults who require Adult Basic Education are actually in literacy programmes (Harley et al 1996).

Although there is a National Policy (A National Multi-year Implementation Plan) to promote Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), the Government funding at this stage is for a limited number of Community Colleges and Night Schools, the latter being staffed by teachers trained in formal methods.

Besides those programmes offered by the Department of Education, 47% of the rest are run by Companies who mainly target the employed sector, and 21% by Non Governmental Organizations (N.G.O.s) and it is a continual struggle to access funds.

Programmes run by N.G.O.s in particular suffer from having inadequate premises and equipment, limited resources for outings and educational events, and above all, teachers who have had 'bursts' of training in informal teaching methods, and are receiving little remuneration. Pinetown Highway Child and Family Welfare Society (hereinafter referred to as the 'Pinetown Welfare Society') runs one such programme.

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[4] Apartheid: legislature that divided race groups and treated them unequally.

Literacy Programmes run by Pinetown Welfare Society ...

As Project Manager of the ABET literacy programme at Pinetown Welfare Society, I have found it increasingly important to examine the full range of reasons why it is so difficult for adults to learn to read and write. Our literacy programme is experiencing much the same difficulties as all others across the world.

We have an average of a hundred Learners at any one time, but our turnover is very high. In the course of the year, another hundred may come and go. Some of them only come to learn to sign their names, or tell the time, and then leave when they have achieved their goal. We always try to stretch their aspirations, but we cannot always stop them from leaving. However, we are most concerned about those who leave because they are frustrated or discouraged, or for some other reason we do not fully understand.

The Topic

In this study, I intend looking at some of the reasons why it is so difficult, for adults in the Pinetown Welfare Society Mother-Tongue Literacy programme to learn to read and write. I intend exploring ways in which we can improve the programmes to make learning easier for the Learners so that they achieve more readily.

Chapter Two: *How this study was conducted …*

In order to complete this study:

- I completed a relevant literature survey;

- I gathered data from the literacy Learners by means of a game and interviews, and from the literacy Tutors by means of interviews and discussions;

- I observed a number of literacy classes;

- I attended a two-day "Participatory Learning and Action Workshop"

- I visited a Montessori Pre-School in Harare, Zimbabwe where I spent the morning observing the teaching and learning;

- I have spent many hours observing my grandchildren.

The Literature Survey

The books I studied focused on four broad areas:

- Children's Learning-Theory (including Play Theory) and Practice.

- Adult Learning-Theory and Practice.

- Adult Basic Education and Training - Theory and Practice

- Orality-Literacy Theory, Oral traditions and Oral Studies.

I chose to use Marcel Jousse as the principal theorist to whom I refer as I believe he provides unique insights into the capacities of people who wish to become literate as adults. Marcel Jousse discovered the use and the form of the Oral-Style, a form of language use and expression ideally suited to providing extensive oral records, and used globally by non-literate communities.

Many of the Learners on our literacy programme come from non-literate, Oral-Style milieus.

I believe that there is much that the literate world can learn from Marcel Jousse about Oral-Style people - their achievements and capacities, their 'concreteness', and their learning style.

Data Gathered from Literacy Learners.

The literacy Learners were the members of the Umhlabunzima Literacy Project in KwaDabeka, Pinetown. I gathered data from the small group (8-15) of Literacy Learners to establish a profile of the Learners and develop some insights into their needs. The Learners shared the information happily and thoroughly enjoyed the game. They were informed about the study and asked if they would like to participate. They were all most enthusiastic.

On 24.6.97, information was gathered in the course of a ball game, which I called 'Patterns' : As the ball was passed from one player to another in a pattern, the participants rhythmically chanted the following information:

"My name is ... ... " [1st round]

"I come from ... ... but I live in ... ... " [2nd round]

"I joined the literacy class because ... ... " [3rd round]

With the assistance of the teachers, I then helped the participants write down what they had shared in the game.

In this session the same Learners were asked: "What makes learning difficult?" Again, the Learners were assisted to write down their answers.

Some were able to write them themselves. Some of the replies came from individuals, but in some cases others who had finished giving their answers to their interviewer, joined in, and as a small group they agreed on the answers.

In another session, a week later, (1.7.97) the Learners were asked, individually, why they had not been able to complete their schooling. This is sometimes a very sensitive subject, which is why it was not included as part of the game, or done publicly.

The Learners' photographs were taken, and they all agreed to having their stories displayed on a board:

"Let him 'play' in and out and holistically the realities he has received in all his fibres" (Jousse 1997:676).

No.3 Ball Game at Umhlabunzima.

"Under the 'sealing' pressure of what is 'real' the [participant] is im-pressed like soft fluid wax and he will ex-press in re-play what he has received" (Jousse 1997:676).

No.4 Learner Profile and Needs Analysis Display Board.

Learner Profile and Needs Analysis Display Board

This display board is 2,4 metres wide and 1,2 metres high and is constructed from 'Masonite' with a moulded timber frame. It is hinged vertically in the middle for ease of transport and also so that it may be free-standing or hung from a wall.

The visual backdrop consists of a black and white mosaic of a group of adult literacy Learners,(see Illustration 8 for coloured version) bordered on two sides with the caption: **LITERACY: LEARN OR 'LOOZE'[5]**, in bold letters 200mm high.

The information on the board was gained from interviews with members of a literacy group in KwaDabeka on 24 June,1997 and 1 July.1997 (see Appendix A). The interviews sought to establish:

•The reasons why the members had not completed their schooling.

•The reasons why they join and leave Literacy classes.

•Aspects of the current programme which the Learners found encouraging or discouraging.

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[5] 'LOOZE': the aberrant spelling is deliberate to reinforce the negative effect of non-literacy in a literate world.

The display includes two interactive features, it being considered appropriate to the thesis that an interactive approach will assist a learning process:

1) The Wheel

The wheel consists of a plywood disc with two circular apertures. It is rotated by means of the knob at its centre so that a photograph of an interviewee appears in the one aperture and a sample of his or her response in the other. Five group members may be 'interviewed' in this way. The wheel makes a clicking sound as it is rotated.

2) Pipe and Ball-bearing

A steel ball-bearing is enclosed within a clear plastic pipe, which ascends in switchback fashion from the lower left to the top right corner of the board. The upgrades represent difficulties and challenges which the Learners experienced and carry statements accordingly. Likewise the downgrades represent aspects which they found encouraging and carry appropriate labels. A magnet is attached to the board by means of a line. This magnet is used to drag the ballbearing up the slope to the summit from which it returns of its own accord. Some skill and concentration is required to prevent the ballbearing rolling back to the start while on the upward journey.

The difficulty which participants experience in negotiating the course is intended to impress upon them the joys and woes of literacy Learners.

The board is useful as a reminder to Literacy Tutors of the difficulties and hardships their Learners face, and the ways in which they, the Tutors, can make learning easier.

Data Gathering from Tutors

The Tutors were those on the Pinetown Welfare Society Literacy Programme. As Project Manager, I meet with the Tutors fortnightly, for In-Service Training, and with the Co-ordinators, two or three times a week.

For the specific purpose of research, I interviewed Tutors and recorded data on 5.12.97, 12.12.97, 13.1.98, and 23.1.98.

My question was: "What works with Mother-Tongue Learners?"

Observation of Literacy Lessons and Discussion with the Tutors

The Tutors, Linda and Jane, gave demonstration lessons for Mother-Tongue Learners on 12.9.97 and 26.11.97. These were followed by Discussions with all the Tutors and Co-ordinators. Once again the reason for the exercise was to discover what works with Mother-Tongue Learners.

Attendance at Participatory Learning and Action (P.L.A.) Workshop

I attended a P.L.A. Workshop on the 18.2.97 and 19.2.97. It took place in a remote rural school in the Bergville District. It was conducted by the Child Survival Programme in conjunction with the local Government Health authorities.

The aim of the Workshop was to facilitate the identification of Health resources and needs, and the choosing of a Health Committee and Health Visitor for the District. The Workshop was run entirely on participatory techniques.

The relevance to my study was that the participants were largely non-literate. The answers that people gave were recorded in writing, icons and drawings. (see Chapter 6)

Attendance at 'Kids of the Future' Workshop

On 26.6.97 I attended a workshop at Hilton College, KwaZulu Natal, presented by Jeannette Vos, co-author of *The Learning Revolution*. Learning through all the senses was emphasised. (see Chapter 6)

Observation at Harare Montessori Pre-School.

During a visit to Zimbabwe last year I arranged to spend a morning (11.9.97) observing the programme at the Montessori School. I returned unexpectedly the following week for another short visit. The teachers, Jody and Lynn, allowed me to ask for explanations of all the activities, and the theory which supported them.

Observation of my Grandchildren.

My grandchildren, Devon (born 1.9.95), Caleb (born 6.1.97) and Tayla (born 28.3.97) have been a fascinating source of information regarding learning styles and behaviours.

Chapter Three : *The Pinetown Welfare Society Mother-Tongue Literacy Project, KwaDabeka*

In this chapter I look closely at the focus group of Mother-Tongue Literacy Learners in KwaDabeka[6] township. I examine the aims of the Mother-Tongue Literacy programme, the means and methods employed, and the results of the programme.

As part of this chapter, I submit an interactive poster, which provides photographs, quotes and insights into some of the struggles and difficulties of the Learners in the KwaDabeka Literacy Project. Motivating factors are also recorded. The poster includes an exercise for Literacy Programme Tutors which emphasises the role of affective and contextual factors in the adult learning process.

The Mother-Tongue Literacy Learners

In KwaDabeka Township there is a literacy project which is typical of those under the auspices of Pinetown Welfare Society. The members are all Black people, who fall into two broad categories :

- those who have never been to school, and have come to learn to read and write in their mother-tongue;

- those who have attended school for a limited period, and have come to the project to learn English as a second language.

This study focuses on the first group - the Mother-Tongue Learners, who are non-literate. The Mother-Tongue in this instance is Zulu. The phrase Mother-Tongue is used in many senses: it is the language in which the members established their first lasting communication relationship; the language they use most; the language they know best and think and dream in; and also the language of which they are native speakers.

There have been various definitions of 'non-literate' over the years. In the 1958 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) document, an illiterate was defined as: one "who cannot, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (Hamadache and Martin 1986:14). Twenty years later, as the world became clearer about the practical implications of non-literacy in a person's life, UNESCO changed its perspective. The new definition reads: "A person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading writing and calculation, for his own and the community's development" (ibid). This changed perspective has made an impact at policy level in many countries, including South Africa. *The Draft Policy Document for Adult Education and Training in South Africa*, (1997), captures the Department of Education's vision for ABET as: "A literate South Africa in which all its citizens have acquired the basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation" (1997:1).

The Learners who are the focus of this study, like Mrs.Masango, have *never* been to school. They grew up in rural areas, where it was not customary for *all* the children in the family to go to school. A few of the women agreed that because their own fathers had not been literate, they had not seen the need for their daughters to be literate.

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[6] KwaDabeka is a township five kilometres north of Pinetown. The dwellings are mainly closely spaced shacks, and there is a hostel, which is estimated to house over 17,000 people.

Others had not gone to school for economic reasons: Lucky Mkhize had eight brothers and sisters; Patricia Mhlungu told me that her parents were not working, and when her mother passed away there was no-one else to look after her father (Interviews: Mkhize and Mhlungu: Appendix A).

The Learners' ages range from eighteen to sixty-five years, with more than half the group falling in to the twenty- to thirty-five year category. Most of the Learners have come from other areas to live in KwaDabeka, either displaced by the violence, or to seek employment nearer town. The majority of the Learners are women - single mothers or married women. While non-literacy is higher among women than men, the attendance by men at literacy classes is disproportionately low. I believe this resistance is related to the difficulties highlighted in Chapter 4.

The Aims of the Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy Programme.

The main aim of the Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy programme is to introduce Learners to the literate mode of their mother-tongue, and assist them to write and read. In some projects there is an emphasis on passing examinations and moving up to the next literacy 'level'. We assist those who wish to, to register with the Independent Examinations Board (I.E.B.) and write external examinations, which are recognized at a national level. In other projects there is more interest in gaining 'lifeskills' than passing examinations. Learners want skills such as reading road signs and telephone books, using a tape measure and telling the time. The long-term goal for all the Learners is to be able to play their part more fully as members of the family, the community, and the wider political and economic society.

At Pinetown Welfare Society, one goal is to establish an income-generating project with each literacy project in order to improve quality of life of the Learners and contextualize the learning. This is working well with unemployed Learners. Another goal is to bring about community awareness with regard to literacy, and to 'engage' the community leaders in understanding and supporting the programme. I will discuss this further in the next paragraph.

Getting the Programme going ...

Projects in a particular community start at the request of that community.

A Tutor is usually approached by a member of the community, who has heard about a literacy project already being run within the community. If Pinetown Welfare Society staff have the capacity to run another project, then an official mandate is sought from the community 'structures'. This is the first phase in 'engaging' the support of the leaders. Sometimes the leaders refuse permission summarily, because they have other plans or priorities for their people.

Following the initial fact-finding meeting with the civic leaders, it is usual for the literacy co-ordinators to address the whole community at a Sunday meeting. The members of the community also need to say whether they want a literacy project, and in what form - days, times, costs etc. In communities where the leadership supports the project, a Literacy Management Committee is formed, and this facilitates the process.

At the community meeting, a date is set for all those who are interested to meet with the Tutor. At this meeting, each person is assessed by means of Standard Placement Tests (see Appendix C), and allocated to a class or 'level'. There are three levels for Mother-tongue Learners, and five levels for English Second Language Learners. The syllabi for Levels Four and Five are still being developed. Most organizations take Learners up to Level Three, which is the equivalent of Grade 6[7]. Learners and Tutors usually meet twice a week for two to three hours. The Tutor has a class of three to ten Learners.

In each community there is a specific arrangement regarding premises for the project. Where there is no library, hall or classroom, people's private homes are used. In one community the project shares a carport with a V.W.Combi[8].(see Illustration 6)

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[7] Grade 6: usually 11-12 year old scholars.
[8] V.W.Combi: passenger vehicle commonly used as a taxi.

The Tutors are mostly young people who have received brief training from a recognized institution such as the 'English Resource Unit' or 'Operation Upgrade'[10]. They are monitored closely by the Pinetown Welfare Society co-ordinators. Pinetown Welfare Society also supervises the programmes and provides fortnightly in-service training.

The Adult Literacy Programme at Pinetown Welfare Society is funded largely by the Joint Education Trust. The money is required to cover the cost of:

- stationery and photocopying;

- some equipment;

- Tutors' and Co-ordinators' travel;

- examination fee subsidy;

- eye-glasses for Learners with sight problems;

- salaries for Co-ordinators[11].

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[10] English Resource Unit and Operation Upgrade: N.G.O.s which train literacy teachers and produce learning material.

[11] The salaries of Tutors are not funded. It is expected that Learners pay for their own books and pay tuition fees to the Tutors. In reality, this only occurs in the 'Domestic Worker Projects' where Learners have an income.

Common Methods used by the Tutors to help the Learners to read and write.

The Tutors have been trained in a wide variety of different methods, but tend to use some more than others, depending on their preferences, and sometimes depending on the Learners' particular difficulties. Tutors are encouraged to use the methods eclectically.

In order to establish the methods commonly used by the Tutors, I observed lessons given by the Tutors on the Pinetown Welfare Society programme, I studied their lesson plans, and I held discussions with them. (Discussions: Zondi and Ngobeni: Appendix A)

They use a range of colloquial terminology for their methods, such as "look and cover, write and check", or "jumbled syllables". I was able to categorize them according to the methods formally recognized by UNESCO (Hamadache and Martin 1986:115-117).

Learning-to-Read methods include:

- **Synthetic Methods,**

- **Analytical or Global Methods,**

- **The Eclectic Method.**

Synthetic Methods. These are based on the principle that a Learner must know the *components* of words, i.e. letters or syllables, and include the following:

a) **The Alphabet Method** is a very old method and consists of learning the name of the letters in alphabetical order, then of spelling and pronouncing combinations of letters. The names of the letters do not always correspond to the sounds produced: for example, 'C.A.T. spells cat.' The Alphabet Method stresses the mechanics of reading rather than understanding.

b) **The Phonetic Method**. Here the students learn the *sound represented* by the letters and groups of letters, together with rules governing the combinations. Again the emphasis is on the mechanics of reading as the Learner recites the meaningless components: 'b', 'b', 'b'. It is best suited to phonetic languages.

c) **The Syllabic Method**. In this method, the syllables are the basic unit rather than the letters, because so often consonant sounds can only be correctly pronounced in conjunction with vowel sounds: 'ma-ma' 'ba-ba'

Analytical or Global Methods. Instead of being confronted with the components of words (i.e. sounds and letters) devoid of meaning, the global approach uses units with complete meaning (i.e. words, parts of- or whole sentences) and then breaks them down into their component parts: for example, a Tutor could begin with a phrase such as: 'One man, one vote'. Such a phrase is intended to stimulate interest in the Learner right from the start. After discussing the meaning of the phrase, the Tutor could ask the Learners to find matching letters, matching words, and then focus on the word 'man' as a phonetic spelling exercise.

a) **Word Method**. In this method, a word is presented alongside a picture which represents its meaning. Paulo Freire applied the method, using 'keywords', which had an affective association. He quoted Jarbas Maciel who described the best 'keywords' as being those with:

"the greatest syntactic value, (number or abundance of phonemes, degree of difficulty and phonetic complexity...);

semantic value, (greater or lesser degree of linkage between the word and the being it designates...);

pragmatic value, (greater or lesser consciousness-raising potential contained in the word...") (Hamadache and Martin 1986:117).

b) Phrase Method. With this method, it is the phrase and not the word that is the real linguistic unit. Proponents of this method sometimes abandon the Reading Primer altogether, and use phrases spoken by the Learners themselves, such as '*sawubona abantwana*' = 'hullo children'.

c) Narration Method. This is an extension of the **Phrase Method** and involves building vocabulary, spelling, etc. from a story, told by Tutor or Learner.

The Eclectic Method. "A rational combination of the two broad methods, has been called 'analytic-synthetic'. It entails a selection of carefully graded words, sentences and simple passages which the (Learners) analyze, compare and synthesize, more or less simultaneously right from the beginning, and while doing so become acquainted with elements of language in the desired order while learning the mechanics of reading" (XIIth International Conference on Public Education. 1949: 46).

The more creative Tutors employ variations based on all these methods. They use large posters on the wall called 'picture codes', newspapers, radios, flash-cards, music, recitations, and games.

Learning to write ...

Learning to write is synchronized with learning to read because writing is perceived to be part of the introduction to reading. The two fields are mutually supportive. Attention is first concentrated on whole words, and progresses to single letter formation. Learners describe shapes of letters in the air, on the ground, with chalk and crayons. Simultaneously, Learners are given exercises, which assist them to feel comfortable holding a pen, to move from left to right across the page, and generally to improve manual dexterity.

Results of the Programme ...

During the course of the year, as many Learners leave the programme, as stay. Sometimes they leave because they have achieved their goal, but usually it is because they have **not** achieved their goal for one reason or another. This worries us.

Of those who stay, the majority write an internal examination at the end of the year and move up to the next level; but some of the older Learners improve in one way and not in another; for example they might improve in reading but not in writing. This is problematic in the present system because it means that they cannot progress to the next recognized level. Even if we allowed them to progress to the next level, they would fail if they wrote an external examination. Of those of our Learners who do write external examinations, only a small percentage passes. Candidates tend to pass their oral examination and their Project File[12] but only a few pass written language and even fewer pass numeracy[13].

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[12] The Project File is an illustrated assignment topic of the Learner's own choosing, usually about him/herself (see Illustration No. 22).

[13] These comments apply to both Mother-Tongue and English Second Language Learners.

In some centres, we have a 'Lifeskills' class whose members do not write examinations at all. In this class, we are able to 'tackle' in an individualized way, the Learners' real needs, without the pressure of having to cover the examination syllabus. However this class is viewed by some, as a 'lower' class.

In this chapter, I have described the Pinetown Welfare Society Adult Literacy Programme, and identified our concerns about low rates of success and achievement by Mother-Tongue Learners. In the following chapter, I will deal with the possible causes of these problems.

Chapter Four: *Causes of Learner problems in current Mother-Tongue Literacy programmes ...*

In this chapter I look at some Biological, Cognitive, Sociological and Affective reasons as to why it is so difficult for adult Learners to learn to read and write in their Mother-Tongue.

Biological Reasons

The Age Factor

Benjamin Bloom's research revealed that humans develop around 50% of their ability to learn during the first four years of life; and another 30% of that ability before they turn eight. The final 20 % of their ability to learn, they develop between eight and eighteen years. These figures were the result of Bloom's study of five human characteristics - learning ability and school achievement being two of these characteristics - between birth and eighteen years. He found, overwhelmingly, that development soared in the first few years, then tapered off (Bloom 1964).

Marcel Jousse explains that it is an instinctive tendency for the "young anthropos"[14] to learn. "For the [young anthropos], naïve and curious, everything is 'new', everything is 'unusual', everything is a 'miracle'. His biological interest in everything around him is still not blunted" (Jousse 1997:677).

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[14] Anthropos: human.

He also describes how the [anthropos] is more malleable, and can learn more easily: "the [anthropos] is im-pressed,[15] like soft, fluid, wax" (Jousse 1997:676). [my substitutions]

The observations of Marcel Jousse confirm Bloom's findings. Biologically, it seems, we are at our learning peak during the very early years, and any learning we attempt after the age of eighteen, will require a great deal more effort, or some other support mechanism.

Perhaps this is why one of the Learners on the literacy programme said : "I cannot concentrate on one thing for too long" (Interview: Goodness Gaqela: Appendix A).

Cognitive Reasons

A New Style of Learning.

The fact that the Learners have to accustom themselves to a new style of learning, is less well researched than the 'age factor' mentioned above. Dryden and Vos, in their book *The Learning Revolution,* are at pains to explain that we "form the main learning pathways" in the first few years. Everything else will be built on that base (Dryden and Vos 1976:223).

In Mrs Masango's case her learning pathways were first developed in the oral mode. From a very early age, she was exposed to myths and legends, riddling and proverbs, her family's genealogy, and the lore and customs of her non-literate community. These would have been recited and chanted, enacted and danced repeatedly during her childhood so that she too very soon became adept at relating and riddling, and keeping account of the affairs of the hut and the herd.

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[15] Im-pressed and ex-pressed: Jousse uses a hyphen to stress the movement implied in these words. Im-press = in-press = press in.

It never occurred to her that she could not write: after all, how could writing have better served her than the rhythmised chanting which embedded her knowledge in her being so that it was literally 'on the tip of her tongue' and 'at the tips of her fingers'?

Marcel Jousse explains that the non-literate person learns through "his hands, all his living, receptive fibres, with all those tactile gestes[16] that are adapted to grasp, to know, to master, to demonstrate and subdue everything around him" (Jousse 1997:676). The non-literate person raised in an oral tradition has a well-developed 'oral-mode learning pathway', but having a well developed 'oral-mode learning pathway' does not automatically accommodate a 'written-mode learning challenge'. Quite the contrary, in fact. Jousse reminds us that we need to understand others from *their* learning perspective : "if people could only come to understand these individuals who are so rich in sensations and intussusceptions[17] of actual things!" (Jousse 1990:xxi).

Thus, when the Learner says, "After the holiday, I have forgotten everything", it may be an indication that not only is she having difficulty as an adult, getting back to learning, but that she is also struggling to learn in a completely different style (Interview: Ruth Mkhize: Appendix A). I will further explain and demonstrate the distinction between oral- and written-mode learning styles in Chapter Six.

Sociological Reasons

Learning in the Adult Phase of Life.

Because Mrs Masango has entered the adult phase of her life, she also has more responsibilities than would a young scholar. Most of the Learners on the Pinetown Literacy Project are women, with households and children to worry about.

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[16] Gestes: whole being expressions. In Joussean terminology, an action becomes a geste when it is received registered and re-played by the anthropos..

[17] Intussusceptions: "the synchronizing of all the gestes that flow from nature into man so that he can express them". (Jousse 1997: 661)

In the past, some members have left the project because their toddlers are too disruptive to themselves and others. Others have had to miss class if their husbands are on night shift, so that they can see something of their spouses. Sometimes the Learners are so concerned about how they are going to pay the children's school fees, or the new housing rates, that they cannot concentrate in the literacy session. With all these worries and concerns, the average adult Learner is not in a position to channel as much focused energy into learning, as is needed.

Affective Reasons

Lambert and Gardner (1972) maintain that the single most important factor in successful learning is motivation. Goleman (1996) confirms that motivation, as one of the 'emotional intelligences', plays a key role in success. Motivation can be affected by a number of factors:

Boredom and Threat : People leave because:

- they are bored by the assessment procedure. It can drag on for weeks if new people keep joining;

- they feel threatened by the tests and get very upset with the results;

- they are disappointed if not placed in the same class as a friend;

- they do not want to be in a class with younger people;

- they want to be in the English class, not the Mother-Tongue class[18].

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[18] This means that they want to learn to read and write English even though they cannot read and write in their Mother-Tongue. Experience has taught us that Mother-Tongue Literacy is a necessary requirement for successful non-Mother-Tongue Literacy.

Learners are easily offended.

Although some of the Tutors have natural skills at teaching, they are all still in the process of learning how best to approach adults, and they often inadvertently offend the Learners. Learners become very upset when Tutors are late for classes, or irresponsible in other ways. One Learner said, "I think when we get some teachers all the time and everyday we can stay to the classes" (Interview: Nokulunga Dungelo: Appendix A).

Feelings of Inferiority

Another thing that affects the adult Learners' ability to learn is a feeling of inferiority. Just as Mrs. Masango felt isolated and afraid when she came to live in a literate milieu, so the Learners often have a feeling of being 'voiceless' in the community. Working among the non-literate masses in India, Frank Laubach put it: "You think it is a pity that they cannot read. The real tragedy is that they cannot speak" (Laubach 1984:178). This feeling of inferiority is reflected in Jabulisile's statement: "I join lecitry to be important to another human being" (Interview: Jabulisile Zaca: Appendix A).

I have observed that this feeling of inferiority is manifest variously in Learners' behaviours who:

- come to literacy classes with a great deal of anxiety;

- easily feel inferior if others progress more quickly than they do;

- are easily frustrated if they do not achieve their goal;

- are very sensitive about anything they construe as criticism; (I have seen a Learner leave a project because a younger person giggled at her mistake.)

Feelings of inferiority undermine self-confidence. Learning at any time is a threatening experience: for a Learner lacking self-confidence and with feelings of inferiority, learning becomes impossible.

Community Dynamics

Community dynamics impact on the group as well, and therefore on the individual Learner. At this stage of the country's history, it is understandable that the civic leaders are largely engrossed with infrastructure, and not focused on the development of human resources in their communities. For this, and other reasons, they are often unsympathetic to the needs of the literacy projects. Literacy projects often fail to gain the necessary community support, and can be hampered in a number of ways:

- the project may not get permission to use available premises;

- co-ordinators attend community meetings to talk about literacy but the agenda is often too full, and the literacy project does not come up for discussion;

- community meetings sometimes become disrupted by disorderly behaviour and there is no opportunity to talk about literacy;

- even after going through all the correct channels to get a mandate from the community, arrangements can still fall through, for example :

- unsympathetic or hostile civic committee members can thwart the project by holding meetings in the same room, at the same time;

- unsympathetic leaders change the locks on the community hall doors, and fail to inform the Tutors.

In addition to this absence of support for the projects, 'in-fighting' or politics in the community can spill over into the project and affect everyone's progress, also causing members to leave. It has happened that :

- if a literacy programme provides its own furniture, it is taken for granted that the chairs and tables may be used for other meetings too. This has all sorts of attendant problems;

- if the classes are held in a private dwelling, there is an expectation of remuneration which cannot always be met;

- if the person concerned leaves the project, there is a possibility of losing a venue;

- because of divisions in the community, some Learners will refuse to attend classes in certain people's homes.

Problems such as these can doom even the best-planned and organised programme.

Specific Needs

In addition to the problems and difficulties that the Learners and their communities experience, the programme and its Tutors are hugely challenged. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, the Tutors who teach for the Pinetown Welfare Society literacy project are informally trained and often have not completed their training when they are released to teach on the literacy project. They naturally have limitations. These limitations are challenged most particularly by the diversity of individual needs in every class.

From Interviews conducted with the group, I learnt that:

- Patricia needs to be able to write in order to get a better job; (Most of the Learners are unemployed, or only have part-time work and want literacy to solve that problem for them.)

- Ruth just wants to "raise up her mind" and concentrate on handwork, jam and polish making, which could bring in an income;

- Jabulisile is hoping to pass I.E.B. examinations through the literacy programme;

- Goodness wants to read and write, in order to help her children with homework;

- Nokulunga Dungelo is the wife of a community leader and keenly feels the need to be numerate, in order to understand water bills, rates increases and trust accounts. (Interviews: Patricia Mhlungu, Ruth Mkhize, Jabulisile Zaca, Goodness Gaqela and Nokulunga Dungelo: Appendix A)

Even experienced literacy teachers are challenged by such a diverse range of Learner needs. Adult Learners' needs are in fact so specific that one of the very best learning situations is a 'one-on-one' Tutor-to-Learner situation. Recently, I participated in a literacy class made up of a group of Foster Parents who meet in the Dassenhoek Library[19]. Since it was raining that day, very few members arrived, and as a result each Learner was able to have the almost exclusive attention of a Tutor.

Mrs. 'M'. was there, painstakingly copying the numbers, 1-10, in a huge, uneven, but very satisfying, scrawl. I was able to guide her hand physically around and around the figure, 9, which she really wanted to copy to her satisfaction.

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[19] Dassenhoek Library: a library in Pinetown South, run by the Inner West Council.

Another member had specifically requested assistance with filling in a building society form, because she wanted to open an account. The Tutor was able to spend the entire session helping this lady as she put her particulars into the little blocks on the paper. There was a sense of joy and fulfillment pervading the room, throughout the session.

The 'one-on-one' Tutor-to-Learner method is described by Frank Laubach who designed the "Each one Teach one Way" in India, over thirty years ago (Laubach 1984). The 'one-on-one' method is still being recommended today, according to an article in the Readers Digest (Dickinson 1997:19). However, this is seldom possible in a Pinetown Welfare Society literacy project today, as there are not enough people willing to be 'volunteer' Tutors. On some programmes there is not even sufficient funding to pay Tutors who are facilitating over-large classes of Learners.

Because adult Learners come with very specific needs, there is a great risk of their becoming frustrated or discouraged in a large literacy class of diverse needs. From this I must deduce that Nokulunga is unlikely to persist if there is not enough emphasis on numeracy and that Goodness is unlikely to remain motivated if she does not begin to understand her children's homework books. If their specific needs are not met, the Learners will leave.

In *The Learning Revolution*, Dryden and Vos stress repeatedly that learning is an holistic process, greatly influenced by the social and emotional context in which it occurs (Dryden and Vos 1996). There are many things that impact on the adult Learner with all his/her complexities of a personal, domestic, and community nature, stemming from the past, the present, and even projecting into the future.

In this chapter, I have identified the problems and difficulties with which Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy Learners have to contend. In the chapter following, I will identify perceptions and insights of Marcel Jousse, and others, and explain how the application of these insights can have a positive impact on this situation.

Chapter Five: *Problems, Solutions and Insights: the Perceptions of Marcel Jousse*

In this chapter, I examine and challenge perceptions of literacy and non-literacy. I introduce the observations and perceptions of Marcel Jousse, who was himself the product of a non-literate milieu, and explain how his insights can help us make learning easier for adult literacy Learners.

Perceptions of Literacy and Non-Literacy

Literacy is Not the Panacea for All Ills

At the outset, we must remind ourselves that Literacy, for all that it *can* do, is not the panacea for all ills. On the contrary, writing can neither sing nor dance, nor can it prevent its own abuse and misuse, nor can it, of itself, correct a wrong impression created in its reader. So, even though writing has wrought many truths in poetry and prose, and has recorded many wonders of science and philosophy, it cannot 'be all things to all people'. The limitations of writing are all too often overlooked. Thus while we, who teach literacy at the Pinetown Welfare Society, encourage people to become literate, we do not hold up literacy as the panacea for all ills.

Nor do we hold up the literate person as being specially equipped to answer all life's challenges. Marcel Jousse observes that people feel ashamed to say that they have lived in an illiterate milieu. "What a mistake!" he says. "Illiterates can be formidably intelligent... life as it is lived in close contact with soil, sap, wind and sky. This it is that constitute[s] the genuine education of the living concrete individual, in contact with actual objects" (Jousse 1925:xxi).

Furthermore, advances in technology threaten to undermine the hegemony of writing. It is clear that with the introduction of voiced computers and videophones, we are entering an era of Orality, when reading and writing may *not* be as important for survival as they are now. "In Canada, video libraries outnumber book libraries five to one" (Quote by Alan Chattaway, Staff Engineer, Aspen Technology Inc., Oct. 1997).

It is important to emphasise the realities of the power of writing, because it is commonplace to label non-literate people negatively. The belittling of non-literate people is not restricted to the literacy class. Literate society generally regards the non-literate as unintelligent, stupid, incapable of thought or creative construction. It is helpful, therefore to put the record straight.

Achievements of Non-Literate Societies

Just as Mrs Masango experienced when she came to Pinetown, knowledge, capacities and abilities recorded in the oral mode are dismissed as worthless. Literate people; even those highly educated, often fail to recognize the achievements of societies without writing. We have material evidence of non-literate or oral cultures all around the world: the ruins of the Great Zimbabwe, the mysterious 5000 year old barrows and henges of Pre-historic Wiltshire; and the immense stone Mauis of Easter Island, among many others. Their origins are a mystery, or at best conjecture, simply because these peoples had no writing; yet their intelligence, ingenuity and achievement has stood the test of millennia, for all to see.

All People think in the Abstract

Another misconception that literate people often have, of the non-literate person, is that s/he is not able to think abstractly. Jousse argued that because people from oral cultures express themselves in a largely concrete or actual mode, this does not mean that they cannot, and do not, operate abstractly in the same way as anyone else. All religious and superstitious belief is of a highly abstract nature:

"I left school becos of the ancestos," said Nokulunga, one of the KwaDabeka Literacy Project Learners (Interview: Nokulunga Dungelo: Appendix A). The capacity to interpret the events of life in terms of the supernatural is (arguably) the highest form of abstraction, as it demands belief and faith in forces and beings of which and whom we have no daily material evidence.

The "living concrete" or 'actual' individual with an Oral Code

What we are trying to achieve in a literacy programme is to assist the "living concrete individual" who has concrete and actual ways of expressing himself - with his hands, his body, his mouth - to translate the concrete into codified symbols (Jousse 1925:xxi).

We keep in sight the fact that both non-literate and literate people are concrete and actual. In worship services, at soccer matches, in affectionate relationships, all people use their hands, bodies and voices; but the person from the non-literate society is more dependant on his/her actual forms of expression, because s/he does not have a written code. His/her code is an *oral* one.

For example, take the case of a mother who has never learnt to read and write. While her children are growing up, they are with her all the time and she is physically able to express her love and care by holding them, clothing them, cooking for them. She teaches them in concrete ways, by example and demonstration: showing them how to make pots, light a fire, and telling them stories ... Then her daughter grows up, gets married and moves far away. Suddenly this mother feels cut off, useless, no longer able to help her daughter, or even assure of her love in concrete ways; and so, because she knows about writing, she begins to yearn to be able to write - to send a written codified symbol of her love. She needs help to translate the 'concrete' into a written code.

Consider another example in the Taxi Industry where a non-literate commuter wants to be able to translate the written symbols back into the 'concrete' (Breir, Taetsane and Sait 1996).

Whereas up until now a commuter may have been content to make a 'wavey'[20] sign with his hands and trust the Taxi driver to take him to Durban, a mishap on the way to work when he was taken to the wrong place, may suddenly result in his wanting to decipher the written symbols at the Taxi rank for himself. He needs help to translate the written code back into the concrete.

Oral and Literate Modes of Expression Must Co-exist, side by side

We live in a dual world; our world is both oral and literate, and we are all both oral and literate. The one does not in any way preclude the other. The two modes of expression need to be saluted and promoted to co-exist side by side. For example, there was a breakthrough in the realm of synthesis between the oral and the literate in Mozambique this year when the authorities allowed the peasants to give evidence based on oral tradition as proof of land ownership (Mail and Guardian. October 3rd - 9th 1997:12). This was a recognition of the value of the oral tradition in the peasant culture, by people who have embraced written culture for many years. The literate mode is necessary for today's world, but without the oral mode, warned Marcel Jousse, the written is in danger of being 'disconnected' from it's deep meaning and significance (Jousse 1925).

The Separation of the Oral and Literate Modes ...

This separation can contribute to a breakdown in communication between two parties. There is often breakdown of communication and understanding between people who are steeped in the concrete styles, and people who are steeped in the written style. For example, Learners who have sat external Examinations this year, have done badly because they do not answer the questions correctly; that is, they do not understand what is required of them.

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[20] 'wavey' sign: waves indicate the sea, in Taxi 'language'.

Whereas, internal examination papers that the Zulu co-ordinators on our Child Welfare programme have set, appear to be perfectly well understood. When I am reading over these internal papers, I often have to resist the temptation to change the wording of the instructions. I realise that where I may prefer more precise, conventional 'exam' language, that very precision probably arises from being so steeped in the written word, that the meaning is lost. Jousse would call it 'algebrosis[20]'.

I am so accustomed to the written word and so far removed from what would be meaningful to the adult Learners that I have to leave it to the Co-ordinators to 'find the words'.

At a Conference called "Education and Training for 21st century Africa" Herbert Vilakazi quoted the critic Chinweizu who warns that if people are going to modernise a language, they have to be "exposed, to saturation level" to myths, legends, proverbs, ethical and aesthetic values, cosmological and philosophical assumptions encoded in (their) mother-tongue" (Chinweizu 1994). In other words, he was saying that if people are going to change their mode of expression, or adopt another one, they must be careful not to become disconnected from the original meaning.

The Building of Self Esteem.

Since some of the most serious problems revolve around feelings of inferiority, it is necessary that we do everything we can to build up self-esteem in the Learner.

The basis for considering each person on the programme valuable, whether Tutor or Learner, is his **intrinsic value** in the sight of God: Man is created in the image of God, and God has breathed life into him. His value is not dependent on whether he can read or write, or on any other performance. The Learner will immediately begin to feel at ease, if he is treated with dignity and respect.

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[20] Algebrosis: a condition arising from being steeped in the written and therefore separated from the original root meaning.

The way we **structure our classes** is an indication to the Learner of our attitude to him/her. It is usually a surprise to the Learner to find that the chairs are not arranged in rows, but rather in circles; and the Tutor is not an authority figure but a friend who is addressed by his/her first name. Learners are not always pleased with this scenario. Some want a classroom ethos; but we believe that this is in fact a need for a feeling of belonging, rather than a need for formality. Tutors can effectively build a sense of unity and identity, by introducing rituals such as opening prayers, and group songs.

We have, also, to **know the cultural beliefs and values** amongst our Learners, and pay due regard to them. I have observed that one of the main reasons for old people feeling useless, is a feeling that their values are no longer acknowledged. For example, it is important in our Zulu tradition that young Learners do not take their seats before the older Learners are seated.

But more important than cultural etiquette, is an understanding of the worldview of a spontaneous person: his reverence towards each daily task, the planting of seed, the decorating of his/her home, his/her sensitivity to an outside power influencing everything that happens to him/her.

We can allay the Learner's fears, and build his/her confidence, if we **take every opportunity to show respect for the Learner's prior learning and experience.**

From the moment s/he joins the class, and has to go through the experience of being 'assessed', we need to try and obliterate the concept of 'the literate elite'. The origin of the word 'secretary', which meant 'keeper of secrets', gives us an indication of how, throughout history, those who were literate have been held in higher esteem than those who were not, and in many cases, have held sway over the non-literate masses.

Our Learners are all people who have knowledge, skills and abilities, gained through life experience.

We are hoping that with the inclusion of the Recognition of Prior Learning (R.P.L.) principle, the new implementation plan will help change societal attitudes towards the non-literate (A Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training:98).

In the following chapter, I suggest activities that will aid adult literacy learning. I show how each of these exercises has capacities for support for literacy Learners, and how these exercises are rooted in the perceptions and insights of Marcel Jousse, and others.

Chapter Six : *Options for Improvement ...*

In this chapter, I consider some of the problems that the Learners experience. I suggest learning activities that will address such problems, and discuss the theories of Marcel Jousse and others which underpin these suggestions.

The kinds of activities needed to address the problems of **feelings of inferiority** are those which build self-esteem. The knowledge, which Mrs. Masango had developed in her non-literate rural community, was real and complex. Although she had a great deal to refer to and draw upon, her knowledge and skills were ignored in the Pinetown peri-urban community and in the literacy programme. This led her to feel and to believe that what she knew, and therefore who she was, was of no value or worth. Such perceptions undermine feelings of self-esteem and self-worth, and rob the Learner of a very valuable learning resource: learning through experience of what is real and concrete.

Feelings of inferiority are best addressed by activities involving stimuli, which dignify and celebrate the Learners' cultural knowledge and practice. This builds confidence in the Learner by basing the learning activity on what is familiar to the Learner. The Tutor displays a large poster of a scene that is familiar to the Learners. Imagine an instance where the scene depicted is a hot summer's day in a rural village. Learners speak about the picture, and name the things they see. As they say words, the Tutor writes the words on the board. The Learners copy the words. At the same time, the Learners are introduced to words in writing which describe the well-known scene.

Such activities are informed by Marcel Jousse's **Primary Learning Theory**, which helps us understand how this learning takes place.

Jousse explains that the anthropos learns instinctively, and by imitation, by virtue of being endowed with a tendency called mimism[21]. Only the anthropos is endowed with mimism.

The process operates as follows: the anthropos **receives** the actions from the exterior world through the actions or "gestes of his whole instinctively miming body". He behaves like a "strange sculptural mirror, infinitely fluid and continually re-modelled". The anthropos **registers** the actions or gestes of the universe around him, through his whole body, "gestually in the manner of a plastic, living and fixing film" and becomes a complexity of "mimemes"[22], which are embedded deep within him. He **re-plays**[23] these, mimemes or interactions of the universe "mimically through the gestes of his whole body" (Jousse 1997:91).

When the Tutor introduces a picture of a familiar scene, the Learner is able to remember in his/her whole being, the sensations related to the picture. From this secure position s/he is ready to be taken a step further into new learning.

Jousse describes the process of learning and expression as a continual interactional relationship with the universe. The Learner is 'played' by the universe and 're-plays' what s/he has received and registered. Every 'im-pression' causes a change in the anthropos.

When a **new** code - writing - is introduced to express **old** knowledge, the impressions will change again, embedding in writing what was previously recorded in the concrete, or oral, mode only. Therefore what s/he plays out will be in a written code as well. This exercise also addresses **feelings of fear.**

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[21] mimism: a psycho-physiological process whereby man makes meaning of the world around him. He receives, registers and re-plays his impressions. It is through this process that he learns.

[22] Mimemes: meanings that have been registered in the memory and can be triggered for re-play. The mimemes constitute man's knowledge.

[23] Re-plays: the third phase of the mimism process whereby man ex-presses what he has received and registered.

By introducing only a few words at a time and allowing the Learner ample time to watch him/her write, and copy over and over, the Learner gradually masters the letters. It happens like this: The Tutor writes the words. The Learner copies the words, **registers** the sound and the shape of them and the direction of the pencil as s/he writes; mimismically s/he **re-plays** the writing, repeating the words and the actions that go with it. *Everything* the Learner learns is by virtue of the same process. Jousse said, "In his very essence the anthropos is a mimer...The universe is an immense and mysterious mimodrama where each being, animate or inanimate, acts on other beings". What Jousse calls a three-phase Propositional Geste has the effect of reinforcing the learning. "The phenomenon of:

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is found everywhere. No phenomenon in the universe exists in isolation" (Jousse 1997:448). This process becomes the tool for the anthropos to preserve and express what is real. "When we no longer have what is real in front of us we have the mimeme embedded in us as a sign" (Jousse 1997:668). Thus, even when the Tutor is not with the Learner, s/he is still able to write the words; to re-play the mimeme in the Tutor's absence.

Another effective activity for building the Learners' self-esteem in the members is **Storytelling.** Learners sit together in trios, of whom one (L) must be literate. Learner A tells the story of an incident in his/her life, to Learners B and L. Learner B repeats the story orally to persons A and L. Learner A corrects or adds details until s/he is satisfied that his/her story has been heard and understood. L then writes down the story and reads it back to A and B. The written stories are read out to the whole class, and pinned up on the wall.

Storytelling:

- builds self-esteem in the Learner who has told his/her story to an attentive audience, and heard the story read out;

- encourages listening skills;

- helps the Learners get to know one another;

- helps Learners relate the spoken word to the written word, and become aware of the different codes and modes of expression.

In terms of Jousse's perceptions, what has been **played in** to the Learner in the story s/he is relating, is **played out** to his/her group members in the spoken word. These in turn are **played back** to him/her in both spoken and written form.

McNamee describes how storytelling and dramatics have become the core of a literacy programme in Chicago. The young people, who were poor scholars, suddenly started to learn, when they were encouraged to write and act their own plays, based on their own stories. In other words, their learning blossomed when they were allowed to use language in a meaningful way (McNamee 1990:288). The writing and acting of plays has also been used effectively with adult literacy Learners.

At this point, I examine Jousse's **Anthropology of Geste**, to help us understand the different forms of expression he identified, and how they develop. Jousse proposes that mimemes constitute the anthropos' knowledge. To communicate this knowledge, s/he re-plays it in one of **Four Codes or Styles of Ex-pression**, identified and explained by Jousse.

The anthropos ex-presses him/herself:

- through his/her hands and his body (corporeal-manual style);

- through his/her mouth (laryngo-buccal[24] style);

- in the written form (algebrised[25] style);

- in a rhythmic, balanced, formulaic mode which Jousse called 'Oral-Style'..

These styles develop as follows:

The anthropos is instinctively mimismic. He cannot resist playing out his mimemes gestually[26], or, with a drawing tool, in mimograms[27].

Just as the anthropos is a born mime, so s/he is a born drawer. His/her drawings are his/her writings. My grandchild of three, said: "Look. These pictures are the words". This creative curiosity in the anthropos enables him/her to become phonetically[28] and lingually miming[29] so that corporeal-manual language develops into laryngo-buccal language.

The anthropos is as curious to re-play the action and form of things, as s/he is to listen to and re-play the timbre of things. The auricular[30] mimemes s/he receives in his/her inner ear, are transposed onto the laryngo-buccal muscles, when s/he utters sounds or words. Thus we have oral expression which will become oral language.

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[24] Laryngo-buccal: associated with the larynx and cheeks, creating voiced sounds.
[25] Algebrised: a Joussean term meaning not 'actual' - standing in the place of something actual; requiring a code for interpretation. Another word for the 'written' form of expression.
[26] Gestually: through movement.
[27] Mimograms: expressions of meaning in a visual form eg. Drawings.
[28] Phonetically miming: re-playing sounds of the voice.
[29] Lingually miming: re-playing sounds of the tongue.
[30] Auricular: associated with the processes of hearing and listening.

I have described, so far, the development of two concrete modes of expression - corporeal-manual language, and laryngo-buccal language.

If these languages are instinctively learnt, how is written language learnt? The anthropos, said Jousse, is a born mime and a born drawer "gestually overflowing with mimemes, the [anthropos] cannot prevent himself from mimically projecting them onto the walls in the form of 'shadow play' gesticulations which he makes fight the one with the other" [my substitution] (Conolly 1996:I). As soon as s/he has pencil or charcoal close at hand s/he instinctively re-plays mimographically.

Instinctively the anthropos has always expressed him/herself mimographically in drawings and hieroglyphics; in patterns on walls and messages in beadwork, inter alia.

Writing is different from drawing, however, in that it has a codified structure. The connection has to be made between the sound and the shape. The Learners have to 'break' the code. Jousse said, "When faced with a page of print, graphic algebrism and living concretism are thrown into conflict" (Jousse 1997:101). Somehow the Learner - the concrete or 'actual' individual - has to integrate this structured, focused, written form of language with the way s/he usually expresses meaning with his/her whole body. It is not an instinctive process. S/He needs help to extend his/her perceptions and power of ex-pression, to include the literate code and mode. **Adult Learners experience great difficulty with ex-pressing themselves in a new code - Writing.**

The activity of writing whole sentences is meant to help the Learners understand that writing is just another mimographic expression. It also helps to allay their fears and build their confidence. In the class, Learners are assisted to write simple sentences about themselves, accompanied by drawings: 'My name is ....' 'I live in ...'. This approach is favoured, because the Learners are real and 'actual' beings, and will focus more easily on a new skill if they perceive it as expressing meaning about themselves.

They express themselves through their hands and their bodies, through their mouths, through a rhythmic, balanced formulaic mode **and in a written mode.**

No. 5 Literacy Group, Kwadabeka.

Learners have difficulty expressing themselves in the new mode-**Writing is a new code.**

No. 6 Literacy Group at Koffie Farm.

"Literacy is the ability to make and handle symbolic transformations of reality" (Bhola 1997:11).

45a

Another activity, for the more advanced Mother-Tongue Learners, is the compilation of Project Files, which are 'illustrated books' about some aspect of the Learners' lives (see Illustration No.22). This helps the Learners to organise information and express themselves in the written mode.

This activity also builds their self-esteem and improves their capacity to work alone. The Learners enjoy the experience of writing about themselves, and this lays the foundation for the next step, which is reading.

The Learners' need to read also challenges the literacy Tutor. Learners express a variety of needs: they want to learn to read the newspaper, their Bibles, the street names etc.

The common point of departure is to encourage them to read their own writing, therefore Learners first read the simple sentences which they have written about themselves. This helps them:

- to make the connection between meaning and writing;

- to realize that once they have 'broken the code' they can read anything they want to;

- to build their confidence.

Once the initial levels of skill and confidence have been established, Learners are introduced to their first reading book, e.g. *Fundani 1*. Such texts should contain sentences similar to those they have written about themselves. Such texts should introduce a few new words incrementally, which are relevant to the Learners, such as *isibongo* (surname), *sebenza* (work), and *eGoli* (Johannesburg). Reading of this kind will help the Learners make meaning of writing to meet their immediate literacy needs.

Words in isolation...

do not have meaning.
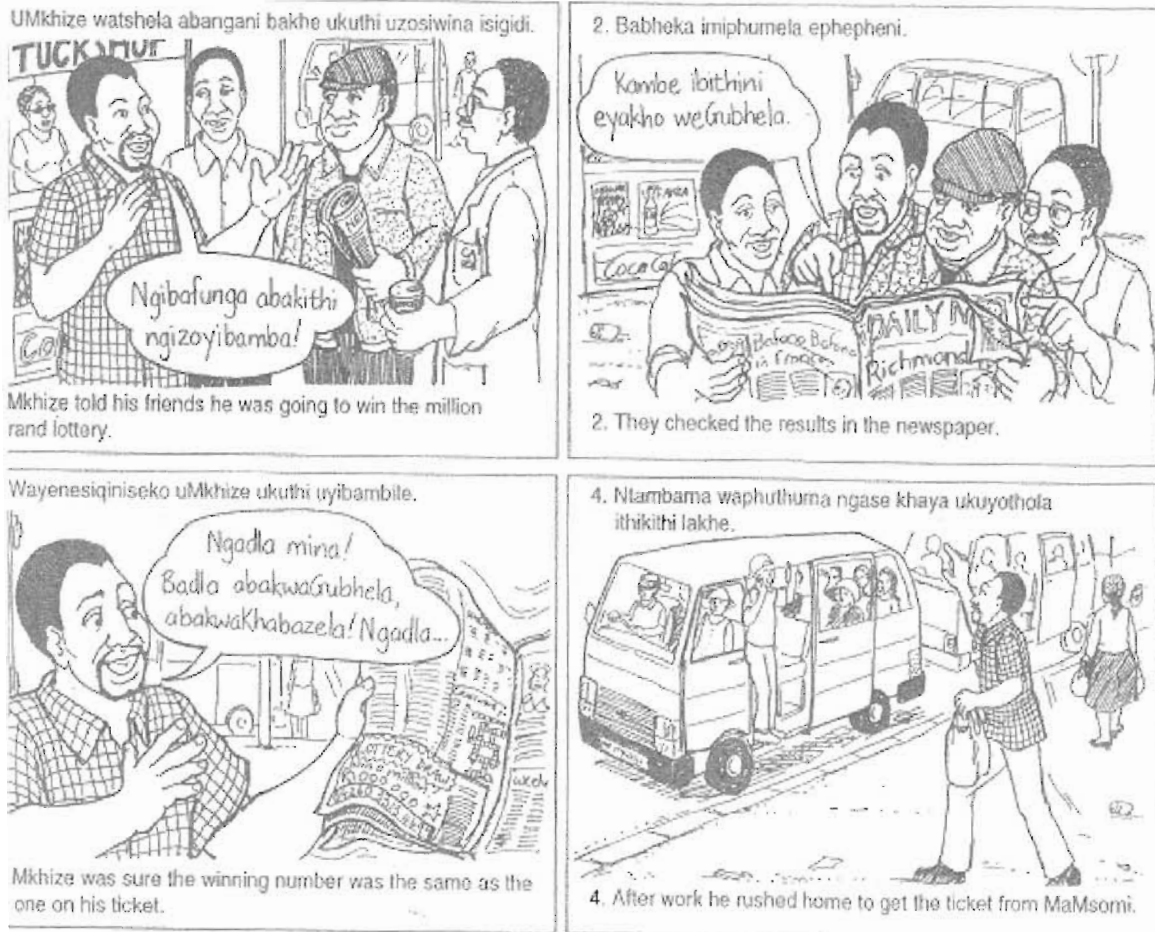
No. 7 Extract from weekly newspaper *Learn with Echo*.

This newspaper provides a regular source of relevant material In both written and graphic form (*Learn with Echo, Centre for Adult Education, Scottsville*).

Vygotsky notes that the key to helping someone learn a language, is to help them "make meaning" (Moll 1990:8). He explained that the focus should not be on the skill of reading, in isolation, but on making something meaningful out of it (see Illustration No.9). He commended those who adopted a 'whole language' approach. He suggested creating "social contexts in which [Learners] actively learn to use, try and manipulate language in the service of ... creating meaning" [my substitution] (ibid).

Jousse's perceptions also provide us with the insights that explain the learning processes required in such exercises. He refers to the "continuous mimismic interaction" with the world around us, which the anthropos uses in an attempt to make sense of the world. "We receive, register [makes sense of] and re-enact the new awareness. The anthropos will express in re-play [his understanding of] what he has received" [my substitutions] (Jousse 1997:670,676).

The Learners will feel that their needs are being met, if they quickly find that their lessons are helping them make sense of their real world. The Learner, for example, will not want to spend too much time on activities such as sounding out of syllables, even though it may be helpful in learning to read. The emphasis should be on reading whole words and sentences that have immediate relevance to life.

Perceptions about children's learning can be helpful, for there are aspects of learning that transcend the barriers of age. If we substitute 'the non-literate' for 'the child' in the following observation, the similarities are significant, particularly in the light of my earlier comments about the misperceptions about non-literate peoples' intelligences and capacities: like children, non-literate people are underestimated. Margaret Donaldson emphasizes that children have far greater reasoning powers than people imagine. They instinctively want to make sense of, and master their world. She reminds us that words in isolation do not have a meaning, and therefore children are constantly inferring and interpreting words that they hear or see. Her great concern is that a pre-school child who starts off being happy and busily occupied, often leaves school "with a bitter taste of defeat and ill-equipped for life" (Donaldson 1978:14).

She stresses that if those involved in children's learning would take into account their great need for *making sense* of everything, their learning experiences would be much happier.

Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy Learners, such as Mrs Masango, also leave their classes "with a bitter taste of defeat and ill-equipped for life" (ibid).

Maria Montesorri also recognises the need to integrate the Learners' learning and their life-worlds. Once again, what applies to children's learning can apply to adults.

Montessori believes that it is important to integrate home and school, to provide the children with one all-encompassing reality. When the children arrive at school, they busy themselves with wiping tables, polishing shoes, watering plants, etc. These 'domestic' activities, which serve to integrate home and school, also provide a concrete reality from which many lessons are launched (Polk Lillard 1972). For example, from filling the vases with water, the children learn about 'capacity'.

Jousse said, "it is in the concrete fact, once it has been experienced, that I perceive the general notion and grasp the abstraction" (Jousse 1925:24). It is not surprising, in the light of what Jousse and others have said about the anthropos' need to make meaning, that the Tutors at Pinetown Welfare Society find some of Paulo Freire's methods very effective:

Freire advocates the use of 'Key Word Learning' (see page 24). Such 'Key Words' are selected for their current interest and focus on topics of social importance to Learners. The 'Key Word' approach focuses the attention of Learners by allowing them to talk about a word that identifies an issue that is important to them. (see Illustration No. 8). **'Water'** would be such a word in a social context where potable water is in short supply. The group would discuss the water shortage, water storage, water purity and then would proceed in any direction that is important to the people at the time. In the process, new words would be introduced, or letters of the alphabet or syllables of words would be identified and learnt.

No. 8 Group of women discussing 'Child Care'.

The 'Key Word' approach
focuses the attention of the Learners
by allowing them to talk about a word
that identifies an issue
that is important to them.

This approach has the added advantage of focusing the attention of Learners who might be distracted by personal and domestic concerns. The approach focuses on the very issues that tend to distract their learning: "My husband insists that I must earn money, not just sit at classes"; "I am so worried about signing up for the new housing scheme that I can't concentrate"; "Sometimes we choose our own Key Words and the whole group talks about it". (Interviews: Appendix A)

A more recent form of Freire's literacy method which encompasses people's need to make meaning of their lives, has been designed by Archer and Cottingham.

They combine it with Participatory Rural Appraisal (P.R.A.), and call it *Reflect*. P.R.A. is a philosophy and set of practical methods for consulting with non-literate communities. In more recent times it has been re-named P.L.A. - Participatory Learning and Action. I have observed this approach in a two-day workshop on "Health" run by *The Child Survival Programme*, near Bergville, KwaZulu-Natal.

I was struck by the extent of language learning that was taking place, as community members tentatively shared their knowledge and grew in confidence as they saw their words written onto card, and illustrated, in simple maps, *chapati* diagrams[31] or matrixes. Archer and Cottingham believe that literacy programmes often become irrelevant or algebrosed, as Jousse would say, when written up in a primer. They have produced a sample programme in a manual, with a lot of very interesting ideas to try (Archer and Cottingham 1996).

When we examine the mimismic process as described by Jousse, we find that the impressions from the universe are 'played-in' and 're-played' through all the senses. Therefore it stands to reason that another way of keeping the Learner focused and energised, is to use a multi-sensory approach.

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[31] chapati diagrams = pie graphs. The technique, the process and the term were first used in development programmes in India.

'Number Rings' are useful in this context:

The game is played on the floor, where concentric circles have been drawn, to represent 'Units', 'Tens', and 'Hundreds'. Learners take turns to throw down a handful of pebbles, for counters, and then add up their score. This type of activity helps Learners :

- to conceptualize 'Units' 'Tens' and 'Hundreds';

- to relax as they deal with numeracy concepts in a play activity.

In the activity described above the pebbles are satisfying to the touch; they make a pleasant clatter as they fall and roll to a standstill, and the visual impact of the game reinforces the Learner's concept of numbers. The game involves the sense of touch, sight, sound, and also arouses the emotion of excitement.

Both Jousse and Montessori identify the value of learning through all the senses. Jousse emphasises that "there is a human composite which thinks with its entire body from its feet to its head (Jousse 1997:670). By virtue of mimism we **receive** impressions through our "instinctively miming body" (Jousse 1997:91), **register** them, "in the manner of a plastic, living and fixing film" (ibid) and **re-play** "mimically by means of gestes from our *whole body*" (ibid).

It is very interesting to look back in history, and find how many societies have played, and are still playing games with stones on the ground. I highlight this because I do not believe that one has to have a lot of expensive equipment in order to plan multi-sensory lessons for the Learners. The advantage of using indigenous material, is that the Learner is more likely to feel comfortable working with familiar materials, and may well show those at home what s/he has learned, teach it to others and continue to play at home.

Like Jousse, Montessori believed that it was vital for a Learner to have a multi-sensory stimulating environment, in order to learn.

In a Montessori school, for example, a child first experiences a triangle in a bold, three-dimensional wooden form, which s/he can look at, hold and finger; then in a smaller three-dimensional plastic form which s/he can still look at and hold, but not quite so easily.

At the appropriate moment of growth s/he is given a large two-dimensional shape which s/he traces and draws; thereafter, s/he is challenged to identify triangles in pictures and finally in the world around him/her.

The creative use of **all the senses** will address many of the Learners' difficulties, and particularly the one of **feeling fearful and threatened** by new learning. Once again we can draw on the experience of the child when exploring his/her environment.

A child will play for hours in a playpool, all his/her senses busy, watching the water swirl and pour, hearing it gurgle and splash, feeling its depth and currents, tasting its soapiness etc. Waterplay can be a time of great scientific discovery (see Illustration No.10)..

Jeannette Vos, (*The Learning Revolution* 1994), actively demonstrates her belief in the role of the senses in learning. In a workshop run for teachers, *Kids of the Future* (Hilton College 1997), she prepared her audience for her message appropriately. Before hearing the content of her message, the stage arrangement and manner of presentation alone illustrated her firm belief in employing the senses in learning.

There was music playing when we entered the auditorium, and the three tables on the stage were arranged with brightly coloured cloths, flowers and interesting looking items which, we discovered later, were her visual aids. At intervals during her talk, she asked us to turn to our neighbours and 'share' some information, or repeat something important she had said. She also had us singing the action song, *Father Abraham*.

She challenged us with the verse from scripture which reminded us that "unless you come as a little child ..." (Luke 18.17) which is, I think another way of warning against algebrosis.

At the end, she handed out posters with the following quotation: "Children can learn almost anything if they are dancing, tasting, hearing, seeing and feeling information."

If children can learn in this way, why should adults not also do so? Adults also learn and remember through all the senses. A chance meeting with an old friend will be barely recalled if its a distant 'hallo' across a crowded street. But if the meeting is a close encounter which is accompanied by the sound of the friend's voice, the feel of his embrace, the sight of his greying hair, and above all, the emotion induced by the news of his wife's illness, the incident will not be forgotten.

In the words of the Apostle John when he set out to proclaim his knowledge and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ:

What we have heard	What we have seen with our eyes
What we beheld	and our hands handled
Concerning the Word of Life...	That we proclaim to you

1 John 1.1

Multi-sensory learning can be used most effectively for adult literacy and numeracy, and has the added advantage of distracting Learner fears because of its physical and affective involvement. In the activity known as 'Community Mapping', the group draws a map of their community on the ground or on newsprint. Such activities are more effective if the participants have buttons, blocks, lids etc. which represent waterpoints, playgrounds, safe houses, etc. The members of the group walk around on the map, bending to draw or position a button. There is much discussion and often argument as they debate exactly where to position the school, or the size of the sportsfield.

Each point on the map is labeled – 'water tap', *shebeen'* etc. The exercise can also be a 'launching pad' for discussing a community problem such as child safety.

As a learning exercise, 'Community Mapping':

- develops Learners' spatial perceptions;

- encourages group co-operation;

- introduces new words;

- promotes community involvement.

Adults also learn through **psycho-physiological involvement or 'whole-being learning'**, such as Role-Play. Role-Play is an effective method of learning which employs all the senses and, in fact, the whole-being in the learning process. It is used for learning Lifeskills which impact indirectly but significantly on literacy.

In a Role-Play activity, the Learner engages in an imitation or simulation of a real life role such as that of an unemployed person going for an interview, or an Interviewer conducting the interview. It is a situation in which s/he can easily picture him/herself, although s/he may have some wrong perceptions. S/He wishes to understand the process better and have a command of the appropriate vocabulary, when it does occur. Group-members play both roles if possible.

The possible results of the activity are that the Learner's impressions change as s/he observes others playing the same role, and as s/he finds himself having to respond to the Interviewee/er. S/He learns new vocabulary for the occasion. S/He gains confidence in the role. The activity can serve to open up discussion on a variety of other important topics such as training, employment possibilities, and cultural differences.

It can also be followed by a lesson in punctuation, the completion of application forms, the writing of a letter of application/appointment or the writing of a curriculum vitae.

Whole-being learning
can be used most effectively
for adult literacy and numeracy
and has the added advantage
of lessening the Learner's anxiety
because of its physical and
affective involvement.
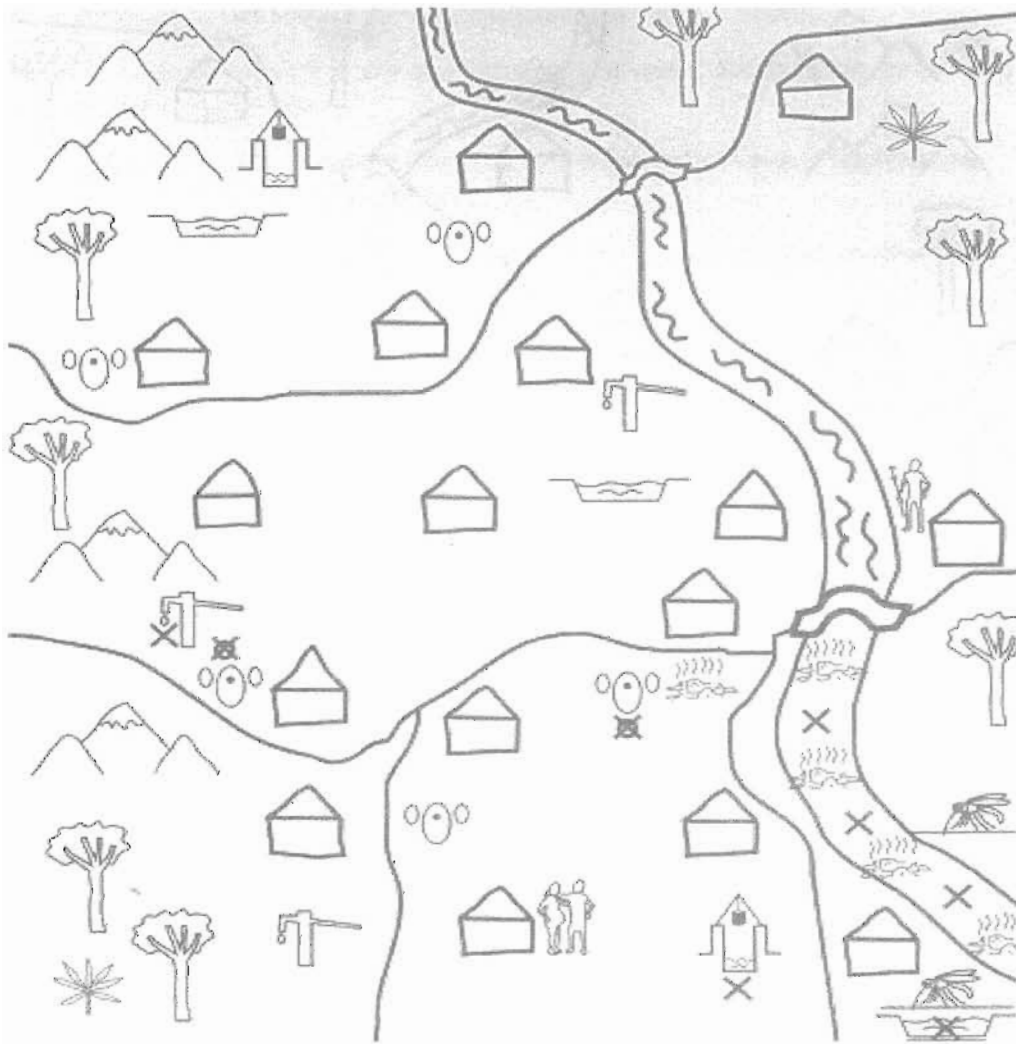
No. 9 Mapping Exercise.

In this exercise, Learners draw on the ground or on newsprint to evaluate and plan improvements to their community. (Archer and Cottingham 1996:120)

53a

Discussion Groups address **Conflict Situations in the Group and the Community,** and can be used to promote understanding of the role of writing and reading in recording and resolving issues. This implies that the Tutor must allow time for open discussion. Such activities make Learners aware of the effects of their behaviour, and offer them alternative ways to behave.

In addition, the Tutor provides a **'role-model'** for his/her Learners. They learn by following the example of the Tutor. While in one sense the whole universe is the Learner's Tutor, in another sense, the mimismic process renders the (human) Tutor an extremely significant person in the Learner's life.

Just as the Learner will re-play the Tutor's pronunciation, the shape of the Tutor's letters, and the spelling of the word, so, during the course of the year, the Learner will also absorb the attitudes and values of the Tutor. "The Learner is impressed, like soft fluid wax" and he will express in re-play what he has received (Jousse 1997:670,676). Jousse described the union between the pupil and the teacher as epitomized in the sacramental mimodrama of the followers of Jesus, "eating" and "drinking" the flesh and blood of their teacher, as they seek to know him and become like him. Jousse said that the Palestinian paysan exists for the "sole purpose of intussuscepting, through all his receptor organs ... knowledge from his...teacher" (Jousse 1997:425). Thus, if the Tutor (teacher) arrives late for class, or is often absent, the Learner (pupil) will do the same. The Learner will also be im-pressed with the manner in which the teacher deals with conflict and handles people with different political and religious views.

We find a description of a similarly mimismic process in Tim Lahaye's book, *Transformed Temperaments*. Lahaye explains how we automatically model ourselves on those who are closest to us and those whom we respect and admire.

Even if we do not particularly like the way our father speaks to our mother, it is difficult not to do the same thing when we ourselves are married. We would have to make a conscious effort to "re-script" ourselves, Lahaye said, in order not to mirror the behaviour of those closest to us (Lahaye 1971).

Since the multi-sensory activities that I am advocating in this section could also be called 'play activities', I wish at this point, to discuss the concept and role of 'play'.

Jousse paints a picture of the universe 'playing' the anthropos, and the anthropos 'playing' the universe. Although he is using the word, 'play' in a specifically mimismic way, I want to discuss it in a more general sense. I believe that Tutors need not only feel free to 'play' with their Learners, but to understand how important it is to do so.

We do not want the literacy Tutors to hold the same view as Mr Gradgrind, Charles Dickens' (fictional) teacher, who regarded 'play' as unproductive and even harmful: "Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else" (Dickens 1983:1).

At different times in history, societies have viewed 'play' in different lights. For example, *ludus* in Latin, from which is derived the French, *ludique,* and the Spanish, *ludico*, meant either 'amusement', 'game' or 'school'. Similarly in Greek, the word *schola* originally meant 'leisure', before it came to mean 'leisure time devoted to learning', and ultimately, 'school'. In these ancient societies, there was very little contrast between leisure and work.

This is why a definition of play is difficult, because, 'play' to some, is 'work' to others (see Illustration No.11). Three year-old Devon, when asked what his father did at work, replied "He plays wiv compooters."

Looking at the characteristics of play, may be more helpful than trying to find a definition. Ideas vary, but all writers seem to agree that:

- play gives pleasure;

- play actively involves the participant;

- play is an activity in which the outcome is not as important as the process.

The impressions 'play in', and the child 'plays out' his understanding

No. 10 Caleb, Devon and Tayla. Water Play.

No. 11 Devon. 'Play' to some, is 'work' to others.

This last characteristic is particularly important for the literacy Learners, who come to the programme with trepidation and feelings of inferiority. In a well-designed play-activity the emphasis is on the fun, not the success or failure of the players. The Tutors and I have been struck by the enthusiasm and unselfconscious energy Learners expend in a vocabulary game such as 'Fruit Salad'. As they shriek, and dash from one chair to another, when their fruit is called out, they are effectively learning words.

Thus it would appear that play, should be an integral part of any literacy programme because it provides an ideal medium for learning, in that:

- it accesses all the senses;

- it lessens the Learner's anxiety;

- it engages the 'whole being' in interaction with the universe in the Joussean sense.

'Whole-being' expression has a profound effect on **the learning capacities of non-literate adults.** I referred earlier to Marcel Jousse's explanation of the existence of four different modes of expression:

- through body and hands - Corporeal-Manual;

- through voice - Laryngo-Buccal;

- through Formulaic Oral-Style;

- through the Algebrised or Written mode.

Jousse's *Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm* (1997) demonstrates the development from the Corporeal-Manual Style to the Laryngo-Buccal, and from the Laryngo Buccal to the Written Style. In societies where there is an absence of writing, a universal formulaic Oral-Style makes its appearance in a wide range of oral traditions and behaviours.

Jousse observes that the bilateralised,[32] rhythmic nature of the human being manifests itself in rhythmical and balanced expression. As meaning is expressed, the words naturally fall into balanced and rhythmic formulas. These formulas aid learning and memory and account for the fact that non-literate societies have rich and extensive oral histories that have been handed down for centuries from generation to generation. Through **repetition** of the rhythm, a **pattern** develops; and thus we have a Formulaic style of expression which Jousse calls the Oral-Style. The style was, and is, mnemonic: ie. It aids memorization.

I quote from a Xhosa Praise Song about Kaiser Matanzima[33] produced by David Yali-Manisi, a modern day oral poet:

A Daliwonga

A Daliwonga

Yiyo leyo ke le nkumkani yabaThembu baseRhoda

Yiyo leyo ke le nganga yeentaba zikaMngqanga...

(Opland 1983:160)

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[32] Bilateralised = balanced

[33] Kaiser Matanzima: Paramount Chief of the Xhosa people.

The verbal reiterations in this poem, creating formulas, are also to be found in the same form in Manisi's other poems. This formulaic characteristic, Jousse says, explains the Homeric epics, (Jousse 1997:43-35,425-426,528-529), the epic stories of the *guzlars*, (Jousse 1997:31), the oral compositions of the Touareg (Jousse 1997:367-400), and many others.

Formulaic Oral-Style has particular significance for the Pinetown Welfare Society's Mother-Tongue Literacy Learners. Because most of the Learners who attend the Pinetown Welfare Society Literacy Programmes have grown up in a non-literate milieu, it is important that we understand the effects of this on the Learners. Much of the Learners' knowledge has been received through this formulaic Oral-Style medium, and therefore, their learning pathways are oral pathways. Although this is a difficulty when in a literate learning milieu, it is also a **strength, upon which their learning can be built.**

I want to examine **Rhythm and Balance** as component parts of Oral-Style expression before I examine the Formulaic Style itself. In this section I am going to consider:

- the innateness of rhythm and balance;

- the relationship between rhythm, balance and repetition.

- rhythm and balance in dance, music, chant and song

Balance and Rhythm are innate and universal. From the beginning of time, when God created the world with night and day, hot and cold, light and dark, the nature of the universe has been rhythmic.

This balanced rhythmic characteristic is reflected in the anthropos. Jousse believed that *everything* about man is rhythmic - his breathing, his sucking, his heartbeat, his waves of energy (see Illustration No.12).

He refers nostalgically to the rhythmic *cantilenas*, sung to him over his rocking cradle, and the rhythm of the children's games, from his childhood, still embedded in his fibres and muscles (Jousse 1925:xx).

Dryden and Vos also regard rhythm as deeply innate. They believe that rocking a baby promotes brain growth; it stimulates the part of the nervous system that controls the inner ear - balance and co-ordination - one of the first parts of the foetus to function in the womb. They quote experiments performed with premature infants whose co-ordination and development improved with fifteen minutes a day of rhythmic rubbing, rolling and stroking (Dryden and Vos 1994:231).

Margaret Donaldson observes a baby's spontaneous behaviour in the first few months and comments that a child's "reflexes are not to be thought of as isolated responses, for they are embedded in a wider pattern of spontaneous *rhythmic* activity" (Donaldson 1978:134).

The Learners on the literacy programme need no prompting at all to break spontaneously into song, which is always accompanied by rhythmic body movements.

Implicit in a discussion about **rhythm and balance**, is the concept of **repetition.** Montessori emphasizes the need for concentrated repetitive effort, which she believed feeds the basic psyche of the child.

Montessori observed that a child left to him/herself, will become totally absorbed in his/her task, and will repeat it again and again, until s/he is thoroughly satisfied.

Since God created the world with night and day, hot and cold, light and dark, the nature of the Universe has been balanced and rhythmic. This characteristic is reflected in the Anthropos - his breathing, his heartbeat, his waves of energy.

No. 12 Montessori pupils rhythmically manipulating beads.

No. 13 Caleb crawling.

Just as a man will naturally fight with alternating fists, so a child will know to crawl with alternating arms and legs.   59a

Page 60

A typical Montessori Centre sets out shelves with little trays of graded activities which they call 'work'. During my observation visit to the Montessori School in Harare, (12.9.97) I watched as each child chose the tray that appealed to him/her.

Not one chose anything that was too easy for him/her. They carefully sat down in their own 'work' area, and with great concentration, proceeded to scoop beans, or drop water with an eye-dropper, or thread beads, until an unseen signal said 'finished'. The signal came at a different time for each child; some continued to repeat the same exercise over and over for the whole period (see Illustration No.11).

This 'work' is rhythmic, repetitive, involves the senses, and seems to absorb the child until s/he has thoroughly mastered it. In the same vein, the Literacy Tutor, Linda, said that the Learners loved the Fundani literacy programme, because it allowed them to repeat and repeat the sentences until they had mastered them (Interview. Linda: Appendix A).

Rhythm informs movement and dance. People appear to derive much pleasure and satisfaction from dancing, jogging, swimming, gymnastics etc. I am aware that it is unlikely that the members of my aerobics class would perform the same exercises with the same energy and enthusiasm if there were no music-beat to urge them on. I think of 'all night' dance sessions and people choosing to work to music, which are all indications of a people's innate rhythmic nature.

In different cultures, the rhythm of the traditional dance and music has a different tempo.

An article on the temples of Angkor in Indo-China describe how the Asparas dancers, who were still performing in the19th Century court of Bankok, were "swaying like withes of willow", had "arms and fingers curving in seemingly impossible flexures, muscles of the body agitating like the fluttering of leaves in a soft breeze" (White 1982).

This word picture of eastern dance rhythm sounds very different from the vibrant, measured thudding that I enjoy at all the literacy classes in kwaZulu-Natal, but they share the common denominator of rhythm. Every culture, too, has a variety of different tempos of its own.

The point is, however, that there is rhythm and music in every society. It is an integral part of man's existence. It should be an integral part of every literacy programme.

Music is a natural manifestation of balanced, rhythmic expression. Studies on how music affects the brain waves indicate that it can be used to stimulate learning.

Webb and Webb in *Accelerated Learning with Music*, specify which tempos and types of music are best for slowing down the brain waves, and unlocking the key to better memory retention (Webb and Webb 1992). The educational series "Live Wire" sell compact discs of classical music for children. The compact disc of classical musical nursery rhymes, called *Majors for Minors*, comes with a booklet that suggests: "Play the music everyday." ... "Training through repetition can strengthen the brain like exercise strengthens a muscle" (Big Blue Music 1997). It is interesting to note that although the producers of *Majors for Minors* do not claim to have researched their choice of music, they believe that they have chosen the most beneficial type of music, because of the *familiarity* of the childhood tunes. The producers make no mention of the anthropological laws, which explain how rhythm is innate and how words become 'imbricated' through rhythm. However, they do note: "This (rhythm) clearly facilitates interaction as you relate to the music booklet, rock the baby, or hum a familiar tune, sing along and later encourage your child to participate ... with ... sounds, movements and ... words" (Big Blue Music 1997).

Jousse would have approved of Big Blue Music's choice. Their view corroborates Jousse's view why music exists. He explains that first that there is rhythmical, balanced movement.

As the timbre of the accompanying voice rises and falls, the formula creates a melody. Because of man's bi-lateralism, the words take on a rhythm, which through repetition also develops into a formula.

When one wishes to re-call the words, one starts with the melody and the rhythm which are stored in the body; once the movement begins, the words 'come' to one, and one is able to access the meaning as well. Thus it is that Jousse feels that "Music without voice is a dead and mummified thing" (Jousse 1997:223).

Before the written word, all history, geography, folklore etc. was recorded in oral **chants and songs**, intussuscepted in memory through rhythm, repetition, and other mnemonic devices.

Because it is so natural for a person to learn in this way, Jousse suggests that whole textbooks should be presented rhythmically. He maintains that, as we repeat something over and over, we make sense of it. This certainly corresponds with Montessori's observations about children repeating their work over and over until they have mastered it. It also corresponds with my experiences in English-Second-Language literacy classes, where learning has been deeply ingrained through song.

It is unfortunate that because of 'mindless' rote learning in certain schools, the tool of memorization through chant has been 'scrapped' today in many formal school programmes. Repetition with rhythm and balanced formula is a form of concrete learning, which is natural to the spontaneous child, and to the Oral-Style adult, who has grown up without the written word.

The learning of mathematics tables through chant, and the learning of historical facts through Praise Songs to the ancestors, were positively used in the past.

However I have found that there is a dearth of learning songs today that are suitable for adult Mother-Tongue Learners. This stems from the view that only children need to learn with their whole beings, while adults must be passive learners, content to sit at desks and only look and listen, and express their mimemes in algebrised forms.

I have found, too, that given the opportunity, the Learner enjoys inventing his/her own learning songs and activities. A book called *Poetry Themes and Activities* strongly recommends that both teachers and learners write their own poetry, to fit in with the theme being discussed. The book offers all sorts of reasons as to why this is a good idea.

In fact the author says, "rhyme and rhythm can imbue a work with essential energy and special qualities" (Parsons 1992:10). I would like to add another very compelling reason, which is that man is bi-lateralized and therefore deeply rhythmic, and learns best when he can express himself Corporeally-Manually. Parsons' themes such as "In the City" and ideas for lessons, can be easily adapted for South African adults.

I would like to see rhythm introduced at every possible opportunity, in any of the following forms: sayings, learning chants, poems, songs, action songs, dances, rhythmic movements, etc. It should be borne in mind that memorization takes place first and foremost through Corporeal-Manual ex-pression, aided by the rhythm that is stored in the psycho-physiological fibres of the being.

Carolyn Graham's *Jazz Chants* are tuneful, rhythmic, and repetitive (Graham 1988). These appeal to adults and are effective for the learning of English grammar and vocabulary. The Tutors on the Pinetown Welfare Society programme intend to adapt them for Mother-Tongue Learners. For example, Rumplestiltskin cries:

Straw into gold,	who told you that?
I can't spin,	straw into gold.
Tell him father,	tell him please,
I can't spin,	straw into gold.

And the Chorus goes:

If you can't,	You will die.
If you can't,	You will die.
You must try,	You must try.
If you can't,	You will die.

(Graham 1988)

Jousse explains that man is **naturally balanced, with a left and a right, a front and a back, a high and a low,** and this integral aspect of man is what makes his expressions not only rhythmic but **bi-lateral**.

We are, he said, "essentially balancing undulating beings" (Jousse 1997:xx). In addition, the anthropos is instinctively aware that what is visible on earth, is a sign of the invisible above.

Jousse showed how in the Palestinian tradition the twinned constructions of **the high and the low** reinforced this:

As a net which is cast into the sea,	and gathers in from every kind,
Thus will it be	at the consummation of the creation.

(Matthew 13:47/49)

Jousse points out that a young child will stretch his hands up, as if to create **height** and stretch his feet down as if to create **'low-ness'**. These same gestures are to be found in the worship liturgies of the Christian, the Moslem, and other religions. Instinctively, too, man measures himself in terms of his fitness for heaven or hell.

The balancing of **right and left sides** is the easiest to identify as we look at the anthropos walking, running, dancing and playing sport. Just as a man will naturally fight with alternating fists, so a child will know to crawl with alternating arms and legs. Our bodies are our tools, and we instinctively avoid fatigue by balancing our ex pressions.

In addition to having a right and left hand, and a right and left lung, it is generally accepted today that we have a right and left brain. *The Learning Revolution* shows a picture of the two sides of the brain linked by the *corpus callosum*. The left hemisphere, Vos says, emphasizes language, logic, numbers, sequence, words etc., while the right hemisphere emphasizes rhyme, rhythm, imagination, pictures and patterns (Dryden and Vos 1994:118).

Balance also operates from the **Front to Back/Back to Front.** This is a common movement in labour - forward/down; back/up - as in hoeing or chopping. It can also be seen as a child advances and then retreats. A game of 'Tug-o-War' or 'K.I.N.G. spells King' are playful mimodramas of this balanced gesture.

The account of the Creation in the Bible, which demonstrates the role of balance in the universe tells us of:

- the partitioning of the light and darkness on the 1st day, as a prelude to the creation of the sun and moon on the 4th day;

- the partitioning of the heavens and seas on the 2nd day, as a prelude to the creation of birds and fish on the 5th day;

- the partitioning of wet and dry on the 3rd day as a prelude to the creation of animals and man on the 6th day.

This balanced bi-lateral cosmos *im-presses* itself on the anthropos and is *ex-pressed* through the anthropos. A person who is physically disabled, is often without this balance.
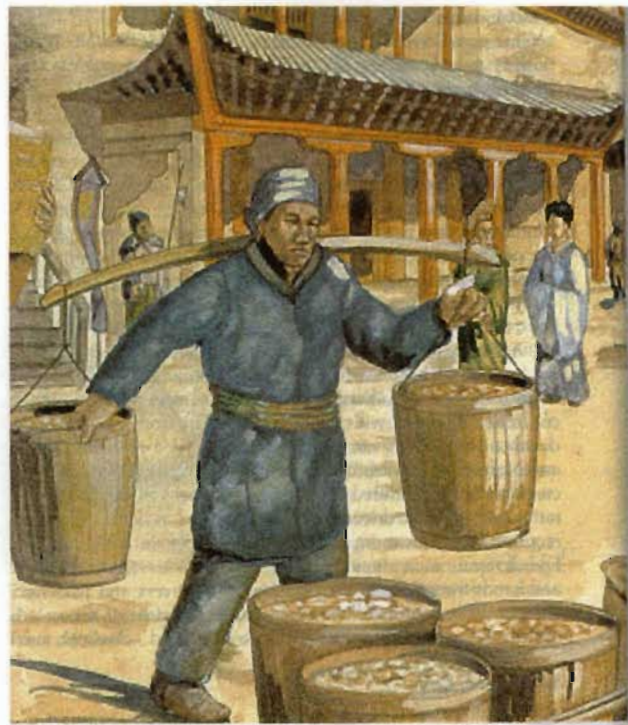
It is natural for man to balance himself: if he has parcels to carry, he carries one in each hand; if he has wood to carry, he balances it on his head so that there is an equal weight in front and at the back (see Illustration Nos. 14 and 15).
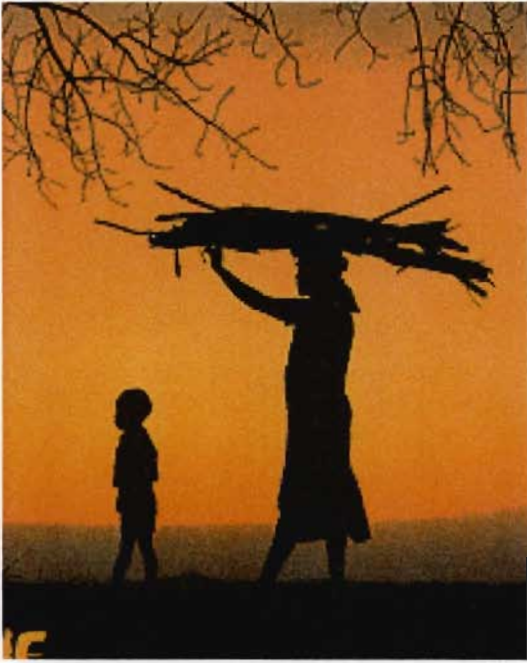
No. 14 Balancing Front and Back

It is natural for Man to balance himself

No. 15 Balancing Right and Left.

65a

"The paysan's sense of balance is manifest in the measured tread of his ponderous walk. His tasks are defined and weighty" (Jousse 1997:275). Jousse said the Oral-Style man is not rough, but direct; he is not slow, but pregnant with reality. His hands "seize what is real. The same fingers and palms which handle the earth have difficulty letting it go" (ibid : 276).

Jousse explained that because of the bilateral make up of the human body, the songs and games using bodies and hands, tend to be re-played through a 'two-by-two' (binary), or sometimes a 'three-by-three' (ternary) rhythmic balancing.

One of Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants illustrates this:

When I was one,	it wasn't much fun.
What did you do,	when you were two?
When I was two,	I learnt to skip.
What did you do,	when you were three?
When I was three,	it was a bore. Etc.

(Graham 1988)

This same balancing is to be found in the traditional Oral-Style chants or Propositional Gestes, which facilitated memorization:

There's a lady,	on the mountain,
Who she is,	I do not know,
All she wants,	is gold and silver,
All she wants,	is a nice young man...
Here's my black,	and here's my blue,
So open the gates,	and let me through!

(Two verses of an old children's singing game, passed on by oral tradition. Quoted by Opie and Opie 1982:1).

We all seek balance in our environment: "we crave external balance, which accords with our internal balance" (Jousse 1997:275). Although Jousse is particularly focusing us on bi-lateralism in the Learner and the learning, the notion that we crave external balance, which accords with our internal balance, reminds me that each literacy lesson needs to be balanced.

For instance the programme should provide the Learner with a balanced 'diet' of writing, reading, numeracy and lifeskills, presented in such a variety of ways as to appeal to different kinds of people and to exercise fully, each person's bi-lateralized body, brain, and spirituality.

The most carefully balanced learning programmes I have found in any written form, are those of Carolyn Chapman, in her book, *If the shoe fits*. She bases her lessons on Howard Gardner's theory that man has 'seven intelligences' which are:

- Verbal /Linguistic,

- Musical /Rhythmic,

- Logical /Mathematical,

- Visual /Spatial,

- Bodily /Kinesthetic,

- Interpersonal

- Intrapersonal.

Some people, Chapman says, are more Verbal /Linguistic, other people are more Musical /Rhythmic etc. (Chapman 1993). Every lesson-plan targets one particular intelligence, and she includes a plan for Thinking skill and Social skill in each session.

A lesson she called 'Mac-a-Lena' was planned as follows:

- Content: Parts of the Body.

- Activity: Action Song - Mac-a-Lena.

- Thinking Skills: Sequencing, following directions.

- Social Skills: Accepting Self and Others.

- Intelligence: Musical /Rhythmic.

Another simple way of achieving a balanced programme, is to use Jeannette Vos' suggestion for what she called her 4-pronged curriculum. She said when anyone learns they should be building at four levels:

- Self Esteem,

- Lifeskills,

- Learning how to learn,

- Basic Academic, Physical and Artistic Abilities. (Dryden and Vos 1994:ch2).

The Learners in the Pinetown Welfare Society programme like to have a balanced format for their sessions, too. They always start and end with singing, and a prayer. The signing of the register has become an important ritual and learning tool, as they learn to write the date, the time, and to sign their names. Regular activities such as sharing of news, dividing into 'levels' and checking of homework, make them feel secure.

The Graduation Function at the end of the year is a highlight, especially if it is slow moving and ceremonial. The members do not like this to be a rushed algebrised affair.

Many writers have attempted to design learning programmes that provide a balance in one way or another. This is about contextual balance. I return now to Jousse's insights into the nature of the Learner: his Mimism and his Oral-Style. These insights provide us with understanding of **oral learning pathways** which comprise **rhythm, balance and therefore formula.**

Although there is little evidence of oral-style in literate societies, it is still possible to observe the **Oral-Style** functioning in the present day in non-literate societies.

Jousse felt very anxious about 'preserving' and studying Oral-Style recitations, since they are not only intricate rhythmic schema, but each propositional geste is an embodiment of the history, the thinking, the feeling of those particular people. He, along with Hampate Amadou Ba, felt concerned, that "With the death of every old man in Africa, a library disappears" (Jousse 1925:135).

I must make it clear that the Oral-Style formula was, and is, in some societies, an extremely exacting framework for recording and passing on knowledge. Amongst the Ashanti tribe of West Africa there is a caste of professional historians who "relate the noble deeds of kings .... which they sing to special melodies" (Jousse 1925:173). Each reciter has a certain number of pupils, to whom he teaches the recitations.

"Any danger of mutilation or corruption is precluded by the fact that, once admitted into the caste, the (reciter) will be punished by death for the slightest mistake, either in text or notation" (ibid).

Another example of the accuracy of Oral-Style transfer of tradition is found in the Old Testament. After he had given Moses the Ten Commandments, *written* on stone, the Lord told Moses to teach the Children of Israel the Law: "put it on their *lips* ... it shall not be forgotten by the *mouths* of their sons" (Deuteronomy 31.19-21).

Even though the written word was in use at that time, The Lord wanted his Law passed on orally, so that it would be remembered in the living fibres of all the faithful reciters.

The Oral-Style enables improvised composition of vast amounts of text. The *guslars*, who are non-literate, itinerant reciters among the Southern Slavs, are said to know between 30 000 and 100 000 rhythmic schemas. Jousse explained that the reciters learn with their whole bodies. They "spread the effort over all activities of the body and mind, pressing into service the muscles of the whole organism" (Jousse 1925:133).

In traditional Oral-Style, the patterns of the Propositional Geste take on different forms in different languages; but very common mnemotechnical devices are alliteration, assonance, the use of proverbs, riddles, and picturesque phrases like 'rosy-tinted dawn', 'brave-hearted warrior'. All have mimism, bi-lateralism, rhythm and repetition lying at their heart.

"Any reciter from an ethnic oral-style milieu is a supreme master of a vast mnemonic treasure of formulas, which he has said and re-said daily and rhythmo-melodically since his earliest childhood" (Jousse 1997:385). Rhythmo-melodisers are improvisers, who mix and match from their treasure store of formulas. Jousse describes Jesus as the supreme reciter who was able to take pearls from the old tradition, and thread them like beads in a necklace amongst the new.

I want to emphasize that although in a literate milieu we appreciate some of these forms for their aesthetic value, their real *raison d'etre* consists in their function as memory aids. These Oral-Style forms were developed to help people learn and remember facts - names of warriors and battles, characteristics of great leaders, nautical information, important events etc.

Formulism appears in **the literate milieu** in a number of guises: "We could say that formulas exist from the moment that an individual plays a geste which will be understood by another individual within the context of a social milieu" (Jousse 1997:656).

Sign Language for the deaf is a formula. There is a formula for behaviour at parties. Religious rituals are performed formulaically. Even greetings are formulas, which tells us that the best way for the literacy Learners to master their salutations in English, is to repeat them again and again, at every class.

I am going to look specifically at **formulas in proverbs, rhymes, dances and games.**

Even in a literate milieu all of us have tucked in our memory, certain **proverbs** that we learnt orally in our childhood: 'A stitch in time saves nine.' ... 'A rolling stone gathers no moss.' My German friend maintains that the following proverb, has deeply affected his values:

Geld veloren	*Nichts verloren*
Ehre verloren	*Viel verloren*
Gott verloren	*Alles verloren*

which translates to:

Gold lost	Nothing lost
Honour lost	Much lost
God lost	All lost.

Why is it that we remember these so well? **Because they are rhythmic, balanced, repetitive and formulaic.**

Nursery **rhymes, songs, poems**, take on a form, through having been repeated over and over.

Jack be nimble	Jack be quick
Jack jump over	the candlestick.

goes the skipping song.

We have all experienced the young child's capacity for 'monotonous' repetition. My grandchild of three, will risk banishment from the table, rather than give up the satisfaction of repeating over and over again, a fascinating new phrase: "Mawee Mawee quite contwawee. Mawee Mawee quite contwawee ..." (Mary, Mary, quite contrary ...). This will be rolled around the tongue, uttered in high and low tones, altered to make new sounds. For him, it is a satisfying learning experience. Through rhythm and repetition the phrase or 'Propositional Geste' has become a formula.

Rules are often presented formulaically. 'I before E except after C'. This spelling rule formula has been deeply embedded in my memory, because of being rhythmically repeated during my school years.

Children in Kwazulu Natal and children in Lancashire playing the identical orally-transmitted singing game.

No. 16 Children in Kwazulu Natal singing "Who stole the cookies?"

Who Stole the Cookies from the Cookie Jar?
Who me?   **Yes you!**
Couldn't be!   **Then who?**

No. 17 Children in Lancashire singing "Who stole the cookies?"
(Opie and Opie 1979:448)

Oral-Style formulae develop from rhythm and repetition.
They help people remember and learn.   72a

A Tutor reported that the Learners liked the Fundani series because it taught them to chant: **"ay, ee, ih, oh, ewe"** just like their children do at school (Interview: Linda: Appendix A).

People have learnt to count by way of counting rhymes. The rhythm and repetition become a formula:

AMABHANISI AMAHLANU (Five buns)

Amabhanisi amahlanu	Five sweet buns
Anoshukela ngaphezulu	With sugar on top
Ngadla laba linye kwasala abamane	I eat one and I'm left with Four.
Amabhanisi amane	Four sweet buns
Anoshukela ngaphezulu	With sugar on top
Ngadla laba linye kwasala amathathu	I eat one and I'm left with Three.
Amabhanisi amathathu	Three sweet buns
Anoshukela ngaphezulu	With sugar on top
Ngadla laba linye kwasala amabili	I eat one and I'm left with Two.
Amabhanisi amabili	Two sweet buns
Anoshukela ngaphezulu	With sugar on top
Ngadla laba linye kwasala laba linye	I eat one and I'm left with One.
Amabhanisi elilodwai	One sweet bun
Anoshukela ngaphezulu	With sugar on top
Ngadla laba linye kwangasala lutho!	I eat one and I'm left with None!

There is rhythm and dance in every society.

No. 18 Stone Relief in the Temple of Angkor.

No. 19 Gumboot dancers from Mariannhill, Pinetown.

They remember in the very fibres of their being.

Laban makes us aware of this tendency to be formulaic, in learning **dance and movements** (see Illustration Nos. 18 and 19). Some dance and movement teachers teach one 'motif' at a time, where a 'motif' is the movement equivalent of a verbal formula. Each motif is an easily memorisable length. A series of motifs quickly make a sequence and a series of sequences constitute a dance. Often the motifs are repeated. After four or five different motifs, the whole pattern of four or five, will be repeated 'en bloc'. It is very similar to learning a song: as it is repeated, it takes on a shape in our minds. As we perform it repeatedly, we learn it. After a while, we can perform the dance or sing the song almost without thinking. Formulaic construction aids memory and learning (Laban 1990).

Jousse adds an interesting aspect to this process. He maintains that understanding arises out of memorising: **"We memorize in order to comprehend"** (Jousse 1997:665). As we repeat something over and over, we understand it, and it becomes real.

All the singing **games** to which I referred in the section on 'Play', have taken on a very distinct form, through having been repeated in the playground day after day: 'Ring-a-Ring-of-Roses', 'Oranges and Lemons', 'I saw three ships come sailing by', are but a few of these.

The ball game, 'Patterns' which I played with the Learners in the KwaDabeka Programme when I collected the information for this dissertation, was a soothing, rhythmical exercise. The Tutors were surprised that even the shy Learners participated so well (Interviews with all Learners: Appendix A). Tutors have used the game on a number of occasions since then.

Because the anthropos has a tendency to favour formulaic construction, formulaic games which assist the Learner to make links, and create patterns, have appeal. *400 Group Games and Activities for Teaching Maths* gives us a number of ideas from which to work. For example: Sets and Subsets. In these games the Learners work in groups with old newspapers.

First they have to find as many sets of things as they can, such as furniture, cars, or food. Once they have achieved this, they make subsets of the furniture, dividing it into bedroom furniture, kitchen furniture, bathroom furniture etc. The exercise can be used for learning mathematics.

The Learners work out how much it would cost to equip a kitchen; or the exercise could be used for learning a language - pictures are cut out and labelled, and a story created around the pictures (DeRoche and Bogenschild 1969).

Certain board games, where the Learners rhythmically take turns to throw the dice and play, seem to be popular. One has to be careful not to allow a game like 'Snakes and Ladders', for example, to continue too long, however, as it is sedentary, and may not have direct relevance to the Learners' lives. A game I would like to try and adapt for Africa is one called 'The Community Game', which was designed for Indonesia. It represents everyday situations, and aims to give players a fuller understanding of solidarity (UNESCO 1980: Appendix 2).

Whenever the anthropos ex-presses himself rhythmically, bilaterally and repetitively, a pattern or formula is created. Jousse said: "Man is, indeed, by nature 'mnemotechnical', because he is intelligent. *Homer faber quia sapiens.* He creates stable, manageable frameworks (formulas) whereby to preserve, in living form, and to transmit to his descendants, his past experiences" (Jousse 1925:183).

The mnemonic tools may be mimic gestures, signs or words which by virtue of rhythmic repetition, have taken on a *form*. These patterns or forms exist to help us, **remember, learn and understand.**

I began this section by talking about the difficulties of having **Oral-Style Pathways**. Having considered all the aspects of the Oral-Style it becomes clear that there are many openings through which to enter these pathways. I would like to suggest that **Oral-Style pathways are in fact assets**, which provide a wide range of opportunities to improve adult literacy learning, by making the teaching more effective and the learning easier.

Oral-Style learning pathways are strengths
upon which new learning can be founded.
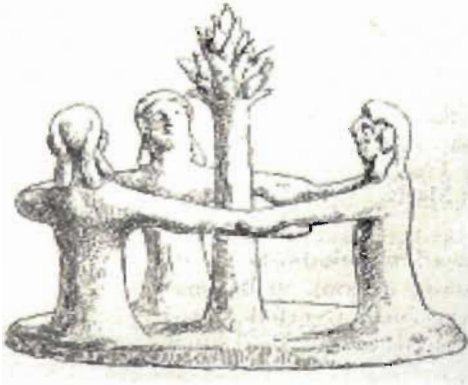
No. 20 Two instances of "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush."
Ancient pottery found in Cyprus and 15th Century French Peasants dancing
around a living maypole (Opie and Opie 1970:290).

No. 21 Learners dancing at a Graduation Ceremony.

Conclusion

My introductory pages touched upon the sense of bewilderment overshadowing the life of Mrs Masango, after leaving the familiar surrounds of her rural non-literate family home and encountering the strange signs and symbols of a literate milieu. The magnitude of the ongoing translocation of rural dwellers to the towns might be expected to uncover a mass of people similarly disoriented; and similarly in need of help, to 'break the code' of the literate geste. The form in which this help comes, however, appears to be largely ineffective: World Bank statistics portray a dismal picture of failure in Adult Literacy Programmes, and our experience at the Pinetown Welfare Society, with Mother-Tongue Learners, causes us to ask, seriously: "What does work?"

In this study, I have examined the Learners and the programme at the Pinetown Welfare Society, gaining an understanding of causes of Learner problems. I have highlighted commonly held perceptions of literacy and non-literacy, which in themselves cause hardships for the Learners. I applied insights from Marcel Jousse to these perceptions, and applied theories from Jousse and others, to the options for improvement to the programme. The options for improvement include learning activities that are aimed at addressing the problems, through the use of insights gained from Marcel Jousse and other theorists.

There are, broadly speaking, two concepts from Marcel Jousse which are particularly helpful in our inquiry:

•**Learning is most effective when it is related to what is 'real' in the Learners' experience;**

•**Non literate adults have well-developed Oral-Style learning pathways, which facilitate learning once they are accessed.**

These concepts give us very clear pointers as to what will work, on an adult Mother-Tongue Literacy programme:

a) Learning through what is 'real' and relevant will include exercises such as:

• talking about themselves

• ticking the register against their name;

• writing about themselves;

• reading what they have written;

• reading whole sentences;

• learning words that are important to them;

• drawing from prior experience;

• reading stories about familiar things;

• helping them achieve their own literacy goals;

• learning through all the senses:

• use of visual aids;

• role plays;

•feeling and touching actual things instead of just talking about them;

•going for walks to decipher road names and shop signs;

•going on outings to the library, the printers, the autoteller machine etc.

b) Learning through Oral-Style Pathways will include:

learning in balanced, rhythmic formulas, such as rhymes, proverbs, action songs, movement routines;

c) Learning through a combination of a) and b):

•rhythmic games;

•All kinds of play activities, using hands, bodies, and voices.

Ideas for further research

Although my explorations into the theories of Marcel Jousse have provided some clear pointers for improved Mother-Tongue Literacy Learning, I am aware of having only scratched the surface. The areas I would recommend for further scrutiny and action include:

- how theories of Marcel Jousse can be further applied in the Adult Literacy context;

- a definition of Literacy through the application of the theories of Marcel Jousse;

- how the Oral-Style learning needs identified by Marcel Jousse can be further accommodated by the introduction of rhymes, rhythmic verses etc.;

- a critical evaluation of the Literacy Programme at Pinetown Welfare Society;

- the development of material both written and recorded, for Mother-Tongue Literacy Learning, e.g. audio-taped rhymes and handbooks for the learning of the Alphabet, Grammar rules, Vowel sounds, Spelling exceptions etc.;

- the collection of traditional stories, songs, riddles, and proverbs that could provide the familiar 'pathways' for these learning activities.

It must also be said that the insights with which Marcel Jousse furnishes us, apply not only to the Oral-Style Learner, but to the entire anthropos. The Anthropological Law of Geste and Rhythm may be applied to anyone, at any time. We are all 'see-sawing' on the Orality-Literacy continuum. Some of our pursuits take us in one direction and some take us in another.

We are indebted to Marcel Jousse for his understanding of the role of Oral Style formulaic expression in Memory and Learning in non-literate societies. These insights will enable us to design improved Adult Mother-Tongue Literacy Programmes.

In improving the Literacy Programmes we will be making learning easier for the Mrs. Masangos of this world.

Umshado

Khule kakhulu
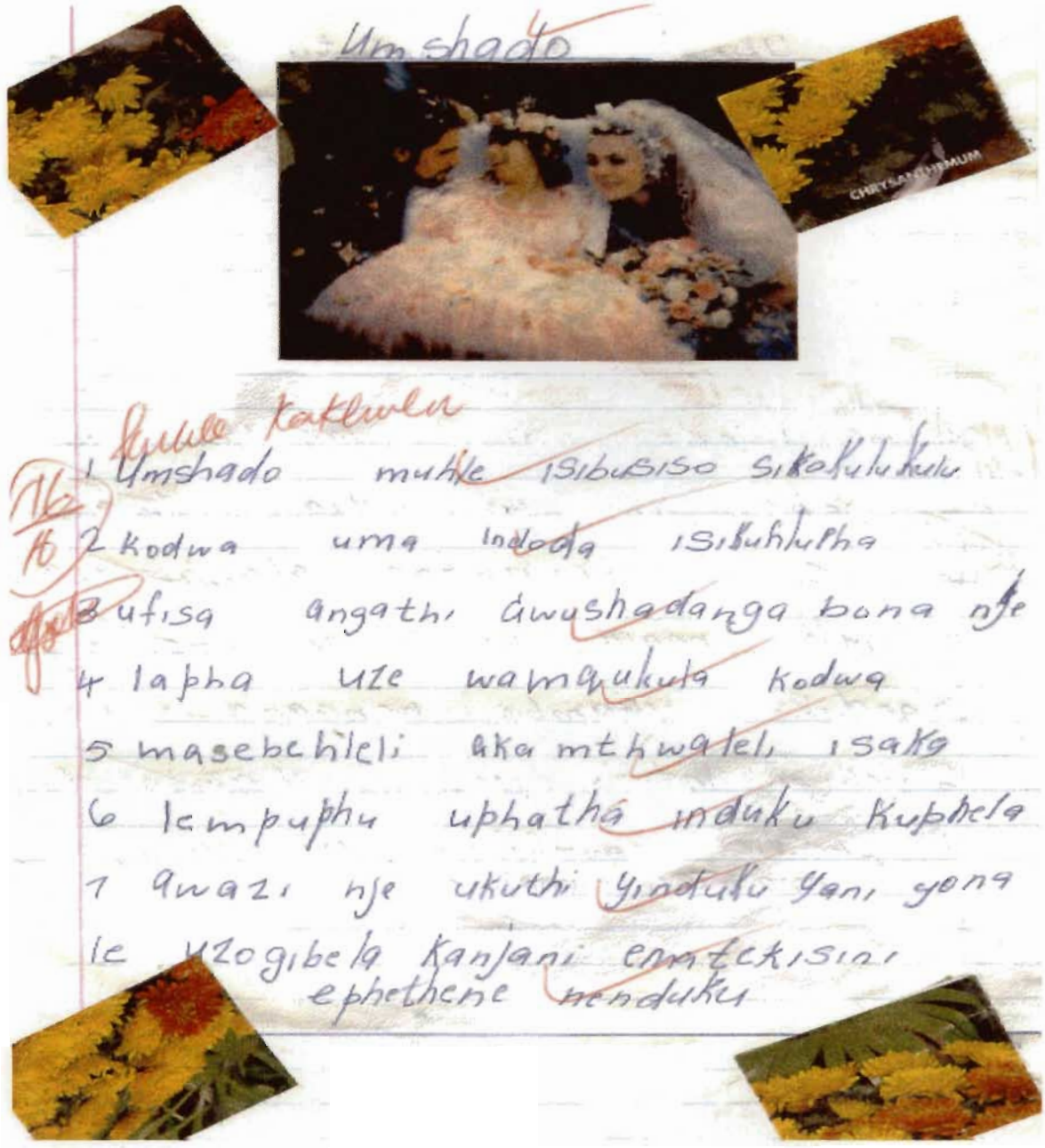
1 Umshado muhle isibusiso sikakulukulu
2 kodwa uma indoda isibuhluhla
3 ufisa angathi awushadanga bona nje
4 lapha uze wamqukula kodwa
5 masebehileli aka mthwalel isako
6 lempuphu uphatha induku kuphela
7 awazi nje ukuthi yindulu yani yona
le uzogibela kanjani enmtekisini
ephethene nenduku

No. 22 Page from Project File of a successful Learner.

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Appendix A

Interviews.

Interviews were conducted with Learners as follows:

24 June 1997, 11:00 at Umhlabunzima, KwaDabeka.

Jabulisile Zaca	Noncebo Ntloko
Lucky Nojiyeza	Patricia Mhlungu
Maureen Kunene	Ruth Mkhize
Nokulunga Dungelo	

1st July 1997, 11:00 at Umhlabunzima, KwaDabeka.

Goodness Gaqela	Nonceba Ntloko
Jabulisile Zaca	Patricia Mhlungu
Nokulunga Dungela	Ruth Mkhize

Discussions with Tutors take place every Friday throughout the year. Specific discussions for Research purposes with Mother-Tongue Tutors took place as follows:

Linda Zondi	05.12.97
Linda Zondi	12.12.97
Jane Ngobeni	13.1.98
Jane Ngobeni	23.1.98

Lessons observed with discussion around Lesson Plans took place as follows:

Linda Zondi	12.9.97
Jane Ngobeni	26.11.97

Appendix B

Learner Profile and Needs Analysis Display Board.

1) Data displayed on The Wheel

The reasons why the members had not completed their schooling, and reasons why they join and leave literacy classes included:

•My name is Lucky Nojiyeza. I leave at Mhlabunzina. I born at Ndwedwe. I joiner literacy classes because I need some knowledge and communication to the World. I left school because I had eight brothers and sisters.

•May num Nokulunga Dungelo. I was bon Tsolo. I leave school becos. 1. I was suffering from eyes. 2. Becos of having ancestos. 3. I quickly get married. I lik litris b cos I want to rid and rait Inglish. I need numbers more than Inglish. Learners leave b cos they a laz.

•Nonceso Ntloko. Reasons why I didn't complete my schooling? My reason is that when I am at school I've got a problem of sickness. Then I left school because of eyes. The second one is that when I'm coming to complete my schooling after sicking my parents have got the shortage of money. I didn't complete my schooling because I've got a problem of pregnancy then I left school.

•My name is Goodness. I was grew in Donnybrook. I join litricy because it help me to understand English. I like to read here because I want to know the perfect English as my mother's language. The people run away because of job opportunities. Some, they have no money to pay. I suggest the increasing of subjects. The availability of books. The provision of cakes.

•My name is Jabulisile Zala. I join litricy to be important to another human. Level 4, She is not straight teacher and she is not enough time thats why many people to not attend this school.

2)Data displayed on the Pipe and Ball-bearing Course

Aspects of the current programme which the Learners found discouraging (transcribed by the Tutors):

• I find I cannot concentrate on one thing for too long.

• I am so worried about signing up for the new housing scheme, that I can't concentrate.

• I get discouraged because I seem to progress so slowly.

• Our Community Meeting was disrupted. The invitation to join Literacy Class did not go out.

• The Civic leaders said we could not use the hall because they needed it for civic business.

• I think I must leave the class because my toddler gets so restless.

• My husband insists that I must earn money - not just sit at classes.

• I find that after the holidays I have forgotten so much.

• Some people in the group dislike others and there is often fighting.

•I get bored when the tutor teaches us out of the manual too much.

•Some tutors are leaving because their funding has come to an end.

•Some of my friends are jealous and love to criticize me.

Aspects of the current programme which the learners found encouraging:

•The tutors give us lots of variety-action verses, number games, debates…..

•Our tutors are helping us fill in our housing forms and explaining about rates.

•The tutors are teaching us songs which help us remember .

•We have made posters to advertise literacy and *we* are recruiting members.

•We have decided to start paying for our classes.

•We are doing a survey to see if a food stall is a feasible project.

•We have been given a box of toys to keep the children happy.

•We have learnt some games which build understanding in the group.

Appendix C

Examples of Standard Placement Tests

used for Mother-Tongue Learners.

(issued by The English Resource Unit, Durban

at a Training Workshop for Tutors in 1996)

MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE LEARNER ASSESSMENT TOOL

Name of Candidate: _ANNASTASIA   DLAMINI_

Date of Assessment: _March 1997_

Address or Work Section of Candidate: _1017 Sub 5_
P. O. Clernaville
_3602_

Level of Schooling: _Never been at school_

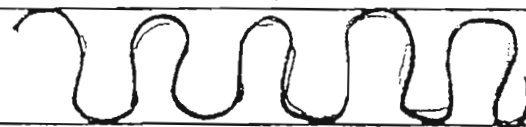Date when last at School: _—_

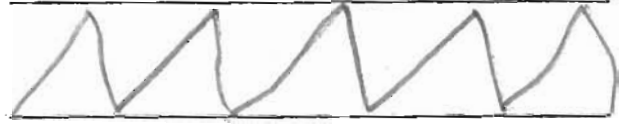Date of Birth: _1948 - 04 - 10_

Name of Assessor: _Jane Ngobeni_

Writing

W1

W2.

The learner writes his or her name.

Annastasia

W3.

The learner writes the date.

4 march

R E A D I N G

Boxer

Surf

Glen

Go