October 6, 1982

Dear Mr. Manasa:

The Washington Education Project was recently brought to my attention, and I wanted to express my support and encouragement for your efforts to help solve this nation's illiteracy problem.

The idea behind this effort is an excellent one, since it provides remedial educational assistance to many low-income students and individuals who might otherwise never receive such training. In addition, it gives many college students the opportunity to expand their horizons by putting their own knowledge to a practical use in helping others. Most importantly, as an initiative of the private sector it offers an innovative and cost-effective approach to improving the overall educational skills of our citizens without the necessity of Federal involvement.

I congratulate you on your earlier efforts with the model program in Miami and wish you continued success with the Washington Education Project.

Sincerely,

Mr. Norman Manasa
Washington Education Project
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 13, 1982

MEMORANDUM TO JAMES CICCONI

FROM: RALPH STANLEY

SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Norman Manasa -- Washington Education Project

Attached is a copy of the letter from the President sent to Mr. Norman Manasa of the Washington Education Project at your suggestion. I have retained the materials on this matter should any further suggestions for White House involvement arise.

cc: Joanna Bistany
B. Oglesby
J. Moorhead
Maxine Walker

AA

When you call Norman Manasa back, you can discuss this letter (which went on Oct 6)

JC

September 8, 1982
(202) 547-3011

Dear Aileen,

The article I mentioned is on Page 23. Will call next week.

all is well.

Aileen Anderson
The White House

TRANSFER SHEET

RONALD W. REAGAN LIBRARY

COLLECTION: White House Staff and Office Files
Cicconi, James W.: Files

ACC. NO.: A 89-03

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AUDIOVISUAL COLLECTION __X__ BOOK COLLECTION _____ MUSEUM COLLECTION _____
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DESCRIPTION:

PRESSTIME, SEPTEMBER 1982

[CONTAINS ONE Article relevant to the file folder, which I copied for the folder]

SERIES	BOX NO.
SERIES II: SUBJECT FILE	14
FILE FOLDER TITLE: WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT – NORMAN MANASA (3)	
TRANSFERRED BY: KELLY D. BARTOW	DATE OF TRANSFER: 6/13/01

How to help stamp out illiteracy? Read on!

By Norman Manasa

The answer to the nation's massive illiteracy problem lies within the colleges and universities of America. It is not because they know something special but because they *have* something special—10 million undergraduates who make excellent tutors when provided a sensible structure within which to work.

Norman Manasa

The Washington Education Project is working to develop projects at colleges across the country that will register undergraduates in 3-credit elective courses and send them into community agencies to teach reading, writing and mathematics to the illiterate poor. This national project is based on a model program that ran at the University of Miami from 1969-73, using more than 1,000 undergraduates.

I founded the Miami project in 1969 and started The Washington Education Project in 1977. Like the Miami model, the Washington project is designed to improve the humanities training of undergraduates by providing experience in the community that will supplement their classroom instruction. This, of course, is nothing new. A mix of experience and theory has been considered the highest form of learning in Western culture since the time of Galileo.

The Miami project taught people in jails, inner-city schools, migrant camps and institutions for the emotionally disturbed to read, write and do simple mathematics. It was a remarkably adaptable program that fit into almost any community agency. The undergraduates did tutoring (rather than painting the houses of poor people or throwing Christmas parties for orphans) since tutoring transfers to the illiterate poor the power to create wealth in the technological age. And *that* is what these people need.

From a list provided at registration, the undergraduates chose the community agency in which they wanted to work for the semester. They then registered in a pass/fail elective course that already had been matched with that particular agency. The course might be in economics, sociology, educational psychology, management or in another university department.

The undergraduates were required to tutor six hours per week for the semester on a regular schedule, signing in and out for each session. Academic credit, of course, guaranteed their attendance. They also were required to meet once each week in a seminar with their monitoring professor where their experience in the community was explained in light of the discipline in which they had registered. To the "theory" of the seminars, the students brought the "experience" of their work in the community and learned from the comparison of one with the other.

The tutoring took place in community agencies that already had an education program in operation. This meant several things:

- The project was inexpensive to run; there were no capital expenditures, no storefronts to rent, no special books to buy.
- There was no time wasted looking for people to be tutored.
- There was no experimentation with methodology. The undergraduates simply used the methods of the classroom teacher.

The undergraduates reported to the agency classroom on a regular schedule where the teacher told them whom to tutor, what book to use and what page to turn to. The tutoring took place in the back of the classroom, and if the undergraduates had any problems, the teacher would be 20 feet away at the front of the classroom to help out.

Under this concept, most of the tutoring is done at the level of helping the kids from the neighborhood with their homework. As a result, the undergraduates do not need to be "trained" in order to be tutors. The undergraduates act as a supplement to educational programs in existing community agencies and are effective from almost the first week of the semester.

The success of the Miami project demonstrates this. In 1972, the principal of a special school for emotionally disturbed adolescents wrote:

> "The service that the tutors perform is irreplaceable. They bring a vital freshness and objectivity to our students' situation, which is often lost with 'volunteer' organizations. Their help makes possible the individual attention and instruction that our students so need. Because of these factors, our remedial reading students have had reading level gains of one to two years within a three- to five-month period of tutorage."

It should be emphasized that these are not "internships" for a few select undergraduates but elective courses, making *all 10 million college students eligible to participate*. The nation's undergraduates (who generally must take eight elective courses to get a degree) thus represent the only manageable resource that can match the country's illiteracy problem on its own scale.

Each undergraduate in this project tutors 60 hours per semester (six hours per week x 10 weeks in a semester). If 1 percent of the nation's college students enrolled in these courses, they would produce six million hours of tutoring each semester, and at no cost to the community. The undergraduates, by the way, are not paid; indeed, they pay tuition to take these courses. As a result, the undergraduates themselves provide a financial pool to continue the project after seed monies are terminated.

It goes without saying that people who can't read don't buy newspapers. But it is these same people who will not be able to do the work that will be required in the coming technological era. They not only will be unemployed but *unemployable* (and, perhaps, ungovernable, as well); they will need to be fed and housed and cared for by society for their entire lives. We must teach these people to read. Otherwise, they will create a constant drain upon the economy and exact massive social costs that I do not think the nation can bear. □

Manasa is director of The Washington Education Project. Publishers interested in seeing his type of literacy program established at a college in their communities may obtain a detailed outline of "How to Get This Project Started" by contacting him at 224 Third St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003; (202) 547-3011.

The Washington Education
Project
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
June 2, 1982

(202) 547-3011

Michel mailed to all district colleagues & univ.

Dear Aileen,

I am quite happily compelled to produce a new edition of the staff members who have been contacted about this project and thought to send a few copies along.

All is well.

Jean Rylander
Elizabeth Conners
9:30 Thursday 10th
Room 368

Sincerely,

Norman Manasa
Director

Aileen Anderson
c/o James Cicconi
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

PS My resume also needed a little work and I have enclosed the newest version.

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

(202) 547-3011

Norman Manasa
Director
May 24, 1982

White House staff members contacted about this project:

Office of Mr. James Baker	Aileen Anderson James Cicconi	456-2174
Office of Mr. David Gergen	Maxine Walker Joanna Bistany	456-7113
Office of Mrs. Elizabeth Dole	William Triplett	456-2865
Office of Mr. Ken Duberstein	M.B. Oglesby	456-6620

Senate staff members contacted about this project:

Senator Howard Baker	Jan Tate Lynn Holmes	224-4944
Senator Alfonse D'Amato	Rick Nasti Tim Leeth	224-6542 224-2731
Senator David Durenberger	Jimmie Powell	224-4718
Senator Orrin Hatch	Howard Matthews	224-0749
Senator Mark Hatfield	Jeff Arnold	224-3753
Senator Paul Laxalt	Barbara Burgess	224-3542
Senator Claiborne Pell	David Evans	224-7666
Senator Warren Rudman	Tom Polgar	224-3324
Senator Arlen Specter	Kevin Mills	224-8178
Senator Ted Stevens	Mary Ann Simpson	224-3004
Senator Steven Symms	Ann Canfield	224-1528

House staff members contacted about this project:

Minority Leader Robert Michel	Bill Pitts	225-5555

House staff members contacted about this project (cont.):

Congressman E. Thomas Coleman	John Dean	225-7101
Congressman Joseph Early	Jan Oliver	225-6101
Congressman Edward Roybal	Dan Maldonado	225-6235
Congressman Paul Simon (Subcommittee on Higher Education)	Marlyn McAdam	225-8881
Education & Labor Committee (Minority Counsel)	Charles Radcliffe	225-6910
Committee on the District of Columbia	John Gnorski	225-7158

Department of Education staff members contacted about this project:

Dr. Donald J. Senese Assistant Secretary Research and Improvement	472-5130
Mr. Joseph P. Ambrosino Secretary's Regional Representative	(215) 596-1001
Mrs. Ann Towne Office of the Assistant Secretary for Higher Education	245-9758
Mr. Wilbert Cheatham Deputy Director Compensatory Education	245-3081

RESUME

June, 1982

Norman Peter Manasa
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 547-3011

Date of Birth: 12/10/46
Marital Status: Single
Health: Excellent

OBJECTIVE: To develop academic training in the humanities for college students that will put them to work teaching the poor to read.

EXPERIENCE: In the spring of 1969, while a student at the University of Miami, I developed the philosophy for an education program that would train undergraduates in the reality as well as the theory of the humanities. It was my view that work with the imprisoned, the retarded, and the impoverished would teach college students things they very much needed to know, that guided by professors this experience would prove a better form of education than did sitting in the classroom, and that such an approach was fully consistent with the purpose of higher education.

The faculties of three departments (Economics, Sociology, and Educational Psychology) voted to participate. Each department made available a 3 credit, pass/fail course and we registered the first undergraduates in the fall semester of 1969. As Director of this new program, it was necessary to provide a clear and compelling philosophy so that community agencies, as well as students and faculty of the University, would participate. The undergraduates did tutoring, and we promoted students from the program to the position of "coordinator" where they organized the day-to-day work at each community agency. We also developed a faculty coordinating committee which insured effective faculty supervision of the undergraduates.

The program ran for 4 years with over 1,000 undergraduates and 60 professors participating through 9 university departments. Such a program could readily be developed on a national scale.

In retailing, I managed the men's furnishings area of a large downtown department store, supervising seven departments with nine full-time employees. Sales exceeded one and one-half million dollars per year.

As an assistant on the staff of the Chief Justice, I had a wide range of duties which do not readily lend themselves to description, except to state that they did not include legal work.

At the Dubliner, I managed night shifts as well as day shifts and, among other projects, wrote the Waitress Training Manual.

I returned to the Supreme Court as a computer operator but, after writing the Computer Training Manual for the law clerks and setting up the training program, I became the liaison between the computer system and all the users within the Court. I also wrote the operational procedures for the Computer Room itself.

POSITIONS:

1980 - 1982	United States Supreme Court	Computer Liaison
1979 - 1980	The Dubliner - an Irish saloon	Project Manager
1977 - 1979	United States Supreme Court	Chambers Asst. to the Chief Justice
1975 - 1977	Retailing (Burdines, Britts)	Department Manager
1973 - 1975	University Cabs	Night Shift Driver
1969 - 1973	SUMMON Program, University of Miami	Director
1967 - 1968	Aerodex, Inc.	Aircraft Machinist

EDUCATION: Three years college (Catholic University, Miami-Dade Community College, University of Miami)

ACTIVITIES: Tutor for emotionally disturbed adolescents at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D.C. (1977 - 1979).

The Washington Education
Project
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
May 24, 1982

(202) 547-3011

Dear Aileen,

I thought this revised one-page summary of the project might be of some use and send along a few copies here.

All is well.

Sincerely,

Norman Manasa
Director

Aileen Anderson
c/o James Cicconi
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT

This is an academic program which adds an experiential component to the humanities training of college students by putting them to work teaching the poor to read. Undergraduates enter this project by registering in 3 credit, pass/fail courses that bring together the reality and the theory of sociology, education, economics, etc. This project teaches college students things they need to know but which they cannot learn through traditional classroom instruction. And, since these are elective courses, all undergraduates may participate, regardless of their major field of study.

Undergraduates in this project tutor 6 hours per week in selected community agencies as a supplement to education programs that are already in operation in these agencies. The tutoring is done on a regular schedule throughout the semester and the undergraduates sign in and sign out for each tutoring session. In addition, the undergraduates meet each week in a seminar with their monitoring professor where the theory of the humanistic discipline in which they are registered is explained in light of their experience in the community.

The undergraduates benefit in four ways:

1) they obtain real-world experience which gives them a fuller understanding of the humanities;

2) they obtain an experiential background which will help them to choose a major and a career;

3) they obtain an entry into the world of work and postgraduate employment;

4) they learn compassion by being compassionate.

But this project also provides the kind of help which the poor desperately need. One must be skilled in reading and writing in order to create wealth in a literate society. Without these skills, the poor will always remain poor regardless of whatever other services they may receive, and they will not obtain these skills without long-term, individual tutoring. Since academic credit guarantees the regular attendance of the undergraduates as well as the expertise of the university faculty, The Washington Education Project provides the illiterate of the community with large-scale, reliable, and competent help at no cost to them.

This project has already worked in Miami (1969-1973) with over 1,000 undergraduates at 14 community agencies. In addition to Washington, D.C., it could be readily developed in other communities as well. Several foundations and federal agencies are willing to accept proposals for the funding of this project.

For further information, please write or call:

Norman Manasa
Director
The Washington Education Project

224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 547-3011

May, 1982

The Washington Education
Project
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
(202) 547-3011

May 11, 1982

Dear Aileen,

I thought you might like to see the mention the project received on page 56 of the May 17, 1982 issue of U.S. News & World Report.

All is well.

Sincerely,

Norman Manasa
Director

Aileen Anderson
c/o James Cicconi
The White House

TRANSFER SHEET

RONALD W. REAGAN LIBRARY

COLLECTION: White House Staff and Office Files
Cicconi, James W.: Files

ACC. NO.: A89-03

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OTHER (SPECIFY: _____)

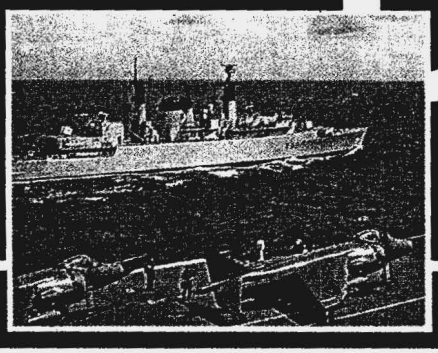
DESCRIPTION:

U.S. News and World Report, May 17, 1982

[contains one article relevant to the file folder, which I copied for the folder]

SERIES	BOX NO.
Series II: Subject File	14
FILE FOLDER TITLE: Washington Education Project - Norman Manasa (4)	
TRANSFERRED BY: Kelly O. Barton	DATE OF TRANSFER: 6/13/01

U.S. NEWS® & WORLD REPORT
MAY 17, 1982 $1.50



How to Take Advantage of '82 Tax Changes

AHEAD: A Nation of Illiterates?

Signature:

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140066

AHEAD:
A Nation of Illiterates?

The growing number of Americans who can't read or write properly is generating widespread concern. A major worry: There won't be enough people equipped to handle complex new technology.

Ben is an 18-year-old New Yorker who dreads using the subway because he can't read the names of stations.

A top Eastern law firm hired a professional writing instructor to work with freshly recruited lawyers because, the firm's founder says, "Many of the new graduates cannot write."

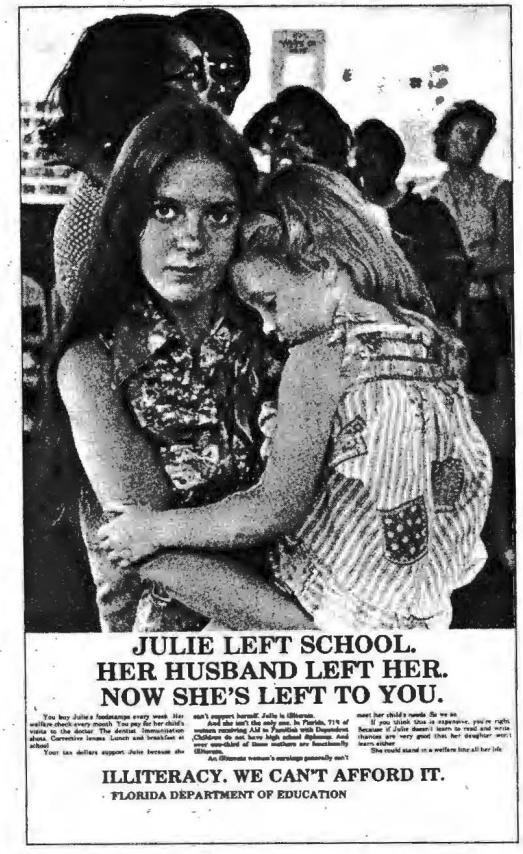
A 21-year-old high-school teacher cannot compose an organized paragraph and has no understanding of grammar or punctuation.

These increasingly typical cases illustrate a potential crisis for America: Growing numbers of functional illiterates who cost the nation many billions of dollars and a grave toll in unfulfilled lives.

Today, a staggering 23 million Americans—1 in 5 adults—lack the reading and writing abilities needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living. An additional 30 million are only marginally capable of being productive workers. Thirteen percent of high-school students graduate with the reading and writing skills of sixth graders. More than one third of adults have not completed high school.

Demographers say the number of illiterates is steadily mounting, swelled by nearly 1 million school dropouts a year and also by immigrants from Latin America and Asia, many unable to read and write in English or their own languages.

These functional illiterates exact a high national price. One estimate places the yearly cost in welfare programs and unemployment compensation due to illiteracy at 6 billion dollars. An additional 237 billion a year in unrealized earnings is forfeited by persons who lack basic learning, according to Literacy Volunteers of America, a private nonprofit literacy program based in Syracuse, N.Y. Local school officials fear that the problem could worsen in the wake of Reagan administration proposals to curtail federal efforts to aid schools in teaching basic subjects, including a sharp cut in adult-education funds.



Poster in Florida: A renewed effort to reach the hidden victims of illiteracy in the nation.

Another disturbing result of illiteracy is pointed out by Barbara Bush, wife of the Vice President and a longtime crusader against illiteracy: "Most people don't know we spend 6.6 billion dollars a year to keep 750,000 illiterates in jail," says Bush. "I'm trying to remind people that there's a direct correlation between crime and illiteracy, between illiteracy and unemployment."

At the same time, businesses are having more and more trouble finding employes properly trained in composing or even understanding written sentences and working with computerized data banks. Labor experts worry that such difficulties could put the U.S. at a disadvantage in competing with other technologically advanced countries.

Paul Copperman, author of *The Literacy Hoax* and a leader in illiteracy research, warns that the economic and technological drag is likely to worsen. The steady decline in academic standards since the early 1960s, he notes, may mean that "we as a society will be compelled to support an increasing percentage of dysfunctional or only marginally functional citizens."

"A Form of Social Dynamite"

A Youth Literacy Task Force in New York City reported in April that 8 percent of that city's youths between the ages of 14 and 21 are illiterate—a proportion typical of most other urban areas in the United States. Such persons, the report said, "constitute a form of social dynamite" that threatens to explode in joblessness, despair and violence.

In Detroit, a young man describes the anguish of applying for jobs: "I would call companies and ask if the applicants had to fill out forms. If it was required, I would pass up the opportunity. About the only thing I was sure I could spell right was my name."

Among principal reasons cited for the growth of illiteracy: Increased dependence on television; chronic, substandard reading and writing habits of millions of young people in poor neighborhoods, and the failure of many families and schools to cope with the problems.

Scholars say results with the basic building blocks of learning—reading, writing and computing—continue to lag behind expectations. A new study also points to a growing number of young Americans who can decipher printed words but cannot comprehend or think clearly about what they have read, as detailed in the box on page 56.

"What we are creating is a kind of semiliteracy—a breakdown in the way we communicate with one another," says Lois DeBakey, professor of scientific communication at Baylor University College of Medicine and a leading authority on literacy problems. "Our regard for language has become so debased that it is destroying the ability even of educated people to evaluate ideas rationally."

Problems of inadequate literacy pervade the schools and virtually every segment of life—the military, business, government and the professions. Examples:

- Instructional materials of the armed forces increasingly resemble comic books, with pictures and sim-

RICK BROWNE

A 14-year-old immigrant from Taiwan is tested for proficiency in English by the San Francisco school district.

plified language used to assist recruits who have reading deficiencies. One Army manual has five pages of pictures to show a soldier how to open the hood on a truck.

■ Thousands of U.S. companies felt compelled to set up remedial courses in basic subjects in recent years, according to a Conference Board estimate. An executive with Prudential Insurance Company in Houston explains why: "We feel we have to play a little catch-up with these people, giving them some of the training they missed in 12 years of school." At another company, an illiterate worker was killed because he couldn't read a warning sign.

■ An estimated two thirds of U.S. colleges and universities find it necessary to provide remedial reading and writing courses for students. Nearly half of the freshmen at the University of California at Berkeley, which draws from the top one eighth of high-school graduates, are placed in remedial composition classes.

■ For several years, college-textbook publishers have been diluting their products with increasingly simplified language, bigger pictures and less-complex writing. Publishers say the trend, known in the trade as "dumbing down," resulted because today's undergraduates cannot handle difficult material.

Such poor performance has a strong ripple effect. Newspaper readership, for example, has been declining since the 1950s, with the sharpest drop occurring in the past decade. Only about 55 percent of adults now look at a newspaper every day. Among persons in their 20s, only 40 percent read newspapers. Editors say this was a big factor in the recent closings of major newspapers in Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. In addition, unit sales of books have been flat for nearly a decade.

How Big a Problem?

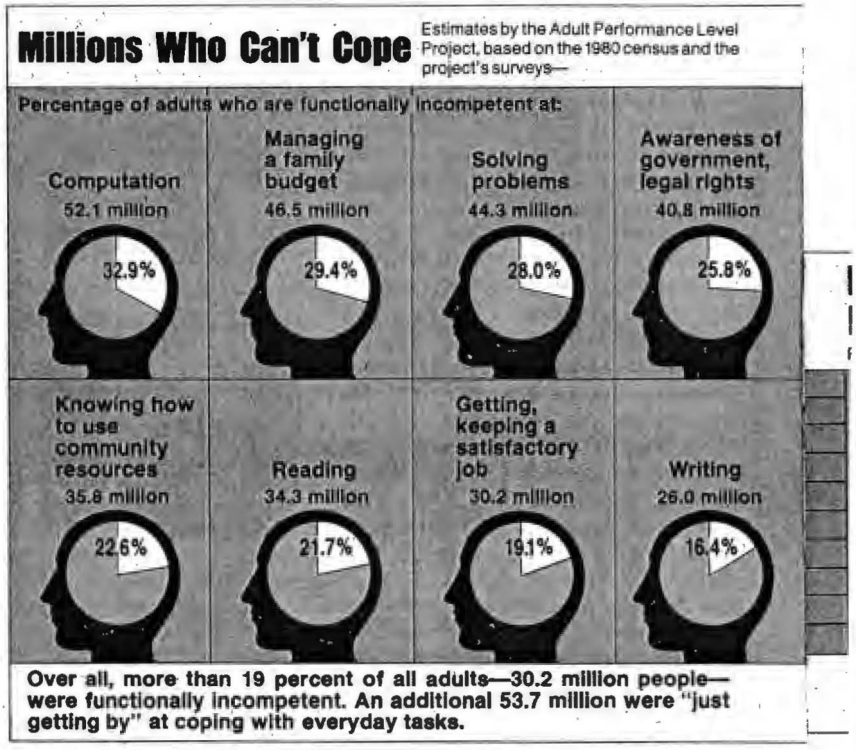
Conventional illiteracy—the inability to read or write a simple message in any language—has virtually disappeared in the United States. The Census Bureau defines an illiterate as someone at least 14 years old who has not completed the fifth grade. By that standard, illiteracy afflicts less than 1 percent of the population, making the U.S. one of the most literate nations in the world. But researchers say that standards of literacy used in underdeveloped parts of the world are no longer useful in the U.S., because Americans need to be able to apply reading and writing skills to increasingly complex tasks. For that reason, educators use the term *functional* literacy as a gauge of skills needed for an individual to perform productively in society as a citizen, family member, consumer and worker. Asserts Dorothy Shields, director of education for the AFL-CIO: "By the 1990s, anyone who doesn't have at least a 12th-grade reading, writing and calculating level will be absolutely lost."

Recent studies indicate that functional illiteracy is spreading. Examples: A person now needs to read at a sixth-grade level to understand a driver's-license manual, at an eighth-grade level to follow the directions for preparing a TV dinner or to read a federal income-tax form, at a 10th-grade level to interpret the instructions on an aspirin bottle, at a 12th-grade level to understand an insurance policy, and at college level to figure out the meaning of an apartment lease. By those measurements, say experts, more than half the adult population could be considered functionally illiterate, depending on the task.

Larry Mikulecky, a professor at Indiana University's education school, says the number of functional illiterates probably will continue to rise. He explains: "Illiterate high-school graduates are only the tip of an iceberg that includes auto mechanics unable to comprehend repair manuals, bureaucrats unable to follow written policy changes, technicians unable to read and understand safety precautions for oil pipelines or nuclear power plants, and anyone else who has found the literacy demands of a job outstripping his or her abilities."

The most recent major study of illiteracy, the Adult Performance Level Project at the University of Texas, surveyed adults nationwide and found that 20 percent could not interpret a bus schedule, understand a printed explanation of finance charges or address a letter so that it would reach its destination.

The problems of illiteracy are felt most widely among minorities. Fifty-six percent of Hispanics in this country are considered functionally illiterate, as are 44 percent of blacks, compared with 16 percent of whites. Women are



Over all, more than 19 percent of all adults—30.2 million people—were functionally incompetent. An additional 53.7 million were "just getting by" at coping with everyday tasks.

more likely to be illiterate than men, and a higher proportion of illiterates are likely to be residents of rural areas. Poverty usually accompanies illiteracy. Forty percent of adults with incomes under $5,000 are functionally incompetent, compared with only 8 percent of adults with incomes above $15,000.

Trouble on the job. Persons unequipped with basic skills are at a constant disadvantage in the job market, particularly in a troubled economy. The least educated are the last to be hired and the first to be fired.

Many employers say they simply cannot afford to hire nonreaders. An official of Amtrak in Chicago points to a food-service worker who was on the verge of being disciplined for burning a number of roasts so badly that they had to be thrown away. "It turned out he had not been able to read the recipe and so had not prepared the food at the proper oven temperature," the official says. Amtrak decided the employe had not been willfully neglectful and arranged for him to take remedial reading classes.

More and more "educated" people also are failing to measure up to minimal standards. Academic performance across a wide spectrum has declined to the point where educators frequently refer to "illiteracy" in math, science and languages. A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching warned that "civic illiteracy" threatens the U.S. as "technocrats" increasingly take over public-policy debates, use language most citizens do not understand and "confuse rather than clarify issues."

"In 1979, millions of Americans sat uneasily in front of their television sets as the Three Mile Island crisis unfolded, listening to strange talk about 'rems' and 'cold shutdowns' in what sounded like a foreign language," the report noted. "The truth is, it was a foreign language."

Unless Americans find better ways to educate themselves as citizens, the report concluded, the nation runs the risk of drifting unwittingly into "a new kind of dark age—a time when small cadres of specialists will control knowledge and thus control the decision-making process."

Why Literacy Is Declining

In a cross-country survey of English teaching in U.S. classrooms, Arn and Charlene Tibbetts reported on a teacher who could not write properly. "At college, I just put commas where I felt they ought to go. I teach sentences by the way they sound to me," she explained.

"No wonder illiteracy is catching," observed the reporters, professors at the University of Illinois and co-authors of the book *What's Happening to American English?* "One can pass it around in society like a virus. That teacher was a carrier and disseminator. From her, students caught the malignant sentence fragment, the chronic incoherency and the incurable dangling modifier."

Thousands of such teachers are often cited for contributing to the drop in literacy standards. In turn, many educators blame television, social permissiveness and family background for disparities in academic performance. High rates of television viewing from an early age can make students passive in school and can produce a "video literacy" that does not respond well to printed text. Victor Walling, senior strategies analyst at SRI International, a California management-consulting firm, says English prose will increasingly be marked by short sentences, monosyllabic words and streamlined symbols that do not have to be read. "We'll move back toward hieroglyphics, to a combination of oral language heard on the airwaves, written language and pictures on a computer screen," says Walling. "We already see symbols taking the place of words on road signs, restrooms and TV commercials."

But most analyses of the literacy crisis hold that better teaching is the key to overcoming the habits of the TV generation and improving the way Americans communicate and think. Says Dean C. Corrigan, head of Texas A&M University's education school: "Once you get kids in school, you have to provide some quality education. The key to that is good teachers. If we don't do something about that, the illiteracy problem is not going to be solved."

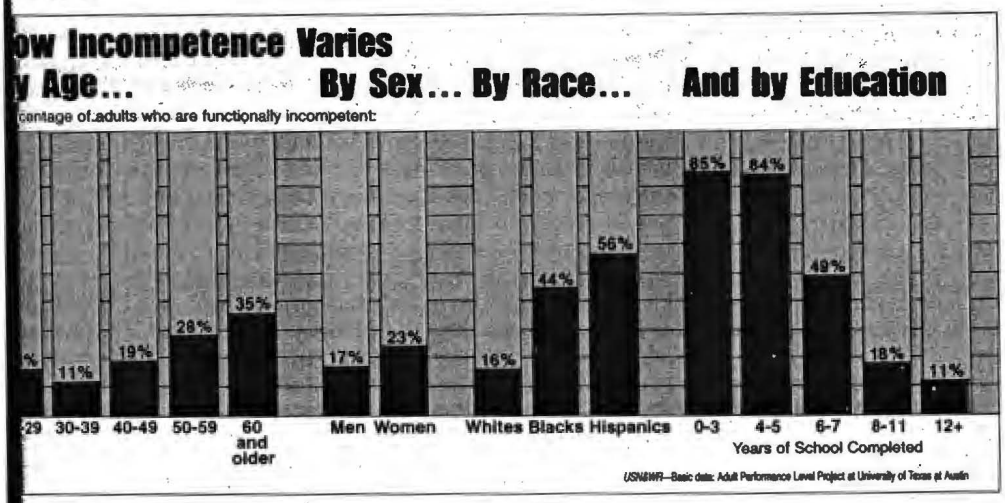
One of the most perplexing problems is that undergraduates who choose teaching careers are often among the least talented academically. Last year, education majors scored an average of 391 on the verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test—33 points below all others taking the test and among the lowest in any academic field.

Baylor University's DeBakey believes there will be little improvement in teacher quality until teaching is restored to a position of esteem and there are considerable increases in salary. "We pay teachers less than meatpackers, less than garbage collectors in many cities," she says. "How do we expect to attract top-quality teachers when they can get a better-paying job in private industry? If our society wants its young people to read and write skillfully, we must elevate literacy to a position of esteem."

Back to basics. By the time students reach college, increasing numbers have to take "developmental studies," a euphemism for remedial work. At the University of Missouri at St. Louis, half the freshmen are placed in a remedial course. Forty-two percent of Ohio State's freshmen had to take remedial English or math, at a total cost of between 10 and 12 million dollars. One reason for the trend: About 80 percent of U.S. colleges accept everyone who applies—in effect, an open-enrollment policy. Comments Diane Ravitch, an educational historian at Columbia University:

"What we have is an inexorable push toward lower and lower requirements to remain in college, because the colleges have gotten themselves tied into a pork-barrel approach to education, just to keep the seats filled."

Another reason cited for the drop in literacy is a decline in standards for conversation, personal-letter writing and literature. The outpourings of advertisers, bureaucrats and computer experts are widely faulted for errors and imprecision. One recent national ad,



for example, extolled a restaurant chain with the jingle: "Ain't no reason to go anyplace else." Another new slogan: "Everybody deserves a chance to make it on their own."

Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, says: "We speak increasingly in telegraphic prose and shorthand. Extended conversation is no longer essential. What we have are things like 'getting it together' and 'wow'—words that have no inner content. Occasions when a person speaks in complete sentences are few." Botstein warns that if such truncated speech continues to spread, Americans "could become illiterate in their native tongue."

Combatting the Problem

The nation's attack on illiteracy is strewn with unsuccessful efforts. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson's Adult Basic Education program promised to end the "inability to get or retain employment" among the poorly educated. In 1971, the federal Right to Read program promised to wipe out illiteracy in a decade. A new directory published by the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Contact Center in Lincoln, Nebr., entitled *Reducing Functional Illiteracy: A National Guide to Facilities and Services,* lists more than 2,600 public and private programs in the United States. By the end of the 1970s, federal programs had reached less than 5 percent of the target population of roughly 56 million Americans in need of basic literacy skills, according to a major Ford Foundation study. At the same time, as joblessness rises and federal funding for adult-education programs is scheduled to be cut by half, demand for literacy skills has never been greater.

"Each and every day we are doing what we can, but it seems like a futile battle against overwhelming odds," says Vyvyan Harding, director of Literacy Services of Wisconsin, which provides reading tutors to 2,600 adults a year. "I've never seen so many nonreading adults in my life."

At Houston Community College in Texas, Earlene Leverett, coordinator for the adult-basic-skills program, says people wanting to improve their skills swamped the center after the economy turned down. Now, 350 are enrolled and 120 more are on waiting lists. "There is not a day that passes that people are not trying to get into the program," she says.

No matter what else is done, scholars are becoming convinced that the basic responsibility for reversing the literacy decline lies with the schools. Moreover, there are signs the schools are responding to the challenge.

Example: In California, the board of admissions of the state's huge public higher-education system sent a letter in January to the parents of all eighth graders in the state. It read: "Your son or daughter should be expected to enroll in an English class every semester of every year, and most students should be taking a math class every semester." The reason: State colleges and universities plan to tighten sharply their admissions standards in 1984.

In New York City, a volunteer-tutor program brings 15,000 adults to schools to work with deficient readers. In 1981, citywide reading-test scores rose for the first time in many years. Marnie Steyer, director of the tutor program at Park West High School on the city's West Side, says students are on their own to get to the sessions. "They bring themselves here, and all their classmates know why they are not in class," she says. "They are up in Room 470 with the 'dummies.' That takes guts."

An innovation. One of the most inventive ideas has been tried in Florida, where University of Miami students tutored illiterate city pupils and got academic credit for the work. Norman Manasa, founder of the project, is working to set up a similar program in Washington, D.C., and says it can work in any city by drawing on local-college undergraduates. "The students create wealth by transferring literacy to a group that desperately needs it," says Manasa. "At the same time, they experience the magic of teaching someone to read and write. The spinoff effects in the community are all positive, because it helps create wealth rather than consuming it."

Jonathan Kozol, author of *Prisoners of Silence,* a book about adult illiteracy in the U.S., has called for a campaign that would enlist large cadres of volunteers to bring basic skills to all Americans. Kozol concludes: "Until we come to terms with the catastrophe in our own urban ghettos and our rural slums, there does not seem much reason to expect that other nations will, or ought to, seek out our advice."

Even in the world's most advanced nation, illiteracy will remain a blight for the immediate future. But experts point with hope to rising scores on minimum-competency tests in lower grades in many schools, and a renewed desire by educators and parents to remedy the problems. That raises prospects that America's vast educational system eventually will be able to teach all citizens how to fill out a job application, balance a checkbook, write a letter—and, perhaps, much more. □

By STANLEY N. WELLBORN with the magazine's domestic bureaus

Youth: "An Emphasis on Shallow And Superficial Opinions"

In one of the most devastating evaluations of American literacy to date, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally supported research organization, reported last year on the verbal and analytical abilities of 106,000 U.S. schoolchildren, ages 9, 13 and 17. Following are excerpts of the report, entitled "Reading, Thinking and Writing":

"Teenagers read little for their own enjoyment, spend more time watching television than they spend reading, do not read for long periods of time and prefer movies to books. About 10 percent remain unable to read even simple materials. . . .

"Students seem satisfied with their initial interpretations of what they have read and seem genuinely puzzled at requests to explain or defend their points of view.

"Few students could provide more than superficial responses to such tasks, and even the better responses showed little evidence of well developed problem-solving strategies or critical-thinking skills. . . .

"Between 1970 and 1980, both 13 and 17-year-olds became less likely to try to interpret what they read and more likely to simply make unexplained value judgments about it. One way of characterizing the change during the '70s is to say that 17-year-olds' papers became somewhat more like 13-year-olds' papers. The end result is an emphasis on shallow and superficial opinions at the expense of reasoned and disciplined thought. . . .

"Many students believe they will emerge from school into an electronic world that will require little reading and less writing. Nothing could be further from the truth. In a world overloaded with information, both a business and a personal advantage will go to those individuals who can sort the wheat from the chaff, the important information from the trivial. A society in which the habits of disciplined reading, analysis, interpretation and discourse are not sufficiently cultivated has much to fear."

The Washington Education
Project
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
April 12, 1982

(202) 547-3011

Dear Aileen,

I thought to send along this expanded list of staffers contacted about this project, as well as a copy of the Seybold Report with its comments on the Court computer training program on page 4.

This is, of course, plain bragging but I thought I could get away with it. Hope you had a fine Easter.

Sincerely,

Norman Manasa
Director

Aileen Anderson
c/o James Cicconi
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT
224 Third Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

(202) 547-3011

Norman Manasa
Director

April 12, 1982

White House staff members contacted about this project:

Office of Mr. James Baker	Aileen Anderson James Cicconi	456-2174
Office of Mr. David Gergen	Maxine Walker Joanna Bistany	456-7113
Office of Mrs. Elizabeth Dole	William Triplett	456-2865

Senate staff members contacted about this project:

Senator Howard Baker	Jan Tate	224-4944
Senator Alfonse D'Amato	Rick Nasti Tim Leeth	224-6542 224-2731
Senator David Durenberger	Jimmie Powell	224-4718
Senator Orrin Hatch	Howard Matthews	224-0749
Senator Mark Hatfield	Jeff Arnold	224-3753
Senator Paul Laxalt	Barbara Burgess	224-3542
Senator Claiborne Pell	David Evans	224-7666
Senator Arlen Specter	Kevin Mills	224-8178
Senator Ted Stevens	Mary Ann Simpson	224-3004
Senator Steven Symms	Ann Canfield	224-1528

House staff members contacted about this project:

Minority Leader Robert Michel	Bill Pitts	225-5555
Committee on the District of Columbia	John Gnorski	225-7158

House staff members contacted about this project (cont.):

Congressman E. Thomas Coleman	John Dean	225-7101
Congressman Joseph Early	Jan Oliver	225-6101
Congressman Paul Simon (Subcommittee on Higher Education)	Marlyn McAdam	225-8881
Education & Labor Committee (Minority Counsel)	Charles Radcliffe	225-6910

The Seybold Report on Office Systems

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THE ATEX SYSTEM

At the Supreme Court

AS MANY OF OUR READERS are aware, we have long been of the opinion that an electronic publishing system, such as the ones installed at most major metropolitan newspapers in the U.S. (and on the Lou Grant TV show!), is not a bad model for an office system. These systems are typically quite large (in the 100-terminal range), are used primarily by professionals (reporters and editors) rather than by clerical or production people and embody both local networking and wide area communications (with remote bureaus and wire services sending news copy in from around the world). Readers of the traditional *Seybold Report on Publishing Systems* have had an opportunity to follow our coverage of such systems for over a decade now. But this issue affords us the first legitimate opportunity to describe such a system in the context of an office environment.

Atex, Inc., one of the leading suppliers of publishing systems to newspapers and magazines as well as to typesetting operations within corporations, government agencies and other organizations, has, from time to time, installed systems more for office word processing than for typesetting applications. Examples of such installations are the law firms of Reed, Smith, Shaw and McClay in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in New York. Another such example is the Atex system installed at the Wordplay service bureau in Los Angeles and the one at McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach, California.

Targeting the legal market. Over the past couple of years, Atex has also been concentrating those marketing efforts which fell outside of its traditional publishing-related activities on law firms. Why? Because large law firms are typically willing to invest larger sums of money in text processing equipment than other organizations, and because Atex had managed to score a coup they knew would carry a lot of weight with any law firm in this country—the sale of a system to the Supreme Court of the United States. Atex also feels that there are a number of analogies between publishing applications and legal ones. Both are involved with large volumes of text; both operate with tight deadlines; and both require careful control over the end-product by professionals.

Purpose of this article. In this article, we will not be covering the Atex system as a publishing system. But we will consider the installation at the Supreme Court primarily in relation to the following issues:

1. What kind of system configuration works for an interconnected office system supporting a large number of terminals?
2. How to handle the problem of "back up" for a large office system?
3. If an office system is to be used primarily by professionals, how should they be trained in its use?
4. What can we learn from publishing systems in terms of file management and editing software that may be appropriate for offices?
5. How is the Atex system used at the Supreme Court?
6. How appropriate is it for office applications in law firms or other organizations?

As usual, as you will see, we have a number of bones to pick with particular design decisions and implementations Atex has made. Nevertheless, the system embodies many design principles worthy of emulation in an office environment.

Interesting contrast. Although we had hoped to have published this article in 1981, we are glad that our procrastination has given us an opportunity to juxtapose the IBM 8100 system covered in our last issue, and the Atex 8000 system described here. Both are designed to be quite large, but use different networking strategies; both are based on minicomputer controllers supporting terminals which have limited intelligence (in the case of IBM) and none (in the case of Atex); moreover the two companies come from divergent computing backgrounds. IBM is steeped in batch mainframe processing, and Atex in the highly interactive use of minicomputers.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of the United States is housed in a magnificent marble edifice in Washington, D.C. The structure is designed to make the average citizen feel humble, from the two flights of broad marble steps leading up to the enormous carved doors, through the spacious halls with their crystal chandeliers, past the

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