LITERACY FOR LIBERATION: A HAITIAN CASE STUDY

By

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Abstract

        This qualitative study of an adult literacy program, Literacy for Liberation, operated by an American based non-governmental organization and serving a marginalized demographic in Haiti, considered the impact of a literacy program designed to enhance technical and critical literacy skills while developing the ability to create communal and individual change. Data, collected in five open-ended interviews and two observations, focused on the contextual, logistical, practical, and beneficial aspects of this literacy program. Results were analyzed using markers selected from Freire's framework of critical pedagogy: humanization, situated literacy, dialogue and consciousness-raising, and transformation. Findings revealed that there were limited economic, social, and communal benefits to participants, and that replication of the program may be possible if certain steps are followed. The overall conclusions demonstrated that expanding literacy programs in this particular setting and tailoring the way they are introduced and taught can facilitate social and economic progress for previously illiterate adults and possibly for future generations, particularly where structural inequality is evident. Final recommendations included a broadened framework, comparison studies of another program, and longitudinal research of descending generations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

"...all my life I felt the things you talked about. I just didn't have a language to express what I felt. Today, I have come to realize that I do have a language. Thank you." (An unnamed illiterate woman cited in Freire, 1970, p. 22).

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the timeline and details of my involvement with Haiti, including my own personal biases in entering this research. Then, I review the context of the study describing why I believe this issue is so relevant today. Next, the purposes of the study, which are to examine an adult literacy program in Haiti, to review the themes in light of Freire's theoretical framework, and to suggest steps for replication, are expressed. Following this, the research questions of the study are described as well as the significance and scope of the study. Finally, definitions of salient terms that are necessary to understanding certain nuances of meaning and aspects particularly of Freire's thought are listed.

Researcher Background

I became interested in Haiti in 1998 when a friend introduced me to the myriad problems and differences existing there. At that point, I had little knowledge or interest in developing countries, never having had volunteerism (either domestically or abroad) as a focus in school or

at home. This friend was, and still is, acting President of a Secondary institution in Croix du Bouquets, Haiti, near Port au Prince, the capital. With this, Louveture Cleary was developed to serve the gifted of the local community who otherwise would not have the money to attend school. At the time of this study, there were approximately 250 students, the oldest of whom help to run an early literacy program for children in the neighborhood after the regular school day. My husband and I were fascinated by what our friend was accomplishing at this school and decided to become modest level donors. In 2004, my husband traveled to Louverture Cleary, an experience that changed his life and influenced his life-long commitment to social justice. In 2006, I also traveled to the high school in order to assist in a week-long Haitian and volunteer faculty training workshop. In addition to leading a few of the workshops for the Haitian faculty and facilitating activities for the American faculty volunteers, I helped to dig a drainage system for a new girls' bathroom, collect and incinerate trash, and cook meals for the group of volunteers that week. This experience solidified my commitment to Haiti, and helped to narrow my focus of outreach to educational initiatives, though I have certainly volunteered since then in a number of ways outside of that realm. Furthermore, I had never experienced the extreme differences that exist in that type of culture and found that I was drawn to learn more. This curiosity along with an article I happened to read concerning a group of women in Haiti from a small rural community learning to read and write, led me to choose the research topic for this thesis.

Since that initial trip to Haiti, I have organized service trips to Haiti for various purposes, involved myself in the operations and events of numerous Haitian organizations based in the Tampa Bay area, organized two Runs for Haiti, assisted with Haitian cultural events in Tampa, facilitated relief efforts for a small community near Port au Prince after the earthquake, and have

been blessed with many Haitian friends along the way. Currently, I am collaborating with a young gentleman who is a leader in his community and President of Odevich, an organization dedicated to education, healthcare, support for widows, and development of sustainable access to food. One of the ways in which I have helped him is to support income-generating activities of mothers in his community who are widows. This research was not only a means for me to obtain a Masters in Education, but also an opportunity to immerse myself more fully into the Haitian culture and embrace her people. I have gained invaluable insights and experiences, which have changed my life, but with these life-changing experiences come responsibilities to those with whom I have come into contact both through this research and my volunteer activities. There are ethical implications that I address later in the thesis.

Context of the Study

One of the basic tools of each civilization is its method and means of communicating. It is the mode by which civilizations fulfill some of their most fundamental necessities such as successfully gaining access to sustenance and health care, satisfying mental, emotional, and spiritual needs through the ability to form the relationship between self and the other, and attaining personal growth, development, and dignity.

On September 8, 2001 at the celebration of International Literacy Day, a day established by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1967 to focus on global literacy, the Director-General of UNESCO described typical images associated with literacy such as the opening of doors and windows, the rapid sharing of information through new literacies found in technology, and the multi-faceted prospects of the literate person. He said, "Literacy is inseparable from opportunity, and opportunity is inseparable from freedom.

The freedom promised by literacy is both freedom from – ignorance, oppression, poverty – and freedom to – do new things, to make choices, to learn." (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2001).

The Director-General was speaking of a literacy that exists outside the traditional classroom as being accessed by an ever-widening demographic and that it is a growing focus of literacy research. Hull and Shultz (2001) provide the example of young boys in Brazil who become proficient in math skills, not in school, but through their work as candy-selling vendors, in order to illustrate the essential literacies learned outside of the classroom. Other 'out of school literacies' such as computer literacy, literacy programs for recent immigrants, journal writing and diaries, functional writing needed for daily life, workplace literacy, book clubs, and educational television, have been the subject of research in education over the past few decades. These literacies are learned through community practices but without supportive community connections, certain groups are excluded.

One of the greatest needs addressed in our world today is literacy for marginalized groups of men, women, and children. UNESCO's Director-General refers to a literacy that can be defined as a liberating tool aimed at bringing people out of ignorance, oppression, and poverty. Many organizations, schools, and businesses in the last two decades have focused precisely on creating programs designed to target both the formal and functional learning needs of adults and children who are marginalized due to: (a) geographic isolation, (b) cultural boundaries, (c) focus on basic survival due to crushing poverty, (d) gender or class discrimination, (e) racism, (f) religious oppression, and (g) disability. Oxfam Great Britain's members, Archer and Cottingham (1997), suggest that many of these literacy programs have failed to affect real change because

either the focus was solely on literacy and that alone is not sufficient to empower, or the focus

was primarily on empowerment that led to use of methods of indoctrination. They advocate the

combination of balance of literacy and empowerment in order to create a liberating literacy that

will truly address the problem of illiteracy in the world.

We live in an unequal and unjust world in which wealth coexists with poverty. Greater

equality, however, may be achieved through strategic structural and political changes. Within

this effort, education is a powerful and elemental force. Freire (1970) believed that,

> those who, in learning to read and write, come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin
> to look critically at the social situation in which the society has denied them this
> opportunity of participation, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that
> has denied them this opportunity of participation (p. 29).

It becomes increasingly evident that for the marginalized to play a role in their liberation,

they must become critically aware of their situation and they must acquire the words with which

to express themselves. Literacy, then, is not simply the ability to read and write; it is much more.

It is "about personal dignity, the right to participate, the empowerment of the marginalized and

the excluded, and the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways and settings, both formal and

nonformal" (UNESCO, 2001, np).

> Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the
> reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a
> critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases,
> reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naiveté (Freire,
> 1994, p. 33).

There are 785 million adults in our world today who cannot read or write, even though

literacy is generally recognized as being essential to social and economic progress (Central

Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2008). Global literacy, therefore, is too important to ignore, and the

opportunity to learn to read and write should be considered a basic human right. However, Freire

(1970) along other critical theorists such as Fraser (1997) maintained that literacy instruction is not confined to learning to read and write, but is about learning to think. Learning to think leads to the ability to participate in society and to the genuine practice of democracy. Literacy should foster a democratic spirit, one that is liberating in the sense that participation in society is viewed as possible and attainable. "When education is placed at the service of liberation, and a continual remaking of the understanding of liberation for all peoples, then it is truly a democratic education…" (Fraser, 1997, p. 63). It is not just liberating to learn to read and write; it is liberating to realize that one can question the accepted norms of society or the religion or family to which he or she belongs and come out with a different answer than the one that is status quo. In the pursuit of liberation, Freire combined these two aspects, literacy and democracy, when teaching reading and writing. This formula, literacy + democracy = liberation, is the crux and defining characteristic. This study followed Freire's formula to ascertain a focus on liberation.

Purpose of the Study

Individuals and nations are continually refining efforts addressing the urgent need to remedy inequality and poverty in our world, for as Martin Luther King said in a live broadcast (1963) at Western Michigan University, "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. " (para. 22 & 24). Illiteracy is a disadvantage, the amelioration of which very much concerns educators everywhere. All over the world, in various disciplines, the idea of combining essential services with the pursuit of social justice is taking hold. For example, in health, Doctors Smith and Hilsbos, are exploring a new brand of medical practice they call "Liberation Medicine" that defines itself by its dedication to using health to further the dignity of persons and justice for all (Doctor's for Global Health Reporter, DGH Reporter, 2006). Another proponent of Liberation Medicine, Professor Alastair Campbell compared health to freedom,

"When we are willing to listen to the experience of the oppressed, we begin to see how injustice has become institutionalized in those very social structures that claim to be concerned only with human well-being." (Hilsbos & Smith, 2011, np).

It is with the same attitude that educators are emphasizing the continuing need for a social justice perspective in education. One example of this mission in education is the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) that works to preserve unwritten languages that are usually present in geographically isolated areas and in so doing, enables practical gains in these communities as well. Recently, SIL conducted a two year course conducted in Kenya for community literacy leaders and teachers from various parts of sub-Saharan Africa where illiteracy rates were some of the highest in the world (Summer Institute of Linguistics International, [SIL International] 2006).

According to the Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, only 52.9% of the Haitian adult population, those over the age of 15, can read and write. (CIA, 2008) UNESCO shows a correlation of literacy to income, showing that according to records in 2001, countries where adult literacy rates were below 55% of the population, income equaled only $600 per capita. As the literacy rates rose, so did the income rates (Summer Institute of Linguistics [SIL], 2008). Though there are arguably other variables involved, the link could be considered noteworthy. Arguably, in some geographically isolated areas, literacy rates are high, though income remains low and poverty pervasive. Other factors, such as job opportunities would greatly sway this statistic, but it can hardly be disputed that literacy provides an advantage when opportunity is present. Many who live under the burden of poverty say with conviction that it is a form of slavery and oppression. Low income, particularly in developing countries without federal social aid programs, often means little or no healthcare, very little food for each day,

continual illness due to poor sanitation, and little opportunity for schooling. This does not translate that people cannot be happy. Indeed, I have met some of the happiest, most peaceful men, women, and children living in poverty in Haiti. The family and community structure is often much more alive than what is experienced in communities in developed countries where suburbia and urban sprawl have become the norm. Advances in transportation, while improving some aspects of life, have served to distance families, neighbors, and communities. Lack of easy access to travel or transportation engenders closeness out of necessity, which could be argued to be quite beneficial to the overall mental, social, and emotional health of humans. So it is true that one can be happy despite one meal a day, a four-mile walk to a water source, no ability to read, and no clinic to go to when sick. However, happiness is not the issue discussed here. The issue is the consideration of what is a basic human right or need and the right to have access to that need. I suggest that poverty is oppressive and is a problem. I suggest that it is a person's right to have enough food to stave off perpetual hunger, to have a clinic to go to when sick with Dengue Fever or Cholera, to have a school to attend where they can learn multiplication, division, geography, and sentence structure. I suggest that the unequal distribution of goods in our world is unacceptable. Though the problem will not be fixed magically, the tools are available. Literacy is one of those tools of engagement.

The implied premise of literacy programs such as SIL's initiative is that literacy should not be a privilege, but a right. Therefore, it is incumbent upon educators to offer their expertise and use their resources to provide access to literacy for those without. The purpose of this research, then, was to:

- Examine an adult literacy program in Haiti for adults learning for the first time to read and write;

- Identify similarities between Freire's work on liberating education and the themes which emerge in the data on the literacy program using markers established through extensive study of Freire's theoretical framework;

- Determine elements of the process by which an education is created "that engage[s] students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply" (Watkins, 1994, p. 22) in order to inform replication efforts.

This research has provided concrete examples and a review of the critical pedagogy through both theory and practice, to reveal the place where literacy and liberation intersect.

Research Questions

This study was carried out by researching three issues. First, the theoretical underpinning of a literacy education that is liberating was explored through the conceptual framework of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and other scholars who are proponents of critical literacy. Second, this study described a literacy program in Haiti supported by the American non-governmental organization, AB Organization 1, that serves illiterate adults and characterizes itself as opening a "new world of hope and opportunity" (Participant A, Interview 1). The data collected from program participants was then evaluated in light of Freire's critical pedagogy. Third, the study concluded with implications for other non-governmental organizations that have identified a

need for literacy training for illiterate adults and that wish to implement a program such as the one being studied.

Significance of the Study

This study's primary purpose was to describe a literacy program for adults in Haiti with a particular emphasis on connections to Freire's theoretical framework and with recommendations for replication of the program. It can be determined through analysis of the data collected and indications of achievement that the literacy program was successful in empowering adults to become literate and in training them in how to think critically; thus, the theory is that certain themes and programmatic principles can be organized into a formula or series of steps for replication of the program. This formula suggested a pedagogy of liberating education that was utilized as a general guide in this study. Many non-governmental organizations are very concerned with providing educational opportunities in reading and writing to increase economic opportunity in the developing countries within which they operate. Therefore, this study added to existing theory of what liberating literacy education looks like programmatically and how it is parallel in many ways. Steps were identified that have initiated the successful program. The significance of this study was, in a practical arena, notation of recommendations for possible replication of this literacy program in other areas like the one studied in this research. In the theoretical arena, Freire's principles of liberating education were revealed in this literacy program that served a marginalized group of people, adults who cannot read or write and some of the outcomes that he hoped for, were realized. Furthermore, discussion of Freire's pedagogy of critical literacy in relation to this literacy program in Haiti spoke to the usefulness of establishing literacy programs in marginalized areas. It may seem like there should be no

question as to the worth of teaching adults to read and write; however, the genuine query of how a man or woman who has no access to a better way of life through learning how to read and write could be empowered by it, will often be heard. The data collected has revealed social and economic benefits of adults learning to read and write within the limited context of this particular case, thereby displaying tangible outcomes of this program. These outcomes can be viewed in light of this study's emphasis on the idea of liberating education as described in part by numerous advocates of literacy cited in the thesis and by Paulo Freire.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was narrow in that the research was a case study on one literacy program in a rural location in Haiti that unfolded in a context unique to that setting in which the program occurred. There were only five participants interviewed which limited even more the point-of-view of the research. Further, the non-governmental organizations (NGO's) operating and supporting this program have characteristics particular to themselves that may or may not be similar to other NGO's working in developing countries. The developing country chosen, Haiti, also has specific political, social, and geographic characteristics, which distinguish it from other developing countries. Moreover, even within Haiti, there are significant differences between life in urban versus rural areas and southern versus northern Haiti. Therefore, what applied in the situation herein researched is limited in generalizability to other programs, organizations, and settings. In order to promote greater generalizability, it is suggested in Chapter V that a similar program which currently has a much greater reach than the one studied here, be examined. Furthermore, it is suggested that other views of literacy are taken into account and studied in order to extend the definition and qualifications of "empowerment" and "liberatory education".

Limitations

> *"He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened."*--Lao Tzu

As with any study, there were certain limitations to this research. The most obvious limitations were as follows. First, the decision to use the organizations studied, when there are so many organizations that have literacy programs to some extent or another in developing countries, must be justified and could be contested. This program was highly recommended by those who had been involved with it on different levels, as well as recommending itself due to the fact of its continued existence in Haiti for over fifteen years. This is an accomplishment in itself, in a country that has undergone the political instability and civil turmoil that Haiti has experienced almost since its inception as an independent state, and in an acute manner since the middle of the 20th century. Furthermore, to be able to maintain a project while receiving no governmental support is laudable and spoke to the sustainability and probable effectiveness of the organization. It remains a small organization that is unassuming in the public light, yet holds valuable lessons for those wishing to make an impact in a similar way. Though the organization has been in existence since 1993, it continues to be funded primarily by individual donations and, in part, by grants, which means, it has discovered like many non-profits, how to operate on a budget supported by a somewhat insecure source. Since many non-profit, nongovernmental organizations cannot afford costly errors; this research may prove helpful to them. The organization was and continues to be distinguished by Charity Navigator as being one of the most effective and financially efficient and by World Blu as being one of the most democratic. It is possible that a better or more apt organization could have been identified, but this organization was chosen based upon said reasons.

A second limitation to this study was the necessary use of participants who did not speak English, or at best, possessed limited use of English. The language barrier could have caused misunderstandings concerning what was being asked and answered. The interviews were less natural due to the language barrier in that there was a pause between what was said and then translated. This limitation was dealt with, however, by familiarizing the participants with the questions, written in their own language, before the actual interview took place. The interview questions were first translated into Creole and then reviewed by the Haitian translator whose native language is Creole but who speaks, reads, and understands English with great fluency. The participants in Haiti actually had the opportunity to write out answers to the questions on a questionnaire before our actual interviews took place. Within this limitation is the further issue that the one participant who did speak English essentially got the most "air-time". Not only did he speak English, my language, making it easier to gain information from him, but also, he is an American born, capitalist, privileged Caucasian male living a privileged existence in the United States, a country on the top of the ladder of developed countries making his point-of-view different from those of the other participants. This presents a limitation because he is so obviously from a different culture, mindset, and experience than the participants who are being served. It could be assumed that he also has biases similar to mine which are described more fully in the following paragraph. This also will impact the audience for whom this research is intended. It could be argued that this research is really not for the people it represents- those being served by the program- but for the benefit of the organization operating the program. It is note-worthy that this participant did spend a significant amount of time actually living in Haiti before moving back to the United States to begin earnest fundraising efforts for the at the time, new, organization. His perspective and approach, therefore, is heavily influenced by his first-

hand knowledge of the people and culture of Haiti. Much of the opinions in his interview are voiced by the rest of the participants.

A third limitation of this study was the inherent and unavoidable bias that each person carries within himself or herself, as well as natural emotional responses to situations very different than the familiar context. In this case, given my background as committed to social justice and also being situated in a Capitalist culture, a distinct bias was viewing the lives of my participants as wanting and a residing hope to find that the literacy program was successful both in teaching adults to read and write and in providing tools of self-empowerment. Furthermore, I already had opinions as to what I perceive as almost intentional subjugation of the majority of Haitians living in Haiti. In other words, I already perceived this context to be "oppressive" and therefore, saw a much clearer connection between Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and my research than someone else might go in without that bias. I have been to Haiti a number of times and have many Haitian acquaintances. I often become frustrated by the governments continued lack of concern for its own people and the instability that ensues. Finally, the context of where the study took place was emotionally moving which colored my understandings and interpretations. I have never seen such poverty and it was my first reaction to assume that it is wrong. I view the life of the average Haitian as marginalized and lacking equality to mine. Though I do not presume to assert that I am happier, but I do believe that my "quality of life" is superior. Clearly, this is a bias; one might argue with my understanding of quality of life. In order to address to the best of my ability these biases, I relied upon the voices of my participants. I represented as accurately as possible their desires, concerns, and aspirations for themselves and for their country.

The breadth of the interviews and the variation in interviewees provided a well-rounded and comprehensive view of the program that in turn revealed strengths, weaknesses, and basic nature of this literacy program and provided ample data for description and interpretation. Interpretations were offered for review by participants immediately following questions in order to diminish misunderstandings. I stood back from my own biases regarding the failure of Haiti as a state and did not allow this to enter into my analysis of the data. A second rater of Caribbean descent was used in the study to diminish the effect of the researcher's emotional involvement and inexperience with the context studied.

A fourth limitation in this study was that all participants were connected with the primary organization in one way or another, with three out of the five directly and indirectly receiving wages or funding and possible recommendations from the organization. Questions were formulated and data was collected in such a way as to obtain as unbiased a picture as possible. Each participant was asked to provide concrete examples, which were employed in descriptions and suggested interpretations.

This thesis was not designed to determine whether or not literacy alone empowers people socially, economically, or otherwise, or if those engaged in a Freirean style of learning literacy were more likely to learn or experience social, economic, or personal gain over the course of the year. This thesis tried to establish a case for this literacy program as empowering in relation to the data, show the applicability of a Freirean framework for literacy learning and make a connection between Freirean pedagogy and this literacy program in rural Haiti. Though the data showed that there were outcomes, benefits, and change left to be desired, the interviews clearly revealed successes of the program and themes emerged to define that success. Attributes of

Freirean methodology were searched for and identified. A case was made for empowerment through literacy. "An illiterate Haitian has little hope of escaping poverty. But as participants begin to read for the first time, a new world of hope and opportunity opens up before them" (Beyond Borders, 2006, np).

Definition of Terms

critical consciousness: a term coined by Brazilian pedagogue, Paulo Freire, to indicate the process by which someone that is illiterate becomes literate while simultaneously becoming more aware of the world around him/her. This is done through the basic learning of reading and writing but with a "mindful focus" on developing the ability for questioning ones social reality. (Shor, 1980, p.48)

critical literacy: emphasis on the ability to read text using critical thinking skills to reflect societal structures and the power relationships within; purpose is to encourage the reader to engage in challenging established norms and construct new ideas for progress. (Freire, 1970)

critical thinking: involves the skills of understanding, analyzing, and evaluating and is arrived at through the use of reading, listening, observing, and experiencing. Often, critical thinking leads to the deconstruction of established notions and the construction of new ones.

democratic: means by which persons become involved in creating solutions to their problems: "A really democratic society is a school or a larger society structured around the belief that the solutions- and not just the problems- reside with the people and that all of the people, if fully empowered, will be wiser than any small minority or vanguard" (Fraser, 1997, p. 57).

education for critical consciousness: instruction that focuses on dialogue and lessons built around students' lived experiences. "Instead of a teacher, we had a coordinator; instead of lectures, dialogue; instead of pupils, group participants; instead of alienating syllabi, compact programs that were "broken down' and "codified" into learning units (Freire, 1974, p. 38).

formal literacy: in this study formal literacy is meant to indicate learning traditional school subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

functional literacy: "the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfill their own self-determined objectives…" (Soifer, Irwin, Crumrine, Honzaki, Simmons & Young, 1990, p. 2).

Haitian Creole: (simply referred to as 'Creole' in this thesis) considered the language of the people primarily influenced by French, various African languages, Spanish, and English. Though French is the 'language of literacy' in Haiti, Creole is growing. It is currently recognized as an official language along with French.

liberating literacy: literacy that promotes democratic behavior and critical thinking while teaching reading and writing.

> In other words, literacy as a radical construct had to be rooted in a spirit of critique and project of possibility that enable people to participate in the understanding and transformation of their society. As both the mastery of specific skills and particular forms of knowledge, literacy had to become a precondition for social and cultural emancipation (Giroux, 1988, p. 148).

limit-acts: acts that are generated as responses to the limit-situations. Often these acts are transforming because they challenge or change the situation that is limiting. (Freire, 1970)

limit-situation: situation that in some way inhibits the person or persons involved but is surmountable. (Freire, 1970)

praxis: putting acquired knowledge into practice. (Freire, 1970)

Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT): an approach to developing literacy programs that combines Freire's focus on dialogue with Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. The purpose of PRA is to gain the input of the local community that is being served by the program to be developed. REFLECT combines Freire's approach to teaching reading and writing with PRA in order to create better programs for the entire community. (Archer, D & Cottingham, S., 1997)

self-empowerment: the process of gaining the means by which to progress intellectually, socially, economically, physically, and spiritually.

self-empowering education: an education that teaches critical thinking skills, which in turn, provide the tools to better ones situation. "Education empowers people. It gives people the means to make rational decisions for themselves about their lives and their educational endeavors" (Soifer et al, 1990, p. 13).

situated literacy: a social theory of literacy that maintains that literacy is rooted in social practices that are mediated by written texts, are different depending on the life situation, are impacted by social and power relationships, vary in dominance and purpose, are impacted by history and continually change (Barton, D., Hamilton, M., Ivanoc, R., 2000, p. 8).

under-literate: possessing the characteristics of literacy in insufficient capacity; lacking the ability to fulfill goals or needs due to limited ability to read and write.

<u>untested feasibility:</u> is the potential of the person in carrying out transformative action (Freire, 1974)

<u>job literacy:</u> development of basic skills in order to improve performance on the job

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter examines Haiti's background and describes its structural inequality in order to provide an understanding of why programs such as the one explored in this thesis are necessary. First, a background on the formation of Haitian culture and society is provided. Second, what it means to be a developing country in light of systems and infrastructure is explored, followed by examples of symptoms of poor infrastructure. The remainder of the chapter focuses on Freire's educational objectives and framework and his pedagogy is introduced with supplemental illustrations from other critical theorists.

Background: Haiti

"Not only is the cost of inequality a cost we incur for no economic benefit, but all the indications are that it imposes a substantial economic burden which reduces the competitiveness of the whole society" (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 230).

A nation built on the labor of slaves, Haiti remains one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. In 1492, the year Columbus discovered America, he also opened Haiti to the Western world. Spain quickly moved to occupy Haiti, lured by tales of gold mines and fertile lands. Spanish settlers enslaved native Indians of Hispaniola much as the European colonizers did in the American colonies in order to easily and cheaply extract the island's rich resources. After decades of slavery and disease, the Hispaniola Indians were almost entirely exterminated and the Spanish found themselves bereft of laborers. At approximately this time, however, the

practice of importing slaves from Africa by what was called the Middle Passage had begun, in response to the need for cheap labor to satisfy the insatiable hunger of Europeans for coffee, sugar, and cotton. In order to produce a large enough supply of these items for the market, the trading of human commodities became just as lucrative as the crops these slaves were made to till. As the native populations of both the colonies and the European-occupied Caribbean islands were decimated through disease and abuse, it became necessary to replace these laborers quickly and efficiently if the Europeans were to continue accumulating incredible wealth. In 1502, the first slaves were brought to Hispaniola from Africa with the number steadily increasing to 30,000 by 1540. (Pamphile, 2001, p. 1-2).

When Louis XIII officially legalized slave trade in the mid-1500s, Africans were imported to the colonies in the thousands by Great Britain as the primary agent shipping slaves to the New Lands. The business of forced labor grew unimpeded by the political leadership and wealthy class who enjoyed the fruits of slavery. In 1697, France gained the Western part of Hispaniola from Spain in the Treaty of Ryswick but continued the system of forced labor on the island profiting from the vast sugar and coffee plantations. "By the end of the century, the slavery system was well integrated into the fabric of the social and economic life in both Saint-Domingue (Haiti) and the American colonies (Pamphile, 2001, p. 2).

In 1779, France supported the United States in their effort to break out from under Britain's rule and supplemented their army with Haitians from Saint-Domingue who then fought with the American revolutionaries in the struggle for independence. Shortly thereafter, France designed the Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen, unintentionally inspiring the slaves in Haiti to seek their own independence. In 1791, led by Touissant Louverture, the Haitian slaves

began the largest slave revolt of that time. The revolt continued under Touissant's successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and in 1804, after 300 years of slavery, Haiti officially declared its independence. Haiti quickly became known in the United States as the "sun of hope" for her unprecedented lead in the slave revolution. (Pamphile, 2001, p. 8) Haiti's spirit of freedom spread through South America, other Caribbean islands, and the United States and gave tremendous inspiration to people seeking independence. Haiti was a beacon of hope in these first years after gaining independence from France and her future seemed bright. Despite this auspicious beginning, however, Haiti began a slow downward spiral leading to political quagmire, debt, corruption, and poverty.

Almost immediately after declaring independence from France, Haiti's own government was established as a repressive militaristic regime by Dessalines, one of the heroes in the fight for independence, and an unfortunate trend in corrupt despots ensued. In 1934, Haitian President Lescot continued racist policy empowering the upper class or bourgeoisie with privileged positions in government while maintaining a very tight militaristic control on the people. He was forced to resign in 1946 and was succeeded by Dumarsais Estime who promised to work for the improvement of the economic and social status of the masses (Pamphile, 2001, p. 150). Estime, however, was overthrown in a coup d'etat in 1950 and Paul Eugene Magloire assumed power. Magloire established a dictatorship exterminating any opposition in the country while also disbanding major human rights organizations in Haiti and severely limiting others. Magloire employed his army to "exercise political control and to brutally repress the Haitian people. "His military police…arrested and imprisoned political opponents, silenced the press, and dissolved the legislative chambers" (Pamphile, 2001, p. 164). In 1956, Magloire tried to have himself

reelected, but was overthrown by the Haitian people and Haiti was overwrought with political and civil turmoil. (Pamphile, 2001)

Shortly thereafter, Francois Duvalier, arguably Haiti's most oppressive ruler, came to power. A nation once acclaimed as a beacon of hope and a proud example of a self-governed 'Negro' country "…became a troubled land: a land of authoritarian government and of human-rights abuse, a land of Voodoo, boat people, and AIDS" (Pamphile, 2001. p. 165). In his obsession to secure his rule, Duvalier crushed any opposition regardless of color or class, and this occupied Duvalier's energies, usurping attention badly needed for Haiti's social and economic troubles. He solidified his dictatorship with the creation of his own police force, which became known as the Tontons Macoutes, to whom many brutal murders of Haitian people were attributed. Despite claims of plans to develop Haiti's infrastructure and an adherence to the ideal of freedom and human solidarity, Duvalier's primary concern was the maintenance of his iron hold on the country.

Haitians began leaving their country to escape the brutal and oppressive regime of the Duvaliers and because the first exodus of Haitians was primarily composed of professionals in the fields of education, medicine, law, and business, Haiti fell further into poverty due to the loss of persons trained to provide these essential services. Today, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and still lacks an infrastructure that will enable its people to rise out of poverty.

Systemic Structural Weakness

As a developing country, Haiti's plight closely resembles that of other developing countries on the 'lowest rungs of the ladder', particularly in Africa. Somehow the government is not able to provide the kind of political, social, and economic security the country needs to progress. The brief description of Haiti's history revealed a pattern of inadequate, and sometimes oppressive, leaders who led the country into further poverty or did little to find way out. The leaders of Haiti are and have always been from the elite class of the nation, and have been lucky enough to receive an education. They are in positions of leadership in politics, government, medicine, and legal matters, to name a few. While social networks are also crucial in Haiti in regard to obtaining employment, education is an identifying attribute setting one applicant apart from another. Few in Haiti are educated past grade school or as the subjects in this study, only learning to read and write at a basic level in adulthood.

So the leaders in Haiti are the ones who have been educated and one would assume, the best to lead the country; however, there are numerous examples of corruption, greed, bias, manipulation, ignorance, and inefficiency woven into the institutions that are supposed to be creating a more just and equitable society. The objectivity that many Western nations have integrated into processes such as getting hired for a job, receiving customer service, elections, housing and business regulations, and other civil laws, is regarded as much more subjective in Haiti. For instance, there is really little to no city planning regarding housing, streets, waste systems, and electricity. Electricity will be provided randomly and intermittently regardless of whether the bill has been paid or not. There are no public water or sewage systems. People will often be seen bathing in, pouring their waste into, and drawing their cooking water from the

rivers that run through cities. Houses can literally be built anywhere with no permit and often no legal claim to the land. An extreme example of this chaos could be witnessed after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti in that it was not uncommon for orphanages to suddenly spring up created quickly and shoddily by persons hoping to gain from the influx of Westerners and their money. I visited one of these orphanages only to see malnourished children of whom the youngest were all sick with various infections directly resulting from poor hygiene and care. The entire group of fifty- some children slept on two damp and dirty office type carpets on a cement floor. Not surprisingly, every child had lice. There was no consistent structural body to ensure proper care was being given. The proper paperwork obtained in order to start an organization or institution is usually just a matter of knowing someone in the right place who will circumnavigate proper protocol to get you papers. One can get almost anything by bribing government officials, police, or the boy watching your car; it is widely accepted and very rarely punished. This type of chaos and corruption is not uncommon in developing countries and many have identified these as causes for arrested development. Education is viewed by many social theorists and activists as pivotal in reconstructing systems which are broken. On a smaller scale, a concrete example of how education can impact the success of a program can be seen in one effort to end 'genital cutting' in Senegal. Molly Melching, a woman from Illinois, started an organization called Tostan focused on using education combined with policy to end genital cutting, a common practice in parts of Africa particularly in traditional Muslim cultures, intended to minimize a woman's sexual pleasure thereby deterring promiscuity. Melching noticed that anti-cutting propaganda and prohibitory laws were not reducing the practice despite the money being poured into it. Through experimentation and research, Melching discovered that educating each village along with the related villages (those where prospective husbands were chosen from) on the

dangers of genital cutting was the only effective method for reducing the practice. In 2008, the

government of Senegal conducted an extensive study on the effectiveness of anti-cutting

programs in the country and concluded that Tostan's approach was the only successful one.

(Kristov, N. & WuDunn, S., 2009, pp. 225-7).

Illustration, Causes and Remedy: Patrick Awuah

In illustration of structural instability that has significant impact, Patrick Awuah, co-

founder of Ashesi University in Ghana speaks of two similar experiences to the ones described

above that a friend of his who spent time working as a nurse in Ghana had relayed to him. In

both instances, the electricity had gone out in the hospital at which she worked and there was no

backup generator though the hospital could have afforded one. In both cases, someone was

undergoing a surgical procedure. The loss of electricity threatened the lives of these two people,

but the hospital did nothing to remedy the situation in the aftermath though they had the means

to do so. When the nurses went on strike a few weeks after the second incident, Awuah's friend

suggested that the hospital take this opportunity to fire its entire staff and start over. In pondering

this situation, Awuah tells his audience he concluded:

> "the Ministry of Health…the hospital administrators, the doctors, the nurses; They are
> among just five percent of their peers who get an education after secondary school. They
> are the elite, they are our leaders, their decisions, their actions matter and when they fail a
> nation literally suffers. So when I speak of leadership, I'm not talking about just political
> leaders…I am talking about the elite, those who have been trained, whose job it is to be
> the guardians of their society: the lawyers, the judges, the policemen, the doctors, the
> engineers, the civil servants. Those are the leaders and we need to train them right"
> (Awuah, 2007, np).

Awuah then speaks about his experience at Swarthmore College where he learned not

just to take notes and regurgitate information as he had done in Ghana, but to think critically, to

reflect upon and question dominant power relationships and social issues. He also learned that

the leaders of Ghana were making some "breathtakingly bad decisions" regarding the affairs of

the country. One of the things he realized later when working for Microsoft in the United States,

was that he had learned at Swarthmore how to face complex problems and find solutions. When

Awuah finally went back to Ghana in response to a conviction that he could and would do

something to aid his suffering homeland, he began to ask people what they thought were the

causes of Ghana's problematic issues. He kept hearing the same answers: "corruption, weak

institutions, and the people who run them." In searching for the root cause, he began to examine

Ghana's educational system, which had taught these men and women who were leading the

country. He found that the system was the same as it had been when he was there; memorization,

rote learning, and little or no emphasis on critical thinking skills.

> "Every society must be very intentional about how it trains its leaders…we are
> trying to train a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders… of
> exceptional integrity who have the ability to confront the complex problems, ask
> the right questions, and come up with workable solutions…discuss the real issues
> that they confront, that their whole society confronts, and [we] give them skills
> that enable them to engage the real world..." (Awuah, 2007, np).

Because of his convictions, Awuah then began the massive undertaking of instituting a liberal

arts college in Ghana and says that about one month into this project, he received an email

message from one of the students that said simply, "I am thinking now; thank you." Awuah said

that it is an incredible thing to "be a part of empowering someone in this way." (Awuah, 2007,

np).

Though a history of despots, corruption, disease, poverty, natural disasters, and

misguided foreign interference has played a distinct role in a clearly compromised infrastructure

in Haiti, it is not acceptable to continue to use these as excuses or acquiesce to the seeming

inevitability of perpetual failure. Instead, as Awuah shows, it is necessary to focus on the roots of the problems and address systemic failures. Because a country's educational system teaches and trains future leaders, it is one of the primary sites of influence. I do not suggest that education is, in any way, the perfect place to indoctrinate the next generation exchanging one type of oppression for another. Rather, as Awuah determines, it is the job of educators and the educational system to create empowered, democratic, and critical thinkers, students who can reflect upon the society in which they live, and with integrity, identify the issues and solve the problems they face. Paulo Freire likewise was faced with this task of working to empower the peasants of Brazil to become aware through language acquisition and dialogue of the forces that acted upon them and the context in which they lived. Freire espoused the idea that education could open the mind and therefore, empower the blind, weak, and unknowingly subjected. He and other educators who have worked particularly in developing countries very commonly believe that education is a primary means of lifting nations out of poverty, disease, and human rights abuses.

Freire's Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Freiri grew up and was educated in Brazil. There is a connection between Haiti and the country where Paulo Freire spent much of his time teaching and refining his theory of pedagogy. Freire (1974) discussed in his book, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, the disconnect between a country that was progressing towards democratization populated by a citizenry lacking experience practicing democracy. Just as slavery was a significant feature of Haiti's early development, the same was true in Brazil. Both countries were colonized by foreign powers who established regimes rather than democracies and who oppressed the masses, stifling the

possibility of self-government. Freire (1974) stated: "a colonization of this type could not create conditions necessary for the development of the permeable, flexible mentality characteristic of a democratic cultural climate" (p.19).

Freire made a distinction between assimilating with ones environment and actually integrating into it. Freire's notion of this was that in assimilation a person accepts a limiting situation and works within the confines of it. It is a situation in which one is consciously or subconsciously aware that his or her situation is not ideal, but conforms to it anyway. In an analogy, it would be putting on a shoe that does not fit but insisting that walking around in it long enough will make it fit. Assimilating is putting on the limiting situation and molding oneself to it. Sometimes there is even a desire to mold with an oppressive environment in order to fit in with those who are acting as oppressors or because it seems futile to challenge the status quo. In the case of the person who either submits to or emulates the powerful oppressor he or she is merely existing within conditions imposed upon him or her, or is assuming the mindset of the oppressor. Freire held that the response to an oppressive atmosphere is "integration with reality" (Freire, 1974, p.21). Shor (1992) actively demonstrated this concept in discussing education as a political act. He suggests that the traditional educational system is characterized by an omniscient teacher, filling empty and passive students with academic knowledge of material that is often not within the students' experiences. Shor questioned the entire school system and labeled as oppressive to the learner. Rather than mold himself to this type of teaching, he spent his educational and publishing career describing how to empower students through education in which the learner is an active and participatory part of the process.

A nation that exists under oppression is not one where dialogue or the development of critical thought is valued. The authoritarian regime fears the people and, therefore, uses policies and laws to perpetuate the absolute rule, silencing opposition when encountered, or in the case of Haiti, allowing crippling poverty and lack of infrastructure to keep people at the survival level of existence. A classroom in which the teacher exists to deposit knowledge and the students exist to receive the teacher's knowledge is an oppressive place where the authentic exchange of ideas is not valued and students use their brains only as receptacles for the information the teacher believes to be important. Often violence in the form of coup d'états, civil uprisings or gang aggression emerges in such societies as a response to a nation under oppression. In Haiti, one example of this was the rise in gang violence in Cite Soleil, Haiti's poorest slum, after the exile of Jean Bertrand Aristide. Aristide's government had provided more aid and development to Cite Soleil than any other prior government. After he was ousted, gangs that remained faithful to him turned on other gangs who had defected (New York Times, 2004). Another more recent example of this type of ignorant and immature reaction was in the aftermath of one of the final rounds of elections in Haiti in which widespread voter fraud was suspected and eventually confirmed. In many villages, angry citizens rioted by lining tires to entrances of towns and lighting them on fire. This type of ineffective and illogical resistance is ingrained and pervasive in Haiti. It is what Freire described as intransitive consciousness characterized by the belief of powerlessness to effect even personal change because one's own fate is up to forces outside of one's control. The state of inertia causes people to act immaturely, to rebel and show aggression, out of pure lack of recognition of any other authentic power. Unfortunately, intransitive consciousness is a symptom of an oppressed and impoverished society never taught to think critically or solve problems effectively and sustainably. It is so frustrating as an outsider to see people stubbornly repeating

the same ignorant ways because they have lacked power for so long, they would not know how to recognize it if it was made available. Power is represented in Haiti in the form of flaunting material wealth and influence, and this in turn breeds corruption and violence.

In an oppressive classroom, students will often choose one of two responses in lieu of resistance as a reaction; they will choose to fight the teacher who is oppressing them and cause disruptions often ending up reprimanded, or they will choose flight from the oppressive situation retreating to the quiet of their minds where they neither participate nor listen to the instruction. Both of these types of students will likely do poorly because neither method is one in which the learner absorbs the material and then tests ability to understand it. A third response identified by Bivens and Taylor (2009) is that, "students may come to imitate the role of the teacher and in all forms of leadership assume a top-down approach that does not seek active collaboration with others, but acts in a singular, authoritarian manner" (p. 282). There is the citizen or the student who will simply conform to the imposed limits and will survive or even thrive in these circumstances and will become the next figure of authority.

Freire (1970) identified violence, in reaction to oppression, as the beginning of an awakening of public conscience. In the same way, the conscience of the student who simply cannot fit into the traditional classroom and responds by fighting or withdrawing is manifesting the first signs of awakening. This reaction still lacks, however, the maturity and sustainability of critical thought, dialogue, and problem solving behavior, and holds value only as a step towards democracy. Real integration is, according to Freire, "the behavior characteristic of flexibly democratic regimes, [and] requires a maximum capacity for critical thought" (Freire, 1974, p. 21).

In Haiti, as in Brazil, the citizens were not afforded the opportunity to participate in the operation of the country. Government existed primarily as a vehicle for amassing private wealth and power. The chronic poverty, insecurity, and instability, which Haiti's governments have ineffectively or intentionally not addressed, have significantly impacted authentic participation of the people in society. In countries such as Haiti is, or Brazil was, there are certain things that need to occur before democracy can truly be practiced. In speaking of Brazil, Freire said, "And so we imported the structure of the national democratic state without first considering our own context, unaware that the inauthenticity of superimposed solutions dooms them to failure" (1974, p. 24). The practice of critical pedagogy is difficult in a country that has struggled under continuing slavery, totalitarian regimes, corruption, poverty, and structural violence. As Freire queried when speaking of Brazil,

> And which of our historical conditions might have produced a genuinely popular, permeable, and critical consciousness upon which Brazil could authentically have founded a democratic state? Our feudal economic structure? The total power of landholding masters?...The force of various governors and officials? The lack of attention to popular education? (Freire, 1974, p. 25).

Haiti has been wrought with corruption from the top down and saddled with governing bodies that have not learned or have no desire to govern properly. Structure is rare in Haiti and chaos permeates every element of society. In the course of Haiti's history, attempts at democracy and improved infrastructure have been made, but the ground was never fertile enough for these seeds to take root and grow. Corruption and greed have impeded progress every time. There has never been a president in Haiti who was able to create widespread public education, health, transportation, construction, waste management, environmental protection, water purification or welfare systems. The mentality of many in the country could use a paradigm shift and the type of

education that Freire saw as necessary in Brazil, is necessary in Haiti. Though the troubles of

Brazil's working class "poor" are far from over, Freire hoped to move in the right direction

through his educational objectives. Quality, democratic education, along with other remedies,

has the power to engender positive change over time even on the national level.

The Need for a Democratic Education

Freire identified the educational system as a medium through which an oppressed people

and struggling nation could begin to imagine transformation. "The special contribution of the

educator to the birth of the new society would have to be a critical education that could help to

form critical attitudes, for the naïve consciousness with which the people had emerged into the

historical process left them an easy prey to irrationality" (Freire, 1974, p. 29). There is the

temptation, however, to teach concepts in isolation, which is what Freire called "inert ideas"

(Freire, 1974. p. 32). These lessons do not engender critical thinking in learners because the real-

life connection is not clear. Furthermore, it is just simply harder to learn if lessons are presented

in isolation and it is less likely that students will be able to apply their new knowledge if it is not

taught and practiced in context. What Freire saw in Brazil was the need for an education that

proposed ideas and dialogue linked inextricably with the fabric of society so that that society

might be examined by curious, critical minds. Through this examination, the identification of

problems and the development of solutions would come forth. The creation of classrooms

characterized by lively discussion, movement of mind and body, equality of voice, mutual

respect, and continual searching, seeking and questioning, is what Freire believed would

encourage and promote development. In the classroom, this type of education encourages

students to listen actively to the teacher. The student makes mental notes while the teacher is talking by agreeing or disagreeing, analyzing and synthesizing, and reformatting the information to his or her own worldview. The teacher learns to relinquish ultimate authority in the classroom and engages the students from the very beginning in a dialogue that informs the curriculum of the class. Outside the classroom, this type of education encourages students to diagnose problems, analyze the context, and make decisions, rather than simply submit to the will or beliefs of others. This education is meant to create critical thinkers who can recognize and confront the problems of their world empowered with the right tools. The conditions in which Haiti's history has unfolded have ultimately been destructive to the formation of critical consciousness and of a people able to engage in problem solving, thereby, obstructing progress in their communities and directly affecting their daily lives. In this climate, there is a great need for accessible education in which people learn democratic behavior by practicing democracy primarily through dialogue. Freire spent many years developing a democratic education and it is what fueled his critical pedagogy.

Freire's Foundational Educational Objective

Freire's primary educational objective was developing critical thinkers. His theoretical framework chronicled in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a book described by Fuco (1972) as a "founding text" because it contains a potent pedagogy as relevant today as it was in the rapidly changing culture of the 1960s in Brazil, addressed themes and contexts that only change face, but never disappear altogether. As long as there is inequality, the struggle for equality remains pertinent; as long as there is injustice, the pursuit of justice is relevant. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has informed educators, sociologists, liberation theologians, and a general audience on Freire's unique educational pedagogy, the essence of which was liberation. Freire worked

primarily with lower class Brazilians who are the participants to whom he referred as the "oppressed" and were the focus of his liberating efforts. Others, however, such as Ira Shor (1992) and Bel Hooks (1994) have extended this concept of the oppressed to include anyone who is in one way or another subjugated by a confining or marginalizing situation. For example, Bel Hooks (1994) who was present at one of Freire's talks, challenged the already well-known and highly regarded educator on his use of gender discriminating language. She discusses in her book, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), the reality of being a black female in a racially charged and discriminatory atmosphere. Ira Shor (1992) discussed his experiences teaching in a "low-budget public college in New York City" (Shor, 1992, p. 1) where race and gender discrimination were common and poverty a daily lived reality for many. Both adapted Freire's definition of the "oppressed" to groups of people they encountered in a very different time and culture than that in which Freire had worked.

Markers of Freire's Liberating Pedagogy

The central attributes of Freire's pedagogy that have been applied by Shor and Hooks as well as by many others were identified in this thesis as markers of a libratory education. Freire suggested that there were certain elements that must be present to form this type of education and these are the foundations upon which Freire built his unique critical pedagogy. These central premises that coalesce to form his model emerged from within his works on and reflections upon liberating and democratic education. I have identified these primary markers as humanization, situated literacy, dialogue and democracy/problem-posing and consciousness-raising, and transformation.

First, Freire believed that what it means to be human and to be continually striving for 'humanization' is the point of departure from which all other endeavors are born. "Concern for

humanization leads at once to the recognition of dehumanization, not only as an ontological possibility but as an historical reality" (Freire, 1970, p.43). This understanding of human dignity undergirded all of Freire's theory and practice on liberating education. Second, education must originate or be situated in the cultural milieu of the people whom it is meant to serve. These learners are to be understood as having the potential or feasibility to become critical thinkers and actors/actresses in their society. Third, the acquiring of information must be viewed as a living thing, continually morphing in and through the ongoing interchange of partners- teacher and student/student and teacher. This interchange is what Freire referred to as dialogue and was probably his most central premise. This dialogic education is democratic in nature in that the teacher relinquishes the ultimate authority and control of the classroom and shares the stage with the students in a mutual interchange of ideas. The teacher and students initiate dialogue around posing problems related to issues that the students face in their daily existence and for which they are asked to seek solutions. In conjunction with problem-posing, there is a movement from intellectual submersion to consciousness. The movement from a disinclination to think beyond one's immediate circumstances to understanding that there is *something* to ponder is the beginning. There is an awakening to the reality of one's own position in the matrix of life. In dialogue with the teacher and fellow classmates, the learner becomes aware of these interconnections and of how he or she exists in relationships external to the immediate context. This moment or transformation that I have identified as the fourth marker and which Freire (1970) described as stepping into history, is when the learner realizes that he or she is an actor/actress in these relationships, and is the point at which he or she has become a critical thinker, transcending the surface. In this way, the realization that the student can actually impact

the systems within which he or she exists becomes clear. The learner now is empowered to think

and act.

Exploration of the Four Markers

Freire (1970) began *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* with the idea of humanization that is a

continual process humans undergo and mirrors the purpose of education, which is the betterment

of the learner.

> While the problem of humanization has always, from an axiological point of view, been humankind's central problem, it now takes on the character of an inescapable concern…But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people's vocation" (Freire, 1970, p. 43).

Simply put, humanization is becoming more oneself by taking ownership of one's own

life and by coming to the understanding that limiting situations are not imposed indefinitely.

Instead, the individual has the ability to act in their own reality, in effect, to change their

circumstances. Even the ability of finally understanding ones limiting situation for what it is, is

truly liberating in that there is no longer a blind or automatic response to life, but an authentic

choice about how to live. For example, a child may be nervous on the first day of school and

may wake up with a sore stomach, may be ornery towards family members, may fight about

what clothes she will wear, and may break into tears. If the parents do not recognize the negative

behavior of the child as a reaction to nerves, they may become angry, yell at their child, and

further exacerbate the tension. If the parents are able to step back and identify the source of the

child's anxiety, they may be able to calmly explain to the incognizant child the true reason for

the discomfort and through enlightenment, deescalate the tense situation. Though the physical

effect of the limiting situation, the child's discomfort, may not be eliminated, the actors in the

situation are empowered to handle the situation more effectively simply because they are aware

of the truth. Living without knowledge of the things that act upon us causing us to feel a certain way, do certain things, or act in a certain manner is debilitating. Even if we choose not to change our course of action due to "awakening" to the limiting situation, we are liberated by the knowledge of our relationship to the various elements in our lives and by the possibility of choice.

Humanization is also the recognition of our inherent self-worth and the value of the other. What makes us human, and the common dignity that we share as humans, demands that we mutually strive for the betterment of our race as a whole. Our humanness contains within it attributes that separate us from any other species on this planet. It is beyond the full scope of this paper to discuss these attributes and how they relate to our common dignity. It is enough to recognize that Freire believed strongly that oppression of another human being is dehumanizing, a lessening of what is essentially human, because of our fundamental connectedness as humans. The one who oppresses is himself or herself dehumanized by this negative act, becoming less of what it is to be human by diminishing another's humanness. Our common humanity and dignity is the reason for a theory of empowering education. Freire began *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* with this discussion of humanization because it is why his reader is to care about the rest of the book; it is why Freire pursued a liberating education and why so many educators and social workers have been inspired by his work. Ultimately, there is something native in the majority of the human race that seeks community, builds support networks, and reaches out to others. This connection is what is resonating within us when we are drawn to the side of people in crisis. Somehow we know intuitively that our own dignity is intertwined with that of the whole human race and it is why individuals seek to create a more just and equitable world for all. Martin

Luther King accurately expressed this sentiment when he said, "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be." (King, Live Broadcast WMU, 1963, para. 22 & 24).

Freire's (1974, pp. 3-16) objective was to move from what he termed an "intransitive" state of consciousness, to semi-intransitive, to naïve transitivity, to critical transitivity. In the first state, *in*transitive, the person does not recognize the limit situations in his/her life or the ability to have an impact on these situations. The semi-*in*transitive consciousness recognizes limit situations, but not the ability to act upon them. The semi-*transitive* consciousness believes in the ability of people to change their circumstances but does not connect his/her life to that of the global social fabric. In the state of naïve transitivity, the person does begin to make broader connections between individual and society but tends to "oversimplify" problems or become prematurely and somewhat irrationally attached to one way of viewing an issue without researching all sides. Freire (1974) posited that the naïve consciousness must move into critical transitivity, which marks the beginning of the ability to authentically engage in dialogue on social issues and concerns, recognize how these issues are personally relevant, and decide what individual action can be taken. Characteristics of critical transitive thought are the willingness to challenge personal beliefs and seek other possibilities especially as based upon evidence, the motivation to investigate and to expect multiple layers-causes and results- to one problem, and by a desire to move forward even if that means changing one's own beliefs or adherence to a certain way of doing something. Movement from intransitive consciousness to critical transitive thought was Freire's goal. "*Conscientizacao* represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural byproduct of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions" (Freire, 1974, p. 15).

Through his experiences in Brazil, Freire (1973) found that the Brazilian urban population was intellectually ready and willing to discuss larger social issues in relation to their individual contexts and had a "surprising interest in education" (p. 37). However, he found that this was not true in the rural populations he visited. He began working on a project called the Movement of Popular Culture in Recife, Brazil and, at the same time, was also the Coordinator of the Adult Education Project in Brazil. Through this project he began to develop his trademark educational pedagogy. The Project began with "culture circles" that were designed to stimulate dialogue on issues that the community was immediately concerned with, whether that was agriculture, education especially in terms of literacy, or voting. The themes for discussion were most often presented visually first with dialogue ensuing. The outcome of these culture circles gave Freire the momentum to seek a similar learning process for teaching adult literacy. The first group was comprised of five adults who could not read or write. A basic test was given after the group had met twenty times. The test was comprised of two pictures of kitchen containers, one labeled as sugar and the other as poison, with a question written underneath asking which substance they would put in orangeade.

The group had no problem identifying sugar as the correct answer. A series of tests in the same manner followed and the participants continued to show comprehension. By the end of the exercise, one of the participants expressed how amazed he was at his own new-found abilities. "I am amazed at myself" (Freire, 1970, p. 38). The focus of the Project was to reach beyond the traditional means of teaching literacy, which generally could be found in primers containing series of unrelated, isolated pieces that merely attempted to mechanically fill the learner with the vocabulary and necessary grammar rules with which to read and write at a basic level. Freire

wished instead to frame literacy learning using as the point of reference or origin, the learner's experienced reality.

In order for the oppressed person to be freed, he or she must enter into the dialogue between the subjective and the objective reality. One of the great powers of oppression is that it creates a cocoon within which the oppressed exist unconsciously or subconsciously. The oppressed is aware only of his or her immediate circumstances or subjective reality. The limiting situation may even be appealing because it is safe, because it is familiar, because it just seems too hard to break with status quo. Freire contended that for the oppressed to function democratically, they must come out of this submerged state through reflection upon the world. "Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, p. 51). The place to start literacy learning for critical awakening then is the learners own world context.

Freire embarked upon a thorough discussion of epochs, thematic universe, and generative themes. He defined an epoch as a period characterized by certain values, beliefs, and practices unique to that historical moment. These values, beliefs and practices are those that directly influence the learner. This thematic universe implies tasks that require action by humans, but the themes of the epoch exist within certain conditions or 'limit-situations' that must be acknowledged and they suggest certain actions or 'limit-acts'. For example, the condition or limit-situation may be the corruption of government officials and law enforcement in Haiti that may incite certain actions by the people such as rioting or by NGO's such as acquiescing to bribery. The conditions have a very direct relevance to the learner as they emerge from his or her

society, and because of this, the learner's social milieu must be explored. The themes of the

epoch occur as more or less general, beginning with the general and moving towards the specific.

For example, Freire identified one of the most significant general themes of the epoch in which

he lived as domination and its opposite, liberation. The existence of liberation as a theme is

created by the existence of domination and this is what Freire called generative themes. One

theme gives birth to another by its very presence and response to that presence. For example, the

overarching theme of domination covers themes that exist underneath it such as outsourcing of

labor in Haiti or causes of land erosion (Freire, 1970, p. 103). The learner can be made to see that

these themes exist in relation to his or her own reality despite lack of awareness or interest. It is

crucial in the beginning phases of Freire's literacy instruction to understand not only the

generative themes, but also how they are perceived by the participants. "Consequently, liberating

actions upon an historical milieu must correspond not only to the generative themes but to the

way in which these themes are perceived" (Freire, 1970, p. 102). It is imperative to understand

how individual lives relate to the larger and more general themes of society. In order for

education to be authentically transformative, it must start from this position.

To capitalize on the possibilities of a liberating, democratic education, the life context of

the learner should be the foundation upon which to start instruction. "We must never merely

discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little

or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears…" (Freire, 1970, p. 96).

The starting point of any educational program intended to help must begin at the point of lived

reality. Research on effective education reveals that a student will learn more effectively if

exposed to material with which he or she is familiar. For example, a discussion on diagnosing

reading difficulties and designing subsequent remedial programs will involve a much smaller

learning curve for someone whose child has been diagnosed with a reading disability and has had

to explore program options for the child. The ease with which this participant can follow the

conversation is due to his or her background experience. It is logical then to assume that that

participant will better retain any new information introduced due to the connection with the

foundational principles. The learning curve is much steeper for the student with no schemata or

prior knowledge. Therefore, it is logical to assume that one's life experience is an excellent

springboard upon which to build new knowledge. Hooks (1994) states that, [students] "rightfully

expect that my colleagues and I will not offer them information without addressing the

connection between what they are learning and their overall life experiences" (p. 19).

Ethnologist G. Elizabeth Rice (1980) discusses studies that showed that adolescents who read

stories that were more closely related to their own cultural experience retained and understood

the information better. "Not surprisingly, subjects show most difficulty in recall for those

situations where the material presented is so foreign as to make assimilation to any available

schema impossible" (p. 167). Amy Shapiro (2004), Professor of Psychology at the University of

Massachusetts argues that prior knowledge must be included as a variable in learning research

precisely because it has such a significant impact upon learning. Shapiro (2004) describes the

situation model in which the educator works to integrate the new knowledge with the student's

prior experience so that the new learning will take root. "By providing an organizational

foundation for incoming information, prior knowledge serves to embed, contextualize, and

elaborate new information" (pp. 159-189).

   The curriculum Freire espoused was formed based upon the learners own cultural

context, experiences, and vocabulary, "a method which would be the instrument of the learner as

well as of the educator..." (Freire, 1974, p. 43). Judith Langer (1984) writes that, "Researchers

from diverse fields have reminded us that comprehension is always to some extent idiosyncratic, building on individuals' responses to the pragmatics of the particular reading situation as well as their understanding of the 'content' of the text" (p. 469). This supports the theory that if the educator integrates the learners own life 'content' into the content of the new learning, comprehension is more likely. If the student has no prior experience with the new material, then the teacher can choose to either provide it or can manipulate the curriculum to teach the lesson using the learners background experience.

Education is liberating in that it enables the student to change and, ideally, to become an agent of change, to influence the direction of his or her life, or at least, to recognize the reality of his or her situation. In order to facilitate this possibility, education must be holistic in that the technical is taught within the context of the students' lives. If one learns that a pencil can make markings, but never learns to write anything with that pencil in order to communicate, the worth of that writing instrument is significantly diminished in that context. The same is true with an education that is never connected to meaningful life experiences; the potency is greatly watered down. Freire (1970) rejected what he called the "banking" method in which the student is seen as an empty bank account into which the educator deposits his or her own knowledge. (p. 76)

> We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears…We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their *situation* in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of "banking" or of preaching in the desert (Freire, 1970, p. 96).

Education that seeks to reflect the students' "situation in the world" engenders co-creation of the curriculum encouraging investment by the students. To extend the banking

analogy, the person who works and makes money deposits it into his/her bank account and is intimately interested in how best to manage that money because it is a precious thing for which hard work has been done. But for another person, this money has less value as it was not earned with his/her own labor. In the same way, the student who does not invest time, effort, and thought into his/her education, but is only told what to think by the teacher whose reality cannot help but be different than the student, will not have the same intimate interest in the potential of the education.

In the classroom where the teacher dictates parcels of wisdom to be received, stored, and then returned in the original packaging, there is no ownership of the information by the students; it is simply borrowed and given back. This kind of education is likely to be largely disconnected from the students' real experiences. Therefore, the student learns little of true consequence, learns to regurgitate information, does not learn to critically think or create new thought, does not learn to dialogue, does not learn to challenge the status quo, and does not learn democratic practice. A holistic education is liberating and a liberating education is holistic in that it embraces the whole person by coupling knowledge in books with lived experiences leading to understanding of how to better one's life and one's world. Once literacy is situated in the learner's life context, the next step is for the participant to recognize what Freire called "untested feasibility", which can be described as the dormant potential to impact directly one's life or change direction based upon a new understanding or recognition of self and self in relation to the other.

The third marker of Freire's liberating education identified in this thesis is dialogue and problem posing. Many critical theorists and progressive teachers have come to reject the banking model described above and instead turn to dialogue as an anecdote. "Liberating education

consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (Freire, 1970, p. 79). Dialogue

between the students and the teacher creates an environment where teaching and learning

happening on both ends- the teacher's and the student's; "through dialogue, the teacher-of –the-

students and the student-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student

with students-teachers" (Freire, 1970, p. 80). Freire included dialogue as a central premise of his

educational pedagogy because of his belief that every person contributes to this life, which

essentially, broken down into its many parts, is what comprises the material of the classroom.

"We began with the conviction that the role of man was not only to be in the world, but to

engage in relations with the world—that through acts of creation and re-creation, man makes

cultural reality and thereby adds to the natural world, which he did not make" (1974, p. 39). The

students actually assisted in the development of the curriculum for the semester by discussing

their views on issues to be explored over the semester. In Freire's culture circles, dialogue began

each session following the visual aid that was identified based upon prior research of the

participants' environment. Such a visual aid stimulated discussion because it used what the

learners were already familiar with, and therefore, could talk about freely as the starting place for

all other instruction. Not only does this engage the learner's intellect, mind, and emotions, but

also, it builds confidence in someone who may enter the position of student in a subservient

manner having learned from experience that the teacher is the ultimate authority in the

classroom. In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire (1992) recalled an early discussion he had with a

peasant who expressed his discomfort at being asked by Freire to offer his opinion; "You're the

one who should have been talking, sir. You know things, sir. We don't" (p. 36). In response,

Freire suggested a game in which a line was drawn to indicate two teams, Freire on one and the

peasant on the other. The two proceeded to ask each other questions gaining points for correct

answers. Whoever ended up with the most points would win. Freire asked the peasant what the

Socratic method was for the first question and received one point as the peasant did not know the

answer. The peasant then asked for his turn, "What's a contour curve?" Freire could not answer,

thereby, giving the other team a point (p. 37). The game proceeded in this manner until the score

was ten to ten, witnessing to the fact that the participants truly did have something to add to the

discussion. Freire taught that the relationship between the student and teacher was reciprocal; a

student would add to the curriculum his or her own personal experiences and could even

challenge the teacher in a truly democratic sense. This type of education which Freire employed

is empowering in that the student is brought to the position of a teacher with knowledge to

impart. In their article, *Learning Democracy through Dialogue: Reimagining The Potential of*

Higher Education Institutions to Support Processes of Positive Social Change, Bivens and

Taylor (2008) provide theory for what empowering education is:

> It is believed that empowering education requires the educator to
> balance power asymmetries in the classroom by recognizing the conflicting power
> relations that exist in the teaching space and by finding more equitable ways to
> realign these roles. Rather than lectures, there is space for active learning and
> collaboration in which curricular knowledge is intentionally tested against or
> combined with the lived knowledge and experience of the class. Rather than only
> receiving knowledge, students are continually mixing and reshaping it within the
> learning environment (p. 282).

The teacher is often viewed as the only person with something significant to say or to

bring to the table because of his or her book/classroom knowledge. It is true that the teacher *is*

often the only one with the extensive book knowledge on the subject of the class, and the teacher

can therefore master the classroom by overpowering and controlling completely the content and

structure of the lessons. The teacher has worked hard to gain the knowledge and as such, could

be said to have "earned" the right to do so. However, the student might then feel isolated from the material due to a lack of personal connection. And because the advancement of the student is the most fundamental reason for educational institutions, many educational theorists and practitioners tailor their instructional material to meet the students where they are. Freire did precisely this with his adult literacy projects in Brazil and it was what he advocated by emphasizing classroom dialogue. Freire (1974) described dialogue as a "horizontal relationship between persons" in which 'a' works in conjunction or reciprocal relationship with 'b' in an interchange of communication and intercommunication. The relationship is one of "empathy" involving a "loving, humble, hopeful, trusting, critical" matrix (p. 40). On the contrary, an anti-dialogic environment that Freire suggested characterizes so much of traditional education, is an 'a' over 'b' "vertical relationship" in which the matrix is "loveless, arrogant, hopeless, mistrustful, acritical" (p. 41). This relates back to the banking method in which information is not exchanged mutually, but is communicated in a one-sided manner by the teacher. "Whoever enters into dialogue does so with someone about something; and that something ought to constitute the new content of our proposed education" (Freire 1974, p. 41). Dialogue is encased in what Freire called "a problem-posing education" that continually challenges the teacher and the students to practice fluidity of thought. The classroom participants constantly change and re-form opinions and approaches based upon the classroom interchange. Problem-posing education suggests that the curriculum is presented in a manner that illuminates a problem or gap relating to the students experiences, themes that pervade their society, and their immediate life context in order to bring about unveiling of reality and to allow the students to seek solutions that they may or may not choose to act upon. Problem-posing education rejects what is often characteristic of the traditional approach to education that sees much of reality as fixed. Certain immutable truths

are continually taught and reinforced year and year with no room for students to question the

universality of the truth. Problem posing recognizes that human beings exist persistently in a

state of becoming. Freire indicated that this continual metamorphosis is to be always directed

towards the goal of becoming more human or what he called "humanization". The whole

purpose of education is discovering problems that exist within our reality and searching for

solutions that are favorable to the whole human race.

> Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming*—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity (Freire, 1970, p. 84).

The banking method, contrary to problem-posing method, perpetuates a cycle of ignorance of

and indifference to the forces that act around and upon us, stifles the "process of becoming", and

denies the potential for change. Problem-posing method uses dialogue as a means to bring about

awareness of the reality in which we live and suggest the ability to become agents of change. By

discussing the endless themes, problems, challenges, and possible solutions that exist in

concentric circles within our reality, critical thinking is engendered, critical thinkers are born.

    The numerous and varied ways in which a teacher can structure a dialogical, problem-

posing class using generative themes, topical themes, and academic themes could be the study of

another entire thesis, so a few brief examples here will have to suffice. Critical theorist and

educator, Ira Shor, worked with Freire and employed his methodology extensively in his own

teaching practices. He offered several concrete examples of Freire's pedagogy in practice. In his

book, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, Shor (1992) gave a detailed

and comprehensive description of his methods involving the students in the creation of his curriculum. On the first day of one basic writing class, Shor described walking into a classroom so silent that it seemed, from the hallway, that the class was empty. After asking the still silent class to move into a circle and introduce themselves to each other in pairs, Shor found that the little conversation this brought about quickly died. Faced with this resistance he promptly decided to use the absence of discussion as the subject to begin discussion. He simply asked the students why they would not speak and after many moments received the answer from one student, "We hate that test" (p. 3). Following a few more scattered responses from the same young man, Shor asked whether anyone else in the classroom "hated" the test. The entire class raised their hands and began to speak all at once. After the dialogue, Shor invited the class to form rough drafts of their complaints regarding the test requirements and read them aloud to each other and to the class correcting grammar mistakes and refining style as they worked. In following classes, Shor took notes on the essays written by the students and formed his next class around the issues discussed and common mistakes made in the writing. This particular class composed a proposal detailing changes to the required test that they found so unfair in its current state.

Another class began with the presentation of a hamburger and then proceeded into in-depth discussion on junk food versus healthy food and the implications for school cafeterias. Shor said, "In each of these exercises, the classes had the chance to develop literacy skills through a real context" (Shor, 1980, p. 106). Shor gave two more examples that are apt descriptions of how literacy can be taught through real life experience. In one class, the study was dramatic writing and Shor asked the students to write a script based on the story of their own life. In another class, traditional gender roles were discussed through study of marriage contracts.

The skills developed by studying these contracts involved writing, reading, organizing information, research and comparison, as well as practice with working collaboratively. Critical consciousness was formed through engaging the students in discussion on typical gender roles and how to equalize male-female relationships.

Problem-posing education, and the dialogue it engenders, liberates a person from a semi-intransitive state of consciousness described by Freire (1974) as the inability to "apprehend problems situated outside their sphere of biological necessity" (p. 13). Freire identified semi-intransitive consciousness in people preoccupied with survival that could not or would not perceive issues or challenges outside that realm of necessity. It is easy to understand how the people with whom Freire worked in Brazil would be consumed by the daily task of surviving and not have energy for much else. It may not be as easy to understand how this semi-intransitivity applies today to our culture where survival is not a daily struggle and yet, I believe it applies in a very real way. For example, in Western society the danger of intellectual anesthetization brought about by endless forms of passivity- mindless watching of television, blind acceptance of popular media, overindulgence in consumer products, working to purchase, going into debt, being constantly plugged in to one form of technology or another, addiction to a whole array of unreal reality shows-is prevalent. These things in moderation all have value, but if and when they serve to numb the consciousness and turn off motivation to act in, with, and upon the world, they become tools of intellectual submersion generating semi-intransitive consciousness. Through dialogue, discussion of problems, causes, possible solutions, challenges, outcomes, and results, people enter into transitive consciousness, which is when they have the "power to perceive and respond to suggestions and questions arising in their context, and increase their capacity to enter into dialogue not only with other men [or women] but with their world…" (Freire, 1974, p. 13).

A person of transitive consciousness is concerned not only with his or her immediate circumstances but begins to see from a global perspective in which he or she suddenly exists in numerous, multi-dimensional, interconnected relationships. Liberating education has this state of transitive consciousness as its goal particularly because if the learner suddenly sees his or her own welfare intimately connected with that of the other, he or she is motivated to work towards global progress. Transitive consciousness is characterized by the depth of research into problems posed, by rejection of easy, over-simplified solutions used for their persuasive power, recognition of the equality of all voices and the ability of every person, openness to dialogue about the many levels of an issue, espousal of dialogue rather than polemics, use of intellectual, logical reasoning rather than emotional pandering and by acceptance of personal responsibility for the problems and their solutions. "*Conscientizacao* represents the *development* of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural byproduct of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort…" (Freire, 1974, p. 14-15).

Once a learner reaches the place in the educational cycle in which recognition of relationship with the other and the world is present, he or she can then perceive possible courses of action that previously had not been considered. True transformation, the fourth marker I have identified in Freire's liberating pedagogy, takes place when the learner recognizes his or her untested feasibility or the possibility of enacting change. Situations such as poverty, economic disparity, lack of access to basic necessities such as proper healthcare or clean water, complicity in civil wars and genocide present in distant countries, and human trafficking can be viewed not as overwhelming inevitabilities of a corrupt and helplessly flawed world, but as challenges to which there are many answers and possible courses of action. Furthermore, simple issues such as basic virtues that contribute to the health of society can be taught through critical dialogue. One

of the roots of dehumanization is an overemphasis on individualization and the sense of entitlement in that we will do what is "right" for 'me' whether it is in our neighbor's best interest or not. The more pervasive this attitude becomes the greater the apathy towards global need will become and the more disconnected our own communities and society will become. What is crucial is the recognition that these situations are not immutable realities over which the individual has no power, but limit-situations with feasible solutions that have not been tested. Even more crucial is the recognition that these situations are not merely someone else's concern, but are intimately *my* concern, no matter what career I have chosen or what resources I have. "The world -- no longer something to be described with deceptive words-becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization" (Freire, 1970, p. 86).

Moving from the theoretical to the practical, Freire (1970, 1974, 1992) provided his readers with extensive plans both in the form of examples and in a more structural format as in *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire detailed an elaborate example of how an organization or group implementing an adult literacy program in an area that has a high illiteracy rate would proceed based upon his model. First, the 'literacy team' would locate the area in which they will implement the program and gain knowledge of the people and place through research or "secondary sources". After this, the first real phase of the project would begin in which the team would actually go to the selected destination and meet with the people who live there and who will ideally benefit from the proposed program. The team must coordinate a community meeting to which everyone is invited to participate and in which the organization's purpose in being there is thoroughly explained. The community must consent to the team members' presence in the community for the purpose

of initial collection of data and also to the planned program that will ensue. The data to be

collected in this initial phase would consist of an in-depth study of that particular community's

daily existence. This study would be intended to produce generative themes that are named as

such because they generate the material or curriculum of the literacy program. The word

generative is used for two reasons; the life of the people gives birth to the themes and the themes

give birth to the program content. Freire emphasized repeatedly the importance of using the

things that the participants were most familiar with to engage them in authentic learning.

> But since people do not exist apart from the world, apart from reality, the movement must
> begin with the human-world relationship. Accordingly, the point of departure must
> always be with men and women in the "here and now," which constitutes the situation
> within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene
> (Freire, 1970, p. 85).

The team also should ask for volunteers in the community to assist in the collection of the

necessary data. Obvious reasons for this include, but are not limited to, development of trust, a

more reliable perception of the community, an insider's explanation for confusing circumstances,

and translation if necessary. It is important that the team members observing in the community

must do so with "understanding" putting aside to the best of their ability their personal biases,

values, and beliefs. This process involves many visits by the team members in which they

document life in the community as a whole and life in its parts or "moments". The team records

the language of the people and observes the community in many different settings such as at

work in the fields or at rest in their homes. Reports should be compiled after each visit to the

community and analyzed by the entire team. Each team member along with the members of the

community dissects the language of the community as recorded by the observers and 'codifies

it'. This evaluative stage is the second phase of program initiation and the process is repeated

many times to produce greater authenticity. The process of codifying the language of the

community is done according to three criteria: the codes should represent accurately the

situations of the community as they were observed by the team, the codifications should be

formulated in a way that encourages dialogue, and each codification should represent a theme in

such a way that it easily implies other themes relative to the general locale in a broader sense. In

the fourth stage, the team should list the themes identified during the coding phase and then

should classify and organizes those themes into relating continuums. At this point, themes should

be added that the team decides are necessary but were not part of the data collected from the

community. After the themes are organized, the team could then decide how to best represent

each theme and the necessary materials, such as journal articles, pictures, slides, audio files,

posters, and photographs, are prepared. (Freire, 1970, pp. 110-124) In phase five the

representations are paired with a generative word that is broken down into its thematic parts.

Once the program actually begins with the participants, the process is to discuss the codification

and analyze related themes. The words that emerge from this can then be broken down into

phonemic families and employed to create a whole list of words that could then be used to write

sentences, which becomes the material from which the participants read.

A recent example of an adult literacy program developed using Freire's framework is

REFLECT, an initiative that began with three programs in 1995 and uses Freire's conceptual

framework as a main precept in creating its various projects. REFLECT or Regenerated Freirean

Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques was developed in response to a study

done in 1993 on the application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to adult literacy

programs. This approach combined Freire's theoretical framework with PRA's practical

techniques. The research for this project was done in numerous communities in three developing

countries using participant and control groups to determine the value of PRA in adult literacy

programs. In this method, there are no materials presented or designated for the class at the

outset. The materials for discussion and lessons are developed by the students in the form of

maps, diagrams, graphs, signs, pictures and other representations of the learners' natural context.

Freire used what he called "codes and codifications" to teach basic literacy skills, simultaneously

creating a democratic class experience through the critical examination of the themes embedded

within the codifications. An example of codes developed in the REFLECT circles might be

general income of the men and women in the group and work opportunities. Other pictures might

depict the power dynamics in the community between the women and men or between the

employer and employee or local agricultural issues. An ever widening array of vocabulary words

are identified from the creation of the pictures and these are used to produce the writing samples

that become the material by which literacy is learned. REFLECT integrates Freire's emphasis on

situated literacy, which was probably first popularized by John Dewey whose life work was

dedicated to transforming the traditional educational system from teacher centered to student

centered. The graphics in the REFLECT curriculum promote literacy learning, but also engender

dialogue that brings about the equally important skill of problem solving. The 20 to 30 pictures

developed by the learners become a permanent tool by which the community can identify,

address, and attempt to solve communal problems. The project works most closely within

Freire's framework by encouraging participation, dialogue, and empowerment of individuals by

promoting ownership of issues that directly affect them. Within the 'classroom' the beginnings

of social change occur by critical reflection upon societal and cultural issues and the formation of

possible action plans. Students are empowered to undertake problems that previously were felt to

be beyond their control or understanding.

The results of the original pilot projects REFLECT began with showed that after one year, the students enrolled in REFLECT circles had achieved basic literacy competence at a rate of at least 34 percentage points above the respective control groups. In Bangladesh the method seemed particularly effective with women. Other noted results that were placed in the category of "Empowerment" were increased involvement in the community, greater knowledge of local systems such as the agricultural practices of the community, stated increase in ability to recognize and solve problems, improved household relations and resource management, a reevaluation of gender roles in a few of the communities involved, development of more efficient sanitary and hygienic procedures, and an increased student enrollment in elementary schools that served the REFLECT trained parents. REFLECT distinguishes its approach from other only literacy related endeavors by indicating that its focus is equally two-fold. REFLECT combines education with empowerment by infusing the Freirean model of problem-posing dialogue into a curriculum that is situated in the learners' realities and is developed by the learners themselves. This approach does not emphasize the learning of basic literacy skills over the attainment of empowerment or vice versa.

> Literacy programs in the past (especially post-Freire) have tried to fuse the two processes, and some have succeeded with remarkable results. However, most have failed, because they have fallen into believing either that literacy in itself is sufficient…; or that empowerment in itself is enough (but have in practice tried to indoctrinate people into new ideologies). REFLECT holds these two processes in an effective balance and helps them to build on each other (Cottingham & Archer, 1997, p. 201).

It is important to note that Cottingham and Archer are suggesting that literacy alone is most likely not sufficient in empowering people to become agents of change in their communities though perhaps the common opinion might be that it is.

> The action-research report strongly concludes that literacy *per se* does not empower people. The control groups showed very few signs of having changed people's lives. Many of the past claims about the benefits of literacy appear to be bogus. Literacy in itself probably does not empower, and does not bring benefits in terms of health, productivity, community organization, population growth, and so on (Cottingham & Archer, 1997, p. 201).

The authors suggest that without a Freirean framework of literacy learning, not only might the participants not become empowered to change themselves, their lives, and their community, they may not even successfully learn and retain the skills taught by the end of one year of training.

A theory which has recently gained much attention in the world of language and literacy and adult education is the Transformative Learning Theory developed by Jack Mezirow, Professor at Columbia University. Mezirow developed his theory of transformative learning originally while studying women who went back to school after a long period of absence. Through this initial study he developed 10 steps of transformation which involved first the "disorienting action" (going back to school), attitudes towards self such as criticism and self-doubt, assessment of life context, assimilation of new roles, building of confidence, and finally integrating old meanings and ways of being and thinking with the new to form a personal system, which Mezirow later identified as "transformed meaning". His theory was heavily influenced by Kuhn, Habermas, and Freire with primary themes found in all three combining to form the Transformative Learning Theory. The theory applies Freire's discussion of how a learner goes through three primary stages of transformative thought from intransitive to semi-transitive, to critical transitivity. Intransitive is the stage in which the person believes he or she has no real control over his or her life that it is up to forces beyond oneself such as God or Nature. Semi-transitive is when the learner recognizes his or her own power but has not applied that to comprehensive change. The learner at least believes here that personal change is possible

but does not transfer that realization to that of becoming an agent of change in society. Critical transitivity is the stage at which the learner combines critical thought with critical action to effect change. The learner understands from a global perspective his place in society and the possibilities therein. Mezirow's theories on how critical thought, reflection, and discourse stem from this last stage, which is what results in the transformative learning experience. (Kitchenham, 2008).

> "Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 7-8).

Both Freire's and Mezirow's critical pedagogy of education include the transformative learning process – the result of the development of critical thought as fundamental to liberatory education. Liz Dillon-Black (1998) who conducted a case-study on transformative learning in adult education in which her data analysis was influenced by Mezirow, stating, "Transformative and emancipatory learning was the product of critical reflection" (1998, p.23).

Mezirow continued to revise his theory on Transformative Learning into what many theorists and educators of transformative theory use today which identifies three types of learning, instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective, and three learning processes which occur in each: learning within meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, and learning through meaning transformation. The types of learning delineated by Mezirow were developed from Habermas's idea of technical, practical, and emancipatory learning. Technical learning was literally the 'nuts and bolts' of a task such as the formulas used to determine the solution to a math problem. Practical learning signifies an understanding of how the learning applies in a

social context, and emancipatory learning is realized when the learner reflects upon the skill/task and recognizes its value in relation to his or her own use. Mezirow adapted so that technical became instrumental, how to learn this information, practical became dialogic, how to use the information, and emancipatory became self-reflective, why one should use the information. The three processes of learning which happen in each of these learning types are identified by meaning types: working with already adopted meanings, developing new meanings based upon a reorganization or integration of old and new meanings, and re-defining the information or problem altogether if neither old nor new meaning schemes will work (Kitchenham, 2008).

Transformative learning theory can be and is applied in many different ways such as in understanding social responsibility and global learning. At its core, it represents the reality that education can be liberating which can mean a whole number of different things depending on to what it is attached. In this case, it is not hard to see the relation between Freire's foundational work and the transformative learning theory that Mezirow created years later. Once a learner reaches this final stage of being able to literally take a problem and re-define it if prior learned solutions are not feasible, that learner is as Freire said, "critically transitive" (Freire, 1974, p.40). It is at this point, the learner can become an agent of change in his or her own life and in his or her society at large.

There are countries, such as Haiti, in which structural inequality is experienced acutely on such a wide scale that radical solutions are necessary. The transformation of the educational system is one such platform upon which significant and sustainable change can occur. It is convictions such as this that lead people such as Patrick Awuah to establish institutions that are entirely built upon the premise of a democratic education designed to bring about the kind of transformational learning Mezirow and Freire envisioned. It is this conviction upon which

REFLECT and the program examined in this thesis were formed and the foundation upon which

it operates. I studied this program specifically for its claim to be a radically different and

democratic way of educating.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter highlights the collection of data, the literacy program studied, the procedures and materials used during the research, and an introduction to the participants. First, the process of the research and data collection is described. Second, both the program chosen and why that program was chosen are explained. Next, the type of study along with the procedures and materials used is described. Finally, the criteria for choosing the specific participants and their basic profiles are explained.

The following chart shows a timeline of how the research proceeded from beginning to end.

Table 1 – Timeline of Data Collection

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
April 2009	Invited Participant A: Administrator for American Based Org.1	Florida
June 2009	Interviewed Participant A: he suggested point of contact for the Haitian based organizations	Washington DC
September 2009	Contacted 'point of contact': she suggested Haitian translator: (confidentiality agreement signed)	Florida
September 2009	Finalized interview questions for Haitian participants and had them translated by local Haitian- American (confidentiality agreement signed)	Florida
September 2009	Sent letters of confidentiality agreement to Haitian translator and 'point-of - contact'	Through ground mail
September 2009	Sent interview questions via email to Haitian translator	Email
October 2009	Reviewed responses. Decided not adequate and that interviews had to be done in-person.	Email
November 2009	Interviewed Haitian participants in-person. Observed literacy classes. Data collection completed.	Haiti

Collection of Data

I used qualitative inquiry in order to accomplish the purpose of this study. According to James McMillan (2004), author of *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer*, "…qualitative problems tend to be much more open-ended, less specific, evolving rather than static, and process oriented" (p. 45). The primary benefits that qualitative inquiry had to offer in this study were the information rich data that was gathered from the types of qualitative research which were used. McMillan (2004) also writes that, "The most important goal of qualitative research is to be able to provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon that is studied. This goal is best achieved if the researcher focuses on what occurs and how it occurs…" (p. 47). Because this research focused on what and how occurs for the participants in an adult literacy program designed to be "liberating" and how it occurs, it is this researcher's conviction that these elements were best illuminated through in-depth qualitative research and that recommendations for replication of the program studied were therefore more possible.

The central purpose of this study was to examine a literacy program in Haiti developed to serve adults who can neither read nor write. The particular country chosen was Haiti due to the researcher's personal connection and its current lack of infrastructure and status as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. While the study attempted to maintain neutrality, the research began with the assumption that, "reading and writing are the occasion for questioning social reality" (Shor, 1980, p. 48). Shor, a critical theorist and proponent of Paulo Freire, describeed what is meant by this assumption that literacy is more than simply reading and writing; "Critical education prepares students to be their own agents for social change, their own creators of democratic culture" (p. 48). Because the study is employing Freire's conceptual

framework of education for critical consciousness or liberation, the program was analyzed in part against this measure of success. So there was the assumption at the onset, that a literacy program designed for illiterate adults in a developing country is successful in large part if it engenders critical consciousness described by Freire.

The bulk of the data was collected off the coast of Haiti as AB Organization 1 worked primarily in rural areas of Haiti. Four of the five interviews conducted for this study were executed in Haiti with the aid of a translator. I chose Haiti due to my personal interest in the island nation and in its status as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Most of the nation's people are underserved, underemployed, and have little opportunity for progress. My husband and I have been travelling to and supporting a variety of initiatives in Haiti since 2002 and have found that we had intimately connected with its culture and people. It is for this reason that I began looking at the possibility of combining my research in language and literacy with marginalized persons in Haiti. The data was collected in the Fall of 2009 over the course of one week.

Program

I chose the program criteria by considering who would most likely want to replicate it or benefit from the research conclusions. Furthermore, I chose a program operated by a smaller organization with a smaller administration in order to avoid some of the "red-tape" of larger organizations. I looked for a program serving a disadvantaged population, and I searched for an organization with a solid reputation. The specific literacy program was chosen according to the following criteria:

(1) developed by non-governmental organization (NGO)

(2) serves marginalized demographic

(3) emphasis on democratic methods

(4) NGO chosen shows longevity and positive reports

The program was developed by a non-governmental agency with the characteristics particular to such organizations. This literacy program was one that served a marginalized community that, in this stud, had been identified as adults who can neither read nor write in their native language living in a country that is considered developing. The World Trade Organization (WTO) does not specifically define what it means to be a developing country or what characteristics would place such a country in that group; it merely refers to developing countries as those that would benefit from greater opportunity for global trade and influence (World Trade Organization, nd). However, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD) identifies the least developed countries, or LDCs, as those that are at a significant disadvantage for development and emergence from poverty and requiring, therefore, the most attention from the international community. Certain criteria are used to identify these countries and in 2003, these characteristics were low income, poor human assets such as child mortality or adult literacy rates, and economic vulnerability (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2002). Haiti was identified by UNCTD in 2005 as one of the least developed countries according to the above criteria and remains on the list today (UNCTD, 2010).

Once the country was chosen, the next pursuit was that of a non-governmental organization that had established literacy programs aimed at assisting illiterate or under-literate

adults, who generally also fit into the other criteria established by the UNCTD defining the least developed countries, that of low income and economic vulnerability. The organization, an American based non-profit, was chosen based upon a significant period of existence and also public recognition of the success of one or more of its programs. Phil Anderson, Florida Department of Education's Adult Education Program Specialist, one of the consultants for direction regarding an NGO for study recommended this organization, which was called AB Organization 1 for "American-based organization" in this thesis, as an exceptionally successful organization that has been operating in Haiti for fifteen years working with the poorest communities there. AB Organization 1 has an office on an island off the mainland of Haiti as well as in Jacmal which is in the Southeast and is currently expanding its reach as human and physical resources allow. It has programs aimed at mitigating child slavery and violence against women and expanding economic opportunities along with encouraging movements capitalizing on Haiti's natural resources and strengths. Anderson himself spent four years in Haiti where he generated a wood-working school, taught English, and managed a large agricultural project. Each year, two organizations, Charity Navigator and WorldBlu, identify charities that they consider exceptional concerning financial efficiency and program effectiveness and excellence in promoting democratic practices in the workplace. AB Organization 1 has been recognized by both organizations for several years to the present. Furthermore, AB Organization 1 has received grants from organizations such as the Vista Hermosa Foundation in Prescott, Washington for several years for their efforts in education and leadership development. Vista Hermosa's Executive Director, Suzanne Broetje, says that her foundation continues to support AB Organization 1 financially because their approach to education in Haiti is one of empowering people to think differently about themselves and their ability to be effective and participating

members of society. Furthermore, Broetje emphasized her admiration of the organization's commitment not only to the economic growth of the people, but to their personal and spiritual growth as well. (phone conversation, December 23, 2008).

AB Organization 1 began in 1993 largely through the guidance and participation of significant members of another organization, Evangelical Association for Promotion of Education, or EAPE, which had been working successfully in Haiti for a number of years, but decided to expand its American base and its mission in Haiti. AB Organization 1 almost immediately established its structure according to a non-hierarchical model that specifically seems appropriate in Haiti, a country whose experience in the abuse of hierarchical authority is extensive. The specific structure used was called Open Space Technology and is designed to promote equality, personal dignity and respect through joint leadership and an accessible space for shared ideas. AB Organization 1 recognizes the many divisions in the world created by poverty, political struggle, class and race wars, discrimination, and culture and gender. Their mission is to overcome these boundaries and work together to promote peace and justice in Haiti. The primary focus is to diminish the economic disparity between the wealthy and the poor through programs that target those victimized by poverty. Among these programs is one, which is called Literacy for Liberation, and it recognizes that literacy is one of the basic tools for success in our World. According to the statistics on the organization's website, over half of the Haitian population is illiterate, though that figure more accurately represents the illiterate adult female population in Haiti. (UNCTD, 2002) Haiti's many social problems are exacerbated by this literacy dilemma. Literacy provides access to a wealth of information such as improved farming techniques, informed voting, proper health and sanitation measures, reduction of preventable diseases, and protecting ones legal rights. To this end, AB Organization 1 assists in

establishing, maintaining, and operating literacy centers in Haiti. The programs are largely

operated by Haitian staff and faculty though there will be one or two international representatives

living in Haiti, working the organizations offices and sites, and overseeing operations on the

ground. One of the programs operated by this organization was the focus of this study.

To further clarify, this organization has many partners and persons in Haiti with and to

whom it works and remains connected. The organization does not have a school, or church, or

medical facility, but works closely with many of these institutions and the people who run them.

Therefore, when a school is mentioned later as one where I stayed when interviewing, it is

simply a "sister" project of sorts, one to which this organization remains close. Furthermore,

there were a few employees of the school who were also employed by AB Organization 1.

Procedures and Materials

The data for this research was collected using open-ended interview questions and was

both audio and video -recorded in order to aid in the transcription of the interviews. Data was

also collected through direct observation during one of the literacy classes of the program being

studied. Permission to video-record as well as audio-record was asked and consent forms were

obtained.

To the greatest extent possible, the participants were interviewed in an environment that

was comfortable to them. The interview with the executive director for AB Organization 1 was

conducted at his home residence and audio recorded. All the other participants were Haitian

residents and were interviewed either in or near their home. Only in the first case, the interview

with the administrator of the AB Organization 1, did the participant speak English. In all the

other interviews, the participants spoke Creole and translation was necessary. There was a different procedure used for interviewing the program participants who did not speak English. First, an interpreter, with whom a confidentiality agreement was signed, was asked to review with the program participants the intent of the research, the questions, and possible answers before the interview was conducted. The interview questions had been translated prior to this by a native Creole speaker residing in the US who had also signed a confidentiality agreement. The person chosen to perform this task was fluent in both languages. This reduced the possibility for misunderstanding regarding what was being asked. The questions were originally presented in writing via email to the program participants after they had agreed to partake in the research. The translator sat down with each participant and guided the process of answering the questions. This allowed the participants to become familiar with the questions and the purpose of the study before the researcher visited. This was beneficial on a number of levels since these participants had never beforehand engaged in research of this nature which could have been intimidating. Also, they are not accustomed to foreigners in their remote community and there was a natural suspicion present. They were able to expand on their original answers in the actual interview as they had had time to think about the questions previously and therefore, it was easier to obtain more detailed information from them. The interviews were conducted in Haiti where the participants live in order to provide a better understanding of context of the participants and allow for optimal comfort of environment. Obstacles due to language barriers were anticipated and extra time was required for translation; therefore, the interviews lasted approximately between two to three hours, with a break in the three-hour interview.

The researcher completed each interview. The presence of the interpreter was necessary for each interview done in Haiti but not those initially done via e-mail. The same translator was

employed for each face-to-face interview to provide consistency. Further, each participant was

familiar with the translator and, therefore, at home with providing information. Each of the

program participants was briefed on the questions beforehand to facilitate fluency and efficiency

for providing more information-rich data.

These five interviews were each critical in analyzing the program in light of the Freirean

framework. Each provided information regarding the elements of creating and facilitating the

literacy program and revealed that there was evidence of Freirean precepts of liberating literacy.

It was clear that the participants who were interviewed possess what Dr. Bruce Berg

(1989) calls "different vocabularies" and, therefore, could not be given a standardized interview

in which the questions were exactly the same for every participant (p. 16). Rather, the

participants life experiences varied even though their lives intersect in the program itself; the

schedule of interview questions was open to some flexibility. The questions were organized

underneath similar categories and many of the questions were the same for the five interviews.

The type of interview used was a semi-standardized interview that according to Berg (1989) lies

somewhere between the completely standardized and the fully unstandardized format in that

"these questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but

allow the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress…" (p. 17). Therefore, a number of questions

was pre-determined for each interview, but original questions became springboards into further

questioning when appropriate. In the case of the two participants enrolled in the literacy

program, the questions were condensed so that the participant was allowed to relate the

information in more of a story format. This was done because it became apparent within the first

few questions that a strict question/answer format was not going to draw more than cursory

responses. The format that the Haitian participants seemed most comfortable with was more a story-form style of answering. This was particularly true in the interviews with the adult literacy teacher and two students. These participants followed more of a story format or narrative in relating their childhood experiences, education, and story of how they came to this adult literacy program. This revealed more clearly the context of their existence, their beliefs about literacy and the value they place upon it, as well as perceived outcomes of the program.

The process by which the questions were created was to first determine general categories closely aligned to the objectives of the research, such as level of education or community life. Second, questions that fell under each category were crafted such as, "Have you had any formal schooling?" and "Are you involved in any group(s) in your community". Specific answers to these questions allowed for the discovery of themes, which enabled the program to be analyzed according to Freire markers and also suggested possible ways of replicating the program. Each participant was asked questions in sets. The first set for each participant consisted of background questions, and the following sets were determined based upon the participant being interviewed and were a combination of behavior and experience, opinion and value, feeling, knowledge, and sensory questions. Each set of questions ended with an invitation to add anything that the participant felt was not discussed or needed further clarification. In most of the interviews there was no further desire to talk. One of the participants had a question at the end regarding whether I would remain involved in her community; basically, she was asking for a financial commitment. The questions were created as open-ended questions, which according to Patton (2002) "permits those being interviewed to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want to express what they have to say" (p. 354). Patton (2002) also suggests that when using open-ended questions the interviewer should avoid structuring questions that require

yes or no answers, but rather, create questions that elicit discussion inviting the participant to simply *talk*. The questions were constructed and necessary measures were taken to decrease as much as possible the obstacle of communicating in different languages.

Observational data were also collected, which provided a clearer image of what the classes entailed and how they were facilitated. Permission was obtained in advance from all the participants in the literacy group being observed. The advantages of direct observation were: (a) greater understanding of the context essential in this study where this element directly relates to the purpose for the literacy program, (b) diminished need to rely on imagined settings, (c) seeing things that have become routine to the interviewees, and (d) occasioning the ability to defer to personal knowledge when evaluating the program.

The sampling procedure used in choosing the actual program was considered 'critical case sampling', which is described by McMillan (2004) as "used in situations as an opportunity to learn and understand" (p. 115). In this case, a literacy program supported by the non-governmental agency, AB Organization 1, was studied to learn how the implementation of the program occurred as well as how it impacts the individual in the program and the communities in which the programs have been established. AB Organization 1 was chosen due to its longevity and external recommendations that labeled it as an effective organization.

Participants

The program participants were chosen based upon how they might best inform the research questions. Therefore, the participants who were interviewed for the purpose of this research were one executive officer/core member of AB Organization 1, one member in the

administrative/supervisor capacity for AB Organization 3, one teacher or facilitator of the

literacy program, and two participants in the actual program. As it is relevant to this research that

the outcomes of the literacy program were discussed, the program participants who were

interviewed were also chosen based on significant time spent in the program. Due to the need to

focus simultaneously on the creation and process of such a program as well as social,

psychological, mental and economic outcomes, the number of students was limited to two.

However, the questions were molded in such a way as to offer a deep and rich description of the

life of each participant, how each became involved in the program, how the organization and

program is perceived in the community, what role the participants had in the creation and

facilitation of the program, description of the classes, and finally, what they feel they are gaining

from the program.

The program participants and the administrators were purposefully selected, based upon

time in or working with the program. The hope was that the longer the participants have been

involved in the program, the greater the depth of information would be concerning the growth of

participants through the program. Moreover, the reliability of the research conclusions of this

study were more solidly based on the experience of participants interviewed. The first

participant, an executive officer and co-founder of AB Organization 1 was asked to participate

based upon his extensive knowledge of the organization's involvement with the literacy initiative

in Haiti. Choice of participants in this study could not be as random as possibly desired. Due to a

very small number of available administrators on the American based side of the organization

and the restrictions of where best to travel when in Haiti, there were certain obvious participants

who were the ones interviewed. Participant A who was interviewed in the United States,

suggested one of the areas in Haiti with an operating literacy program that was the best prepared

to receive visitors. The literacy programs are spread out throughout the island and therefore, there were few literacy programs, teachers, and supervisors and a limited amount of students from which to choose. The choice was even more limited based upon the area, which was the most convenient (in reference to accommodations) for the research to be conducted. This was a significant factor in determining who was selected for interview.

The criteria that was provided to help in the selection of the first participant was as follows:

a. The interviewee will have been involved with the program for a sufficient amount of time as to be able to explain with confidence how the program was created and how it is being facilitated in the given area.

b. The interviewee will be someone who has direct authority to make decisions regarding the manner and content of what is taught.

c. The interviewee will have to have sufficient knowledge of the geographical area in which the program is taking place and also, the culture of the people it is serving.

d. It is preferable if the interviewee has been involved with the program long enough to be able to highlight outcomes of the program.

Once the program administrator was interviewed, he was asked to help choose the teacher or facilitator of the program to be interviewed. The following criteria were provided:

a. The interviewee will be one who works on an intimate level with the program participants teaching the skills of reading and writing.

b. The interviewee will preferably have 8 months or more experience with the program.

c. The interviewee will have sufficient knowledge of the culture from which the students

come.

d. No prior expertise in teaching is necessary.

Once the teacher was chosen, he was asked to choose the two adult participants to be interviewed

and the following criteria were provided:

a. Each participant will have completed in whole or in significant part the literacy program

offered by the organization.

b. Each participant will be of the ethnic descent of the geographic area in which the

program is taking place.

c. The participants will have unique characteristics from each other in terms of age and/or

gender, but otherwise, will be representative of the average adult in the area.

d. The participants would have had little to no literacy skills before entering the program.

e. Each participant should be one who would be comfortable speaking on his or her

experience in the program.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim according to what the translator stated. Any

comments made by the researcher were signified in the transcriptions by 'IC' for interviewer's

comments and 'OC' for observer's comments. Any such comments were placed in parenthesis to

enable more efficient coding. These comments served to assist in identifying categories that

illuminated themes that were then analyzed on the backdrop of Freire's pedagogical markers and

also in terms of steps to recreate such a program. Primary concepts were identified and used as a

guide to reflect meaning based upon data collected. Only the most prominent themes were discussed in relation to the purpose of this project.

Each participant was told that they would remain anonymous and any other organization with which they may be involved would not be named. All participants and organizations involved in this study are referred to using a pseudonym. It was necessary to name the country in which the program is taking place and a description of that country's circumstances was given, however, the participants did not have to be named in order for the data to be useful. All data collected and recorded during the gathering phase has been stored in a locked file cabinet and on a computer with a password, both of which are in my possession at all times. Upon completion of the study, all transcripts, recordings, and observations will be shredded so as not to be recognizable. The research was shared with the thesis advisor for the purpose of guidance and full dissemination of findings will only be provided to the thesis advisor and committee at the University of Manitoba. A brief two or three page description of the research results and analysis will be provided upon passing the thesis to all those who participated in the study, however, identities will remain anonymous.

The following table provides an outline of the participants, their involvement, and aspects of their demographic relevant to the study:

Table 2. Participant Profile

Characteristics	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E
Language	English	Creole	Creole	Creole	Creole
Position	Administrator	Program Supervisor	Literacy Teacher	Student	Student
Gender/Approx. Age	Male; middle aged 50's	Male; middle aged 40's	Male; middle aged late 30's	Female; young adult, early 20's	Female; elderly, early to mid 60's
Level of Education	University	At least High School/ possibly University	High School	Grade school- most likely 5th grade	none
Activities	Fundraising for AB Org 1	Supervising and Training literacy teachers	Teaching literacy program	Literacy student, early education teacher, daughter and sister	Literacy Student, mother, grandmother, tended garden, helped with grandkids

Each participant's interview was initially analyzed separately and then later analyzed in comparison and contrast to the other interviews for theme identification. The observational data was employed to gather concepts and justify choice of themes. This process followed the structure outlined by Lichman (2006) as circular; "…making meaning from qualitative data is a process that moves between questions, data, and meaning" (p. 171). Though there is a step by step process (Table 1, p.63) in collecting the data and analyzing it, Lichman (2006) describes it as a circle that can be entered at any point between the asking questions, gathering the data, and

analyzing and coordinating concepts into meaning. The stories and experiences of the

interviewees were examined thoroughly by repeated readings in order to more accurately

delineate and discover themes therein. Once the interviews were coded with comments and

analyzed according to themes found within, the data was explored in its entirety in relation to

primary concepts in Freire's framework of liberating education in order to hypothesize whether

the data fits into Freire's framework. Moreover, procedures of implementation and facilitation,

causes and consequences were considered to form recommendations for replication of the

program.

     In the next chapter, the results of the data collection analysis are described.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter relays the journey to Haiti and describes the setting in which the interviews took place protecting the actual location and identities of participants as much as possible. The results of the interviews and data collected are then analyzed with parallels identified between Freire's markers and primary themes that emerged from the data. Next, a similar program to the one studied but which is based more closely on Freire's work and combined with Participatory Rural Appraisal methods is described. Then, data that related to steps in creating and operating this program is examined along with a description of the NGO that facilitates the program. This section includes how the community needs are assessed, how the program is initiated and the teachers are trained, the roles of the administration, teachers, and students, the literacy materials used, and the evaluation of the program. Finally, the prominent themes which emerged from the data and how they relate to the markers identified from Freire's pedagogy is explored

Journey to Haiti

In order to better provide the context in which this research in Haiti was set a description of the journey there and the environment in which the research was conducted is included here. In as much as was possible, however, markers of exact location and identities are omitted in this thesis in order to adhere to ethics protocol and to protect participants.

In the month of November 2009, I traveled to Haiti to conduct the field research for this thesis. My research method as previously stated was to conduct a series of four interviews having

completed the first in the United States with AB Organization 1. Each interview was conducted with a person involved in some capacity within this adult literacy program in Haiti, from the person who was responsible for securing program funding to the student taking the literacy class. According to the purpose of this research, I wanted to discover the possible benefits for such an initiative and desired/verified results. The position is taken, by some, that this program could not possibly be useful when the students live in areas where there are little, to no jobs, for those who are already literate much less for adults who are just attempting to learn to read and write. An exploration of the ideology and educational philosophy of Paulo Freire suggests that there is more to being or becoming literate than practical gain and many of my questions were designed to obtain access to this kind of information. Secondly, it was with an interest in possible replication of such an educational program that I took up this topic. In my four interviews in Haiti as well as in my time spent there in other capacities, I became increasingly aware of what Freire (1993) identified as "magical consciousness" or thinking that is not based in critical reflection, but in an unfounded faith in a solution that has nothing to do with the real problems and viable options that might effect change. This can be a mentality perpetuated by societal norms sometimes unidentifiable, but real all the same. The truth is that such tacit assumptions are poisonous to democracy, created and upheld to keep an entire demographic under oppression. In my interviews, I found this reality, but found as well the presence of democratic education and advancement, consciousness-raising, humanization, dialogue/problem-posing, and transformation, the markers drawn from Freire's framework and used to code the data.

We have all heard of the poverty that plagues Haiti and so I did not expect the beauty of the mountains, which surrounded the Port au Prince airport the first time that I stepped out of the plane and onto the tarmac. This, however, was not my first time in Haiti, so I was not taken

aback by this, but instead was filled with the trepidation of traveling there alone for the first time. Happily my arrival was met by a few of my Haitian friends and my stay in Port au Prince was truly pleasant. When I reached the island off the west coast of Haiti, where I was to carry out the bulk of my research, I was met by a small, thin local with a wide and toothy smile who was to be my translator and guide. I was given the choice of taking a motorcycle or a truck for the two-hour trip up the mountain to the area in which I would be staying. I chose a motorcycle for the sheer thrill and freedom of it all and I have to admit, I was playing the part of the fearless and liberated woman. About halfway up this mountain on paths that certainly did not qualify as roads, my backside was so tenderized from the relentless pounding on the narrow seat of this metal contraption (which miraculously weathered the outrageous terrain), I would have done anything to have gotten off the motorcycle and into a truck!

Once we were finally there, I settled in for a five-day stay in this tiny rustic village. Clothes were washed by hand in a large metal kitchen bowl while sitting, or rather squatting, in the dirt outside and baths where taken in the open air in back of the house using a small dish to dip out of a large bin of rain-water. The bathroom at night was the small tin bucket placed discreetly next to the bed. One fell asleep to the howling of dogs and awoke to the crowing of roosters which could penetrate the thick foam of even the highest quality ear plugs.

Evening arrived by the time I reached the cinderblock, three-room house where I stayed. Most of the houses in that were one to three room square structures made out of a type of cinderblock as far as I could tell. Room dividers and many times even front doors were provided by sheets or strips of fabric. A room would not hold much more than a kitchen table, it's chairs, and possibly a few other pieces of furniture against the wall. Usually there would be at least one

bed in each room, including the kitchen. The family members spent little time inside their houses

which are dark even in the daytime and crowded. In this part of Haiti, there was no indoor

plumbing and in most cases, no electricity. Oil lanterns and candles were used at night for light.

The school in the area in which I stayed was actually quite nice and probably one of two similar

to it on all of the Island. This school had one large circular building at its center, a wide open

courtyard used for various activities including morning and afternoon assembly, and a two story

rectangular building adjacent to this courtyard with a library, classroom, and a small computer

lab generated by solar power. This school was funded by an organization, which had partnered in

the past with AB Org 1 and continued to enjoy a strong relationship. Most other schools, clinics,

churches, or other public facilities of the sort on the island were one room, cinderblock buildings

which often multi-purposed as all three. Roads on the island were barely navigable by

motorcycle. Getting up and down the mountain, a distance of perhaps 30 miles would often take

2 to 3 hours depending on how far you were going. Trucks would be able to traverse parts of the

island but not all. There was one town on the island to and from which goods and people would

go to and from on the ferries. This town had one gas station and a few stores selling small

products but really nothing else. Everything had to be bought and sold on the mainland, an hour

ferry ride and two or so hour boat ride depending on how many engines the boat had. The boats

and ferries were packed to the maximum capacity on every trip with people and their suitcases,

goods bought in town, their fruit, vegetables, livestock, and handmade wares to sell on the

mainland. In this area, the people spoke Creole and it is my guess that at least 50% would not

have been able to read or write in Creole. Most people here would eat primarily what they raised

or grew on their own land. There was one hospital in the main town and another clinic run by a

non-profit. Most of the little towns on the island did not have any formal health facility, though

you might have found World Vision or a USAID facility at random. Here food and some health care would be provided, but without consistency as far as I could tell.

The first night I stayed there and each following, a white plastic lawn chair was brought for me to sit on while some folks stood, others sat on stones, and some squeezed between the roots of a large twisted tree. The darkness of the night, uninterrupted by any lights, brought a quick end to the routine business of the day, bringing forth a calm and unhurried state in the people rendering the need for electricity moot. At night, the mountain air thickened with the comforting sounds of stories told by young fathers of the community, the laughter of adolescent girls, yawns of sleepy children, and the continual barking of the eternally hungry and free-roaming dogs. In Haiti, unlike other countries, you will not so easily find people who speak English. Being the first time I had traveled without other English speakers, I found myself engulfed in a strange isolation, which stemmed from my inability to communicate in the native language. While particularly unnerving at first, I quickly became accustomed to simply observing which became the conduit through which I absorbed and experienced the culture and surroundings that week. I noticed more acutely details of the life that quite possibly would have gone unnoticed if I had been able to easily dialogue with my hosts and their neighbors.

The beauty, serenity, and quiet charm of the Haitian countryside were remarkable. The seamless blend of the community - toddlers finding treasures in the dirt while grandmothers, plucking the tops off juicy, plump green beans, talked with the young mothers holding babies to their breasts in an endless stream of conversation which blended unnoticed into the progression of the day as morning becomes night with uneventful sameness - left me longing for the

simplicity of a life decades past in America long ago swallowed by our relentless need to be productive or by the mind-numbing chatter of our television sets.

Results of Interviews

An interesting factor that affected which students were interviewed was the hesitancy of the people of the village to speak with an outsider. They have very little knowledge of research and for what purpose a qualitative study is executed. There was definitely the obvious, though not aggressive, presence of suspicion in this community towards me as well as an expectation from some of the community that I would have to compensate them somehow for their efforts. Even the participants who accepted to be interviewed were somewhat reluctant in answering the questions. Assurance from their literacy instructor who is also a very well-respected member of the community and the translator who is well-known in the area was necessary in obtaining participation. Both students interviewed were female which was significant. Haitian men are most often the persons who are in leadership positions in Haiti and it is still very much a patriarchal society in which women are not necessarily considered equals. To allow a woman to be in a position of authority or power over a man, assuming being interviewed by a woman would bring about such feelings, might influence whether a Haitian man would agree to an interview conducted by a female. Both the Haitian literacy program supervisor and teacher did not hold that bias towards me or at least did not allow it to interfere with the interview process. This may be in part due to greater exposure to foreigners and the amount of education they had undergone to which the students of the program had not been exposed. Furthermore, the training that each would have participated in for the program would have stressed a more liberal mindset.

In order to gain perspective on how the program was created and implemented, one executive director from AB Org 1 and one administrator of the program itself in Haiti were interviewed. The information garnished from these interviews provided an overview of the steps taken for concept development, implementation, and management of the program. This information provided practical ideas for replication. The interview with a teacher in the program provided data on how the classes are facilitated, how the people enrolled actually learn to read and write, and whether there was a connection to Freire's pedagogy of education for liberation. The teacher was asked to describe proceedings in the classroom and to provide examples. He was also invited to share opinions on whether the program had proved useful to the participants, in what ways, and also, whether it had had a visible impact on the community in which it was taking place. The teacher was invited to participate in two consecutive interviews of approximately one hour each in length.

Two adult literacy learners who were participants in the literacy program studied were chosen based upon the duration of their time in the program. However, choice was limited due to who was willing to participate. Some of the students were not willing. Again, the hope was to gain a more reliable view of the possible outcomes of the program and to that end, students who had had sufficient time in the program were desirable. Ideally, both program participants would have completed the program and had some experience in using the skills obtained, but this did not turn out to be the case. One of the students was in the second year of the program and hoped to eventually teach as a result, however, her education is limited and there is not much opportunity or hope that she will be able to afford University schooling. She has hope, however, as a result of the literacy classes. The other student was much older and was not seeking any

economic gain from the program, but rather, personal gain. She had only been in the program

approximately six months.

Analysis of Data

I chose this research topic out of interest peaked by an article I read about adult women in

a rural area of Haiti who had learned to read and write for the first time and cited specific social

change such as cessation of domestic abuse simply because of the elevated status gained through

literacy. Approaching this research, therefore, I believe that I was in part biased by the hope that

I would possibly hear similar stories of empowerment and real change. I chose Freire's

framework out of interest in his foundational work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which outlines

the nature of oppression to be such that it can be applied to a wide variety of contexts. This is

not to suggest that I see the whole world painted the Freire color and there were other options

that I considered before ultimately choosing Freire, such as James Coleman and the social capital

theory or Simone Weil, a social activist who wrote on workers' rights and the unjust character of

human suffering. I also looked at Ira Shor and Henry Giroux, other critical theorists and

educators who were both contemporaries of and influenced by Freire. Both were born and

educated in the United States and have contributed to the field of critical pedagogy. Freire's

primary bias is an anti-oppressive education summed up by his banking concept of education and

born of his experience in the oppressive political climate of Brazil at that time. Freire believed

that there should be no dichotomy between the teacher and student, a reality which is very hard,

if not impossible, to achieve. This belief was influenced by the great affliction of poverty and

disparity Freire witnessed among his students, the working class of Brazil. Due to a number of

factors, not the least of which was poverty, this demographic had no voice and that undergirded

Freire's philosophy of education. In reviewing a number of Freire's works as well as works by those who were heavily influenced by him, I decided his pedagogy was the best fit for the type of program I studied and the setting in which it occurred. The culture in which Freire worked and wrote was more similar politically, economically, and socially to Haiti today than those of these other theorists. Furthermore, the exact method of Freire's teaching even down to using crude objects from nature to facilitate lessons is literally used in the literacy program I studied. I synthesized his ideology into four markers which I decided to use to as a backdrop to analyzing my data.

From preliminary research into the organizations involved in this literacy program of which I had not had any previous knowledge or connection, I found that the culture, literature, and instructional methods delineated by Freire fit remarkably well in the context in which my research took place. But I did not know whether the data would reflect the markers of liberating education that I had extracted from Freire's framework. Once the data was collected, I reviewed it as objectively as possible to decipher consistent and prominent themes. After coding the data, I then again stepped back with as little bias as possible and asked objectively if the themes that I had found in the data indeed echoed Freirean perspective. I found that in this particular context, there was a significant relationship and that using the Freirean perspective allowed for a deeper exploration of underlying issues and proposed outcomes. I am not, however, suggesting that this is the only perspective through which to view this data or that this is a political manifesto of some sort. I am not advocating that there are easy answers to difficult questions or that there is one ideology that must be adopted here, namely, Freire's. The questions I asked are valuable in any context and there are many lenses through which the data could be seen. The manner in which I analyzed the data collected was based off of an extensive literature review examining not

only Freire, but other critical pedagogues and social theorists. The study itself was designed to be as comprehensive as possible given the limits of the intended region and demographic.

This research was essentially a study of a program and its participants. The data was framed around Freire's markers of liberating literacy and, as such, followed an analysis structure appropriate to program evaluation. The data was evaluated through categorical aggregation in which data was coded, themes identified, and meaning assigned. Furthermore, the language used to express themes and meaning assumed the characteristics of the participants' language in reference to the program. "The qualitative analyst works back and forth between the data (field notes and interviews) and his or her conception of what it is that needs to be expressed to find the most fitting language to describe the process" (Patton, 2002, p. 475). Patton (2002) begins by suggesting that the program's underlying processes be analyzed. This involves discovering the primary concepts of the program and labeling them. The language that is used to 'codify' or label these concepts should derive from the language used by the program participants. An example of primary concepts that may be identified would be the creation of the curriculum and the implementation of the program. Identifying some of the program outcomes was done inductively by reporting changes that the two participants attested to themselves and changes perceived by the teacher and/or program administrators, deductively by comparing the data collections to the stated goals and mission given by the organization for that specific program, and logically by categorizing changes in attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and skills of the participants according to self-report and external report by teacher and administrators. Interview data was interpreted qualitatively in that the data was viewed in its parts and as a whole once it was coded and meaning assigned, a process that involved dialogue between the data and the researcher's

interpretation. Another main perspective through which the data was coded and analyzed was Freire's markers.

Participant A, co-founder and chief executive member of AB Organization 1, worked at one point with the first of the Haitian organizations and then co-founded the American based organization to focus on education, health, agriculture, child and women's rights, and job promotion. Though quite removed from the actual scene of the adult literacy classes, Participant A was able to detail the processes by which the programs were initiated, supported, and operated, as well as attest to the benefits of the program through stories and proof of advancements such as small books and programs developed for the promotion of human rights and dignity written in Creole which is not a language often written in purely due to class discrimination. Even now in Haiti, if one attends a meeting with important parties present, the language of discourse is French. Creole is looked down upon and if one wants to present oneself as well-educated and of some import, one speaks in French. The educational system is French in model, method, and in materials. Creole, however, is currently recognized as an official language and written material in Creole is becoming more common rather than fading away. Indeed, more materials are being written and published than ever before. This may be due to the fact that Creole remains the language of the people as it is what the majority speaks. Part of the movement in adult literacy by the organizations involved in this program is the advancement of the native tongue through development of written materials in Creole.

Another point of interest in our initial discussion before the interview formally began was that Participant A had gained experience in Freirean pedagogy and ideology while conducting research in Brazil on educational methods/programs which had been influenced by Freire. It was

interesting to discuss my research from this perspective with one of my participants as I was not expecting any to have specific knowledge of the framework I had chosen. I was able to ask Participant A if he had any knowledge of the use of Freire in the adult literacy programs in Haiti. He was of the opinion that Freire's framework was not fully incorporated anywhere, even in Brazil due to its very abstract nature. He made the apt point that it is difficult to find literate persons in the country sides where these organizations' programs are operated much less persons able to fully grasp Freire's ideology and incorporate it into their teaching. It is his belief that there will be elements of Freire found, but not his model exactly. I would contend that there might be more Freire present than assumed but that it would not be called by that name. For instance, one of the participants interviewed in Haiti, the supervisor for the adult literacy program, stated, "…they already know lots of things but they don't know how to put it on paper." This echoes Freire almost exactly when he points out that the 'peasants' with whom he worked held essential knowledge within themselves and did not need a degree behind their names to represent a significant and useful sector of society. Often it seems that those who are educated are the only ones given credit for influencing culture and yet, Freire contends that the minute a person is active in the world, he/she is a part of making and remaking culture. Repeatedly, the participants of this study reflected Freire's ideology through their thought and methods without knowing who Freire or his contemporaries were. Participant A also discusses the interesting dynamic presented by a movement towards literacy brought about around 1986, which introduced a more holistic, progressive approach to teaching literacy. Duvalier attempted to quell this movement and was apparently unsuccessful as it was immediately before his overthrow. According to Participant A, the Catholic Church managed to overshadow the movement and bring back a more traditional approach to literacy learning. This movement begun

by a group called Mission Alpha would have had strains of Freirism in it, but according to

Participant A, it would be hard to know the impact as it so quickly became sub-profile. Overall,

it seemed that Participant A, while maintaining that consciousness-raising certainly was a part of

the mission of many literacy programs, it was not a primary focus or active part of practice until

perhaps a bit later. "I think Freirean ideas have definitely had an influence in our adult education

programs, but trying to use literacy as a tool for consciousness raising has been part of a lot of

literacy programs there but my guess would be that most adult literacy programs really don't

attempt to do much of that. And they may try to do that later on after people have mastered some

of the skills of learning to decode and have a basic level of literacy"(Participant A, Interview 1).

Participant A suggested strongly that a REFLECT session be observed while in Haiti

which I was able to do. In fact, he believed that useful results might be found if REFLECT

sessions, which are based most specifically on Freire's methodology, were compared to the

literacy programs that his organization supported which are not based upon Freirean principles

specifically.

REFLECT in Action

Freire (1974) posited that the naïve consciousness must move into critical transitivity that

marks the beginning of the ability to authentically engage in dialogue on social issues and

concerns, recognize how these issues are personally relevant, and decide what individual action

can be taken. While in Haiti conducting my research, I asked my guide and another adult literacy

teacher if they had heard of REFLECT to which they excitedly responded that they were

involved in using the method. They then offered to gather adults from the community to show

me how it was done as I would not still be in the village when they would be holding their

regular session. Unfortunately, the adults had to resume their evening routine before I was free to observe a REFLECT session with them so instead, the two instructors gathered children aged approximately between 7 and 17. Of course the very young children did not participate, but youth as young as 10 years of age became actively involved. I feel that though observation of this method was not included in the scope of my research targets, it is a useful adage that further illuminates methods of adult literacy as well as the unique way in which consciousness is raised when teaching literacy through situated literacy and democratic pedagogy.

The session began with the youth and the two instructors gathering in a circle and a discussion regarding common ailments experienced in their general area in different seasons throughout the year. Normally, this method involves more focus on the words, their phonemes and syllables, and creating new words with that existing word. This, however, was omitted in this session as it would not have worked with these youth as most were literate. The part of REFLECT highlighted in this session was the discussion that would start the identification of words to learn to write and then read. The topic of the discussion is meant to underscore a familiar topic or issue in which participants would already be versed as it is something from their daily existence. This is situated literacy and is an incredibly apt way to approach the teaching of reading and writing to adults. Adults are most often much more insecure about their lack of knowledge than children are; beginning a session with something to which they can relate, can extrapolate upon, and bring something to the table, promotes self-confidence that is almost essential for authentic learning and provides a sense of ownership over the material. The students were asked to identify various illnesses in their community. As they named them, they would write them on the ground in a diagram resembling a chart. Each illness was written on the vertical bar of the graph and each month was written in the horizontal bar. Discussion of what

season each illness occurred most in then ensued. The discussion included disagreement regarding the opinions of other students about the relation of ailment to month and also exploration of what caused the illness during that month and possible ways to avoid the illness. Students would volunteer to put an X in the month they thought a specific illness occurred.

Once the discussion was represented in the ground, in dirt, or in this case, on cement with chalk, the participants again discussed the thoughts represented in the diagram, how diseases such as typhoid and malaria were spread, what months that specific disease was most prevalent and why, and preventative measures. It was interesting to note that there were many false assumptions regarding how prevalent the diseases were and ways in which the danger of transmission was heightened. It was remarkable to discuss details such as where one would tie his/her donkey as relevant to the spread of cholera or dysentery or that commonplace diseases in Haiti that even children were familiar with as part of their lives such as dysentery, are rarely part of the rest of the Western world's experience due to proper hygiene, access to health care, and education. In the course of this post discussion, any person who would like to change the graph, what they wrote or what any other participant had written, was free to do so. It was even acceptable for participants to start completely over if they were dissatisfied with the representation or came to an entirely different conclusion after exploring the topic further in conversation. The participants felt free to disagree with what has seemingly been agreed upon and change it. In a broader sense this conveys the value of listening, being receptive to new ways of thinking, and recognizing the best way forward even if it is not the easiest or most comfortable. This engenders flexibility of thinking (an essential characteristic of critical thinking) and pursuing solutions when obstacles are encountered, while at the same time, enhancing a 'creator' attitude rather than a 'victim' attitude. A victim will find excuses for

personal failure and lack of progress and will rarely advocate for him or herself. A creator takes charge of his or her situation, is constantly challenging old assumptions and replacing with new, finding multiple solutions for one problem, working around and through obstacles instead of stopping and turning back in defeat, and making decisions that may seem difficult.

Once the discussion on the graph was finished and any desired changes had been made, the sketch on the ground was then transferred to a large piece of paper and the diagram was drawn to scale. The purpose of this was the more permanent placement of the represented conversation from which specific words would be extracted in order to learn to write and read them and then used to make new words. I felt that the observation of this session was very useful regardless of the use of children rather than adults and the omission of a few main elements of the true model. REFLECT is becoming a more widely used technique for adult literacy instruction in countries such as Haiti.

Replication of the Adult Literacy Program

One of the purposes of this research is to explore the steps taken and the methods involved in operating an adult literacy program in rural Haiti. Most of this information came directly from Participant A and indirectly from the other participants in the study as well as from information garnered unintentionally. The elements explored in my research on how this program was initiated fall under a few main categories: partner organizations, administration and funding outside of Haiti, and administration and operation in Haiti.

Understanding the network of organizations and persons involved in facilitating this operation can be complicated. Actually, the scope of my data collection is not sufficient to detail

in full this network of organizations and how each came into existence. The closer one comes to

the non-profit world, especially where smaller local non-governmental organizations are

involved, the more complicated the web that links one organization to another and to a specific

project becomes. For example, there is an organization in which I am involved in Haiti that has

operated for sixteen years and in that time has been funded by UNICEF, USAID, IOM,

CONCERN, and others. Sometimes the funding is channeled from the umbrella organization

such as USAID through another, larger local organization and then to the smaller organization.

Furthermore, the small organizations often partner with several of the same size who will

sometimes gain the funding and then spread the projects out sharing the funding. It can be

confusing.

AB Org 1: Background, Mission, Vision, Mode of Operation

AB Org 1 was founded in 1993 by Participant A and a friend both of whom had already

spent time volunteering in Haiti in the late 1980s for another organization based in Port-au-

Prince which is still in existence today and focuses primarily on educational initiatives.

Participant A and his fellow volunteer were so moved by their experience in Haiti that they

petitioned the organization they were currently volunteering with to start an offspring.

Participant A described the original organization he was with as the "fairly traditional mission

organization promoting education and funding programs of education in Haiti and we felt like

there were opportunities for learning that would go both directions." This research did not

encompass the existence or nature of a continued partnership. The mission of AB Org 1

according to Participant A is really "to bring people together across cultural and economic lines

for their mutual liberation" (Participant A, Interview 1) which is exactly the experience the two

founders themselves had had. Behind this mission is the belief that though the poor country is

most obviously the recipient of various types and methods of aid, those providing the aid are also

in a position to receive aid, only of a different kind. In this situation, the aid is more amenable to

an intellectual and emotional transformation:

> "privileged people from this country could learn and grow by having authentic
> exchanges with people on the other side of the global economic divide… In our
> experience, for those, like us, who grew up with lots of privilege relative to most
> people in Haiti, there was an opportunity to find more meaning in our lives if we
> go to a place like Haiti as learners rather than as people who are going to fix the
> problem and who simply look at Haiti as a problem that needs to be fixed. That
> was really the spirit behind the creation of AB Organization 1 and had an
> influence on the kind of pedagogy that we try to promote that creates in the
> classroom an opportunity for students to be real active participants in the
> educational experience and to not just be the recipients of the teachers wealth of
> knowledge." (Interview I).

There is a mutual benefit for the giver and the receiver, the student and the teacher, to the point

that these lines are ultimately blurred and the student and teacher, the giver and receiver, become

one in mutual liberation. Creating a mission therefore, specific to AB Org 1 and its area of

interest, was the first goal and a springboard into the rest of the project plan. It is important to

note that one will find generally two different kinds of non-profit operations in developing

countries: organizations which maintain control of their projects using an administrative team

comprised primarily of their own people (non-locals) and organizations which operate in the

locale of interest through local organizations staffed and operated primarily by natives to the

country in which the program is taking place. Both can work quite effectively, but it is an

identifying mark of an organization and is noteworthy in studying procedures and systems.

AB Org 1 chose to operate primarily in the latter manner, through local organizations

originated in Haiti and operated primarily by native Haitians. Participant A said, "We have had a

very decentralized approach, organic. …" (Participant A, Interview 1). When asked which programs he oversaw and what his primary job was with AB Org1, Participant A responded, "Unfortunately, I don't have as much involvement with our programs as I used to and at this point most of what I do is fundraising and management and occasionally I get to visit Haiti and see what is going on and I am involved sometimes with some program development." In fact AB Org 1, though the primary donor for this adult literacy program in Haiti, does not take the responsibility of overseeing the program and the administrators in Haiti. They make executive decisions such as other programs to fund, but are not directly involved in matters such as hiring or firing teachers, supervising literacy classes and writing reports, etc. The donor organization, in this case, must rely heavily upon and trust greatly the local organizations operating their programs. One of the means, then, to improve the likelihood of success is to initiate only programs determined through some form of needs assessment as filling a genuine need in the community. This helps to ensure a vested interest by the immediate parties who will end up being responsible for oversight of the program.

Determining Community Needs and Planning Response

There are various ways to assess the needs of the community in which an organization is planning on initiating programs. It is important for foreign based organizations to involve the local people when determining what these needs are. Often, however, assumptions are made, best practices are established, and a strategy is devised without sensitivity to community voices and cultural nuances. Challenges will then arise in the process which perhaps could have been avoided if proper investigation and needs assessment was done first. It can be tempting for organizations to create programs based upon "hot topics" which have a greater likelihood of

obtaining funding rather than focusing on carefully identified gaps. One of the ways in which AB

Org 1 determines needs in the community is by employing a technique developed by Harrison

Owen in the 1980s called Open Space. This technique brings together anyone interested in

participating in a community meeting and the agenda for the meeting is the first action item. The

group that has come together creates the agenda and organizes the meeting. Control is not given

to one person, and according to Participant A, it is not chaotic, but extremely effective. He

purports that an agenda is created within approximately thirty minutes and informs the content of

the rest of the meeting. Ideally, the agenda is representative of the entire population in a

community and addresses a wide range of concerns. Open Space is used by AB Org 1 as a way

of promoting general participation, rather than control by one. This provides the increased

probability of discovering the real needs of the local people rather than what the organization

perceives or assumes the needs to be.

> If a rural community, for example, invites us in to talk about how they can respond to the
> problem of children being sent away or illiteracy, one of the first things we would do
> would be to organize an Open Space meeting working with the local leadership and
> leaders from local orgs where people from various groups in the community are all
> invited to participate and where they can talk about the issues they think are important.
> From that you get notes and all sorts of info on what people feel passionate about, what
> they see as problems, opportunities, and you get a sense of who is willing to take
> responsibility and leadership for things. That is usually the context in which we find out
> what is important to the community. One of the principles of Open Space is **passion and
> responsibility**- so if you feel passionate about something, you have to do something
> about it. So people don't just complain, but have to take responsibility. It has been a very
> useful tool (Participant A, Interview I).

In the case of the HB Org 3, which most closely operates the program I studied, funding

is channeled through the AB Org 1 that is stationed and has programs in a number of different

areas of Haiti, primarily in Port-au-Prince, Jacmal, and LaGonave, to another HB Organization 2,

which then passes the money on to HB Organization 3. Each of these organizations is funded themselves by various other means and manages a variety of initiatives, with adult literacy being one of them. Though it seems unnecessary to have a middle organization involved, this is simply a product of the process of obtaining funding. The American based organizations or donors are looking for these local organizations that have programs they would like to fund. The organizations in Haiti are searching for money and often obtain it by supporting another, usually smaller, organization managing a program that fits the grant or mission of the donor. Often, even though, the third organization actually carries out the program, the other two organizations on the chain will also take credit for the program, in order to continue receiving funding. This seems to work in everyone's favor except sometimes the community, which the programs purport to serve if funding is gained through a grant which does not address a real need. Essentially, AB Org 1 is primarily responsible for obtaining funding, deciding through the process of assessment detailed above what programs they will be supporting, and then supporting these programs through local organizations all over Haiti with which they partner. The Haitian organizations are responsible for operating the program from training the teachers, to hiring new staff/faculty, evaluating and supervising the individual programs, writing reports which first are sent to HB Org 3 to AB Org 1.

Initiating the Adult Literacy Program

The adult literacy program I specifically studied, operated primarily in rural areas of Haiti. The countryside was the primary focus of AB Org 1's programs "because it tends to be where the more neglected people are." Participant A also pointed out that they do work with some local organizations in Port au Prince, but have generally focused on the rural areas of Haiti. The area

of my research is split into two main sections, Upper and Lower. HB Org 3 services six zones in

this area. In each zone the number of programs will vary based on the adult literacy rate,

availability of teachers, among other considerations. Each program can have up to twenty-five

participants with any more than that considered to large of a group for maximum effectiveness.

One teacher is responsible for each program and every zone has a Team that is comprised of the

teachers and the supervisor for that zone. There is one supervisor for each team. Once a month,

the team comes together to meet to discuss progress, obstacles, what has worked and what has

not, and particularly, it is an opportunity for the teachers to represent the communities in which

they teach in speaking of the problems they are facing. If the problem is something that demands

attention, each team can submit a proposal in one of the bi-annual general meetings of all HB

Org 3 members requesting assistance. For example, one proposal addressed the need for an

additional literacy program in an area which had an exceptionally low literacy rate. Participant B,

one of the supervisors for a team in the Upper area, described two other examples of instances

when a team (s) submitted a proposal to HB Org 3 requesting immediate attention to a problem.

> I remember I was the secretary for HB Org.3 and the team of Zones 5 and 6 in the
> Lower area had a big problem with water in 2004 and 5 and some people were
> dying without water. They wrote a proposal to HB Org.3 and HB Org.3 reacted
> with urgency to help them with water and after that Concern (Irish NGO) started
> to work on the water situation so it is better now. (Participant B, Interview 2).

Another example of this is when teams will ask for assistance with their communities' gardens
and land. Participant B said,

> You know agriculture is one of the domains of HB Org.3 and some of the zones
> will ask them for help with agriculture. They ask for training, seeds, and help with
> their gardens… Sometimes some zones create and maintain seed banks.
> Sometimes they ask for money for that and ORG.3 gives money to buy more
> seeds." (Participant B, Interview 2).

Recruiting Supervisors and Teachers

Supervisors are generally identified by HB Org 3's administrative team and can be former literacy teachers or from outside of the program as well. In one case, a former HB Org 3 supervisor described how he was identified by an American who was working in the adult literacy program and offered a position as a supervisor for the sections she was responsible for when she was not in Haiti. He obtained this position because he had begun his own literacy classes for adults after returning from studying in Port au Prince. (Appendix 6, p. 1, lines 3-12) The supervisor worked first for HB Org 3 as a secretary before moving into the position of supervisor for the adult literacy program in the Upper region.

The program teachers are generally recommended by each team in each zone rather than chosen by someone unfamiliar with the community. It is a practice to choose someone well-known in the community as cultural norms dictate certain standards of practice. For example, someone's worth as a teacher and how he or she is respected in one of these communities in rural Haiti is significantly influenced by his or her reputation in the community. As these are very, very small villages, the teacher will generally be well known by everyone before taking that position, and will already have earned the trust of the community, which is particularly important when taking a position where one is teaching other adults. This demands a certain level of sensitivity that is not required when teaching children. For example, Participant C, the adult literacy instructor, said, "I knew it would be different because I would be teaching adults. I knew that I would have to have more patience and acceptance with the adults because they are adults and they are my peers. I can push kids more than the adults" (Participant C, Interview 3). Adult

literacy instructor, Participant C, was already known and respected in his community as a leader. He had also had the opportunity for teacher training prior to becoming an instructor for HB Org 3. At first, when he conducted his classes, many adults would simply watch, but they eventually joined and in many cases, are now reading and writing at some level. When I asked Participant C how the literacy program came to his village he responded by saying that the community and its leaders came together many times to discuss the fact that many adults in the village did not know how to read and write. The community members asked Participant C to approach HB Org 3 which was and ask if they would consider opening a program in their area. HB Org 3 came to Participant C's village and interviewed a few candidates in the community for the teaching position. Participant C was chosen to teach the adult literacy classes in this community after testing and initial training.

> Our community sat together and discussed this problem and then we decided to send a leader to HB Org 3 to ask for help. I took this responsibility to go to them to talk to them about it. At first HB Org 3 didn't promise anything. They came to test some people like me to train to teach adult literacy in our community. They ended up choosing me (Participant C, Interview 3).

The candidates for adult literacy teacher are asked to take a test which involves questions about literacy, general information, knowledge of the Creole language, and ability to read and write. One candidate is chosen and sent to a week-long training session after which the candidate must again be approved based upon his performance during that week. During the training, the teachers are taught about agricultural concerns such as how to raise animals and how to properly care for a garden, they are taught about how to protect the environment and most importantly, how to teach other adults to read, write, calculate, and to become more aware of the world in which they live and how they can impact that world. Participant B described it like this:

> So like a mirror, you put the participant in front of a mirror to look at themselves. When that person looks at himself in the mirror that pushes the person to go fast and learn how to write down on paper. It motivates them (Participant B, Interview 2).

Once the teacher is hired, he or she is evaluated after four months of teaching and at four and a half months, an observation of his or her class is conducted.

Evaluation of Adult Literacy Programs

The evaluation of the individual literacy programs is a continuous, in-person, and somewhat informal procedure from what I could gather from Participant B. Some of the results of evaluations might be change of teachers, closing a program if they find that participants are not coming or teachers are not coming, relocation of a program to another town, or creating another group/program in the same town if there is a high level of illiteracy. The literacy program supervisor is required to write a report once every two months relating the activities occurring in the zone(s) for which he is responsible. Participant B stated that it is his personal practice to write a report once every month because he feels that this is more efficient. The reports are sent to the main town and then to AB Org 1 headquarters in the States. When asked what the best way to find evaluative results for the literacy programs would be, Participant B replied that that could be found in the Administrative offices of HB Org 3 in the main town. He stated, however, that he was not aware of a comprehensive written document detailing or evaluating the program at that point.

> Normally, up to now, it could be difficult to find out information about the program because we don't have a written document about the program. You can find out information from the centers or go to HB Org 3's office to ask them. Or you can find people who know a lot about the program too" (Participant B, Interview 2).

Participant A also indicated that gaining a holistic view of the program would be difficult due to the 'decentralized' approach of the whole operation, which was explained above.

One of the downsides of that, is we often don't have a real sense of the impact of our work because it is so spread out. We don't even know everyone who is using the materials. There is no one that could give you a summary of what everyone is doing with the things that we have developed (Participant A, Interview 1).

Instructional Methods and Materials

Basically, there is a two-pronged approach to HB Org 3's adult literacy programs. The classes are structured to emphasize learning to decode words in order to begin reading and writing, and then there is dialogue intended on teaching critical thinking skills. These two facets of the program are taught and practiced simultaneously in a multi-layered approach rather than lateral. One skill informs the other and vice versa in a reciprocal fashion.

The materials used to teach reading and writing were essentially quite basic. For the first year of the program, a literacy primer called the *Garden of Letters and Words* was used to teach decoding. However, at the same time, the teachers used a book of images and proverbs as well as material that is reflective of the world around them and chose words from that to be decoded. The approach taken is similar to teaching young children how to read and write. Teachers used basically the same materials if they had access to them such as pencil, paper, chalk, money, clock, etc. But they also used sticks, rocks, leaves, things from their environment. Haitians are very accustomed to using what is easily accessible, finding interesting ways to use common materials, and making use of everything they have to be used. The subjects covered in the programs are reading, writing, and arithmetic, though a whole range of other topics will emerge from the discussions which are part of the program and will be explained below. One of the first words that a participant will learn to write is his or her name. The process, explained by Participant B, is that first the teacher will teach the student "signs" or symbols which are already familiar but put together will form letters and then words. These symbols are a half circle, circle, dot, half line and full line- called a stick by Participant B, cross, and another half circle facing the other way. Once the participants have become familiar with these signs or symbols then they proceed to use them to write their names as they are shown by the teacher. From that point, other

words will be chosen to be configured out of the now known symbols. Words most often used

are words that are encountered in everyday life, such as a mango or season and then words will

be made from those words where one letter is substituted to make another similar word with the

same phonemes (very much like early literacy instruction). There will also be words of interest

that will emerge from the discussions and then be used to teach writing. The students are then

encouraged to write their own documents which can serve then as reading material for them as

well. When asked how this process works, Participant B explains that,

> In the centers they think about their problems, so when they come together in the
> center, they pose the problem- they talk about it. Like if they are talking about dry
> season, and then the teacher writes the title of the subject like Dry Season, they
> start to write something for the first page of the book. Each phrase should have
> pictures to describe…They talk about hunger. They draw something to show how
> people get hungry because they don't have food. They wrote books about
> environment, deforestation, how they environment gets dirty, and sometimes they
> talk about when they good environment…(Participant B, Interview 2).

There is also much that they discuss and learn that is relevant to daily life. Issues such as

protecting the environment, sanitation, proper care of self and sources of water, how to properly

build a place to go to the bathroom, and how to work together to improve the community, are

incorporated into the curriculum. Participant C stated,

> Sometimes we talk about environment and identify the problems we have in the
> environment to show how we can protect the environment…We teach them about
> the problems that you have when you poop anywhere. When they use bathroom
> without a latrine they learn that that will bring disease or some of them may dig
> hole then to make latrine. I propose to them to create a group and trade work with
> each other. We talk about jobs in the classroom…"(Participant C, Interview 3).

Often discussions are also initiated with the use of a book of images and proverbs that AB Org 1

developed along with other materials in partnership with Touchstones. One of the problems that

AB Org 1 encountered almost immediately was the lack of material written in Creole, the native

language of the people. There are very few books of any kind, fiction or non-fiction, written in

Creole in Haiti which can simply be discovered by wandering into any library one might find in

Haiti (usually only in schools) and taking a quick look at the contents therein.

To combat this problem, AB Org 1 subscribed to a few publications written in Creole

such as Bon Nouvelle, a publication distributed by the Catholic Church which came out once a

month in a small booklet. Participant A noted that it was a very useful publication including

activities such as word searches and also, interesting stories. "That was an attempt to provide

native language material that was interesting to rural Haitians." There were also other small

works like this that were written in Creole along with a Creole translation of the Bible. AB Org 1

were interested, however, is something more substantial and at that point partnered with

Touchstones to tailor a series they already had published targeting slower readers which took

excerpts from classic Western literature or folktales from a variety of cultures together into a

text. These excerpts could be read and discussed in one session ideally. The group reads the

excerpt together and then discusses. This method was adapted to suit the needs of AB Org 1 and

HB Org 3 for their adult literacy programs in Haiti. The book, designed to target pre-literate

students, came from this model and is comprised of short stories, proverbs, and images, which do

not necessarily have to relate to Haiti specifically, but will engender conversation.

> This is designed for pre-literates so that even as people are learning to read they can
> already be in an environment where there is openness and participation. So it is not
> simply the student looking at the board and tracing and mastering sounds. From the very
> beginning they are using their voice and reflection (Participant A, Interview 1).

The images and proverbs are most often unrelated. When asked why the book was

created in that manner, I was told that this was more likely to incite confusion and therefore,

discussion. It seems that a common assumption or teaching practice in Haiti is that there is one

right answer or one solution to every question. This book was designed in part to dispel that

belief. The primary objective was to create an environment where students who had not been

traditionally solid learners could find an avenue to express themselves, to display their

knowledge and thereby, build confidence in their own abilities. The key to the success of this is

that the material is of interest- it is something they have heard before, an image that invokes

thought or confusion, a story with a moral question. An example of a proverb might be "the

hunger dog does not play", "You may hate the dog but tell him his teeth are white" and "the dog

has four feet but he doesn't run in four directions." These are Haitian proverbs and there are

many applications which will provide extensive conversation. The instructor will then use this

material as a springboard for learning new words and writing original documents. Participant A

said:

> Students go from passive observers who have education imposed on them to
> active where they are reading things with universal themes that they can connect
> to their lives. Then they can discuss those with their classmates. Their experience
> and what interested us was that students who might not be traditionally strong
> students could thrive in an environment like that. Also, students who might be
> focused on trying to please a teacher were often put in a place where they had to
> think beyond what the teacher wanted to hear, and because there were no right or
> wrong answers they were in a context where what was valued most was the ability
> to listen and learn together with a group of people. (Participant A, Interview 1).

The discussions which came about from the materials which were intended to engender

dialogue are formally called, *Reflection Circles*, by this HB Org 3. The process was that first the

instructor or one of the participants read a proverb or a story from the book discussed above. The

group then separated into two or more smaller groups and discussed the story or proverb in each

group. Once each group had had time to sufficiently explore the themes, lessons, and various

other elements of the material, the participants returned to one group and discuss as a whole.

Participant C gives an example of one story and discussion, which took place in his class.

> "So we had a subject with something about 2 people who were living in a village. One of them was making a garden and the other was not doing anything. The one who was working was successful in his garden and he planted millet, and when he prepared it to eat he did not give the other man any of it to eat. So the worker ate and the other stayed in hard times, without food for many weeks. The one who wasn't working came to the worker and he said let's work together now and he said yes, we can do that. So, they make an agreement and this time he asked the worker to plant something that is going to grow well and everything that grows on top will be for me and everything under will be for me. The man who had not worked had seen that what the worker had planted previously had grown on top of the soil, so he was trying to benefit the most. So the worker changed everything and planted sweet potato which grows under the ground and so he tricked the other guy" (Participant C, Interview 3).

In the ensuing conversation the students discussed the actions of each man and eventually, asked

Participant C, their teacher, to explain to them who was right and who was wrong. Participant C

explained to me that he would not give them the answer. The point is that there are a few ways to

view this story and that there is not always one right answer or solution. If the teacher refuses to

give a definitive answer, the students are forced to learn how to find their own path by the use of

critical thinking.

After this original book, one of Touchstones former members relocated to Haiti to

develop further instructional materials in conjunction with AB Org 3's parent organization for

the Adult Literacy program. The books developed from this, called *Education as a Conversation*,

were "short and inexpensive" and could be read and discussed by both adults who were already

literate and those who were more in a "semi-literate" stage. These books are written in Creole

and focus on issues such as child slavery, sexual and domestic abuse, AIDS prevention,

prevention of disease, and agriculture. These are intended for the second year of the literacy

program and are used once the students have a basic command of the language and AB Org 1 found that generally, it was very well-received by the students. For some students, this was the first time and first place they could discuss instances of abuse which often in their culture are not even recognized as abuse. The environment is intended to be a safe place where open dialogue is encouraged.

Table III. Freire's Markers and Interview Themes

Markers	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E
Humanization	-focus on reality of Child Servitude: advocating for children's rights	-motivated to talk about things that affect them & think about change	-"handicapped" -"not completely in this society" -feelings of inadequacy -shame	-personal enjoyment in learning to read/write	-changing negative attitudes such as jealousy
Situated Literacy	-develop programs based on needs identified by the community	"we train them how to raise animals…"	-training on useful sanitary measures which apply specifically to locale	-learning of information useful for actual activities carried out on daily basis	-participant E helps by consulting on content of program
Dialogue and Democracy Problem-Posing and Consciousness-Raising	-Open Space -Also see lines 223-240 "passion and responsibility" -educational materials related to occupations and human rights Education as Conversation	-teams discuss community problems "so when they come together in the circle, they pose a problem…like the dry season…"	-story discussions which discuss ethical, moral, etc issues -when they use bathroom without a latrine they learn that that will bring disease or some of them may dig hole then to make latrine.	-lack of problem posing; relying on prayer to solve problems	-discussing differences of opinion -I think that if they can ask for some help aid or grant they would have money to work in the world.
Transformation	From "humiliation" to a "sense of belonging"	-advancement of techniques and methods of sustainable living -intergenerational impact -increased literacy rate	-improved economic/employment opportunities	-changing negative behaviours -opens your mind	-connection of education to dreams.

Humanization

Freire describes humanization as a process of becoming more oneself through awakening to the many possibilities each person possesses which enhance, and fill out, life. When there is a desire within oneself which is not able to be fulfilled due to an outside obstacle, this could be considered dehumanizing. If a person is kept from achieving to their fullest potential but does not realize it, this is still dehumanizing. This precept does not apply when a person is fully aware of other choices available, but chooses to remain in his or her current situation independent of any outside influence. In Freire's experience with peasants in Brazil, he sees the oppressive actions of the ruling class towards the masses as dehumanizing. This study does not pursue this view or aspect of Freire's discussion on humanization. Politics was only discussed in this study as a likely discussion topic and to find out if discussion on politics incited solid debates. Any comments on whether the government of Haiti is oppressive, or keeps its citizens illiterate and unenlightened in order to oppress are not appropriate in this study. Only the obvious and common knowledge failings of the Haitian state are outlined in this thesis. No assumptions are made as to intent. The term "humanization" in reference to learning to read and write signified that those activities were exclusively human abilities, powers that only our species on Earth possesses and therefore, being literate, makes us in a sense more human.

Humanization is equated here with a state of being, not doing. Often, people find their personal worth in the job that they have, how much money they make, how many people know their name. These things are certainly edifying and can certainly improve quality of life, however, these are things that the person does, products and fruits of her/his labor, not who the person is. Often, success is measured only by what can be seen, felt, and touched, but not by the

inherent self- worth that is part of being human. If self-worth was measured merely by what a person produces or by usefulness to society, then those who are unable to produce what the world values, therefore, by this line of reason are not useful and lack value. Perhaps, what the world values or does not value is debatable, but if it were to be measured by what people buy, watch, listen to, and emulate, it is clear that money, cars, beauty, privilege, and recognition are all high on the list. Those who contribute to the economic health of society are viewed favorably, while those that do not, cannot are marginalized. They have to start empowerment groups, unions, campaigns, non-profits, fundraisers, and new and interesting ways to get attention and services. The marginalized are the elderly, the physically handicapped, the crippled, the paralyzed, the mentally handicapped, the diseased, the uneducated, and unemployed, the illegal immigrants, and the poor. These people are drags on our human, physical, natural and other resources. They cost money, not make it. They are useless to society because they cannot or do not produce. They are burdens to be born with barely concealed impatience. "Those who are weak have great difficulty finding their place in our society. The image of the ideal human as powerful and capable disenfranchises the old, the sick, the less-abled" (Vanier 1998, p.45). This "ideal human" makes it difficult for those who do not fit the profile to feel worth, value, and purpose in this world. "How can …societies encourage the development of personal consciousness, freedom, and creativity...?"(Vanier, 1998, p.52). Humanization is the movement towards these three elements and toward a development of *who* "I" am rather than *what* "I" do.

In this study, humanization was considered that which adds to our inherent dignity, personal consciousness, freedom, and creativity; it was thought to be measured by feelings of self-worth, not by production. Reading and writing were seen as ends in themselves when placed under the category of humanizing activities. Literacy was a practice which develops critical,

analytical, and metacognitive thought which is unique to the essence of humanity as opposed to other life-forms. The ability to think with reflection was the notion of what identified us as human and not beasts. Reading and writing, then, are humanizing behaviors, whether they lead to a function which is materially productive or whether they simply develop "personal consciousness, freedom, and creativity" (Vanier, 1998, p.52).

In the first interview, Participant A, an executive officer with AB organization 1, described a few of the different groups that used the curriculum developed to target specific human rights issues pertinent to Haiti, some of which are child servitude, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, domestic servitude, and more. In many cases, these various forms of abuse overlap such as in the case of child servitude where it is quite common that the children are not only domestic slaves, but sexual slaves. In one instance, Participant A described how a group of women who had survived child servitude found the discussions, reflections, and lessons focusing on these topics to be particularly fruitful.

> I was with a couple women who are adult survivors of child servitude, we work with them too, and they use it in some of their programs and they talked about how valuable it was for them because it was the first context where they could begin to express their ideas and learn how to ask questions which is another important part of this. So it was a chance for them for the first time to express their thoughts and discuss with people in an open way in an environment where there is not something imposed on them (Participant A, Interview 1).

These women were possibly speaking of their negative experiences as child slaves for the first time because it was allowed. Child servitude is still quite common in Haiti; child slaves are called Restavecs and it is a widely accepted statistic that there are approximately 300,000 today in Haiti. For this reason, Restavecs may not feel comfortable expressing their distaste for a system so engrained into the fabric of a society. In this situation, however, in this literacy class,

these women were able to just talk about their experience. This program was intended to bring

awareness to the Haitian people themselves, particularly those in rural areas who, because they

are abjectly poor, will send their children to be domestic servants to families in the city, of the

wrongness of this practice. Many Haitians believe still that their children will be better cared for

in a wealthier person's home because that person will feed the child and often, education is

promised as well. This is a dehumanizing practice and it is an abuse, which AB Organization 1

seeks to combat through their educational literature and their literacy classes. Furthermore, to be

treated as a slave is dehumanizing as it compromises our value, worth, and inherent dignity. To

not be able to speak of the horror of such treatment is dehumanizing as it greatly diminishes the

likelihood of healing. Creating a space and environment where people can openly dialogue on

the various sides of such an uncomfortable issue, supports the effort towards humanization, as it

supports healing and prevention of further abuse.

Participant A shared another experience in his interview that directly related to the theme

of humanization. When asked for a concrete example of the need for literacy classes, he said:

> It may not be concrete, but people who have grown up without the opportunity to
> learn to read and write feel very excluded and feel often that they are not entirely
> human- that is the language that they use- and so when they learn to read and
> write they say that for the first time they feel human. That is probably the first
> thing. They feel humiliated that they are illiterate. They go into a church and can't
> read the hymnal or Bible and they are sitting next to someone who is literate and
> they feel very ashamed and so a sense of belonging , being human, belonging in
> their own society is probably the biggest thing. (Participant A, Interview 1).

It is interesting that Participant A does not first choose to speak first of a concrete gain from

these literacy classes of which there are numerous examples, even when the question itself would

have led him in this direction. After describing the words of the participants themselves talking

of feeling "not entirely human" he says, "that is probably the first thing" meaning that

becoming/feeling more fully human as a result of the learning to read and write is the most

significant benefit. When the literacy instructor, Participant C, was asked for his opinion the

value of reading and writing, he stated which, "

> I think that being able to read and write is valuable because if you can't read and write, it is like you are a handicapped person. It makes you feel that you are not completely in this society. Sometimes people feel ashamed to express themselves because they feel that they are not as smart or good as other people who can read and write. (Participant C, Interview 3).

This reflection illuminates what Jean Vanier discusses as the perception of the ideal human as

noted above. Each of us recognizes innately whether consciously or unconsciously what society

commends and awards. There is very little room for those who cannot "keep up" as in the case of

those who are not literate. The literacy instructor likens illiteracy to literally being physically

handicapped. Though it seems unfair and many challenge its existence, there is a norm or 'status

quo' which is recognized and upheld by society. Children are taught to conform to this norm in

school, at home, and on the playground. Adults hide inconsistencies with this norm and those

who cannot hide their differences are labeled as socially awkward. Whether we like to admit it or

not, most of us strive to fit into the norm, to conform to the status quo, so as to be admired,

desired, affirmed. And whether it is a good or bad thing, this ability to be accepted brings

confidence and pride. These are humanizing feelings.

There are ways in which handicapped persons can reconcile with their challenges and

ways in which they can progress which allow them to feel more a part of society. In the same

manner, these adults who neither read nor write are handicapped but can face the challenge and

progress through literacy classes. Learning to read and write even at an advanced age is

liberation from a handicap in a sense. In the case of Participant D, she did not mention a concrete

gain desired from the literacy classes. In fact, Participant D is easily 65 years old and will not be

pursuing employment or community leadership positions, so some might ask why she would be taking these classes. Her explanation was, "I like when they are teaching me how to write and read". Very simply put, she was gaining personal satisfaction and that is enough for her. The sense of being marginalized, not fitting into the 'ideal' or even the status quo of society can create feelings of jealously towards those who have the desired attributes or skills. Participant E, the younger of the two students, actually had begun her early education but was forced to quit due to lack of money, expressed a feeling of envy she had felt before towards those who were literate. "Before I was jealous when I saw people who could read anything and I couldn't read anything. Now I can read. I felt jealous because I would like to go far" (Participant E, Interview 5).

One of the most obvious and pervasive attributes of this system that is set up by AB org 1 and AB org 3 is the Reflection Circles. One of these Reflection Circles was recorded for the purpose of observational data for this study in order to have a better perception of how the classes work. Due to time constraints, only this aspect of the literacy classes was recorded. It was obvious from discussions with the participants, other students, and from the observation that the Reflection Circles were the favorite part of the literacy class. What was most often cited as so enjoyable was the opportunity to discuss and debate viewpoints, ethical issues, moral standpoints, methods, politics, history, and more. Participant B, the literacy supervisor said, "The adults discuss the issues in their community and that keeps them motivated to come to class" (Participant B, interview 2). These issues encompass the above continuums and whether or not something concrete is accomplished as a result, the mental exchange is exhilarating for the students. These discussions are then used as springboards for writing original documents, thereby, employing multiple elements of literacy instruction.

Humanization upholds the importance of the subject who is the focus of the literacy training, and the most significant factor in any such program. Freire's overarching and continual emphasis was on the human person with whom and for whom he was working. In order to stay true to this mantra, the organization first explored the genuine need of the community/demographic in which the program was conducted. Freire seemed to be able to do this almost seamlessly, to blend into the socioeconomic milieu and culture wherever he went. Discovering the real and not projected needs of the people was a starting point for his pedagogy. This may seem to be an obvious starting point for any humanitarian effort- but there are numerous examples of programs which are more beneficial for the organization operating them than those served. For example, there are many organizations that involved themselves immediately in the 2010 Haiti earthquake relief efforts with programs and projects developed and designed to rebuild, restructure, and bring immediate and necessary aid. An organization with which I was affiliated secured tents approximately two months after this earthquake (January 12, 2010) before the rainy season and at the request of a local Haitian organization. We were confident that this was a real need, not something that we projected upon them. Through a series of mishaps, the tents were still sitting unused in a warehouse in Miami by November, 2010. In our efforts to get the tents to Haiti, we had not asked ourselves whether this was still a need. Later, out of pure frustration, I asked this question and found to my surprise and chagrin that this was no longer a need! Therefore, we adjusted our tactics.

Situated Literacy

Situated literacy refers to the social theory that literacy is rooted in the cultural, political, economic, and systemic facets of a society. Therefore, it is something that changes as history

evolves and is different in all places. One way to shorten the learning curve in any situation is to base new information upon existing information. In education, background information or a person's schemata is connected to new learning so as to create a bridge where the old informs the new. It is easier to walk across a bridge over a chasm when hiking, rather than jump and it is the same for the mind when a new concept or skill is introduced. Using familiar material to teach new material facilitates the absorption of the new information. The student is much more likely to understand new concepts if they somehow relate to ones already understood. The concept can then be 'owned' by the student to be employed at his/her will. Discovering and extracting the background knowledge should be a starting point of educational ventures and this is as true in a traditional fifth grade classroom where new information in a textbook follows upon already learned skills in the fourth grade textbook, as it is in an adult literacy class in Haiti where men and women are learning to read and write for the first time. The most obvious way to do this is to use the familiar objects and scenes in the life situation of these learners as a springboard for discussions, writing, and then reading. There were numerous examples of this method of teaching in the program studied herein. From using real problems faced by the community to developing materials in the native language of Creole, AB Organization 1 and HB Organization 3 stress the placement of the literacy program within the context of the life situation of the learners.

When asked how it was that it was determined that the community in which housed the literacy program studied was chosen for the initiation of the program, the literacy teacher interviewed answered that the community had often discussed the problem of illiteracy among the adults in the village and determined that a solution should be found.

There were a lot of people in this village who did not know how to read and write. This is a problem especially when they go to the center for food, they should be able to sign their name and they couldn't do that, so most time they put their finger somewhere to sign. So, that pushed a lot of people to thinking about the fact that they could not read or write and that it was a problem. We thought about how we would solve this problem and we were trying to get in contact with an NGO or someone making work in this area. (Participant C, Interview 3).

Because this teacher is also a respected leader in his community, he was asked and agreed to approaching HB Organization 3, which was already known to be operating adult literacy programs in other villages on the island and the organization then came to assess the need and a literacy program was established. Rather than initiating a program that had not been determined as an actual need, HB Organization 3 was motivated to begin the program there because the people asked for it. It came from the people themselves who knew that their quality of life would be improved if the literacy rate improved. AB Organization 1 has a similar method of keeping program initiatives close to the people they are designed to empower through a meeting forum called "Open Space" developed by Harrison Owen in the early 1980's and is now used internationally in both the business and non-profit sectors. AB Organization 1 uses it in Haiti by inviting community leaders, representatives of local and international NGO's, and any other interested parties from the community to attend a meeting where the agenda was created by the attendees. Participant A, the executive officer interviewed, maintained that an agenda would be created within thirty minutes and therefore, the agenda items would be truly representative of what the entire population involved, not controlled by one person or party. "…(it) is especially useful in Haiti in getting past some of the barriers and obstacles that are created when there is a really rigid hierarchy or very authoritarian leadership or when you are trying to get groups to collaborate and is very useful as a network tool" (Participant A, interview 1).

Another aspect of the literacy program, which relates to the marker of situated literacy is the continual and pervasive focus on community problems from keeping water sources clean to how to use new and improved gardening techniques. Participant C discussed in detail the many practical skills focused on in his classes:

> Sometimes we talk about environment and identify the problems we have in the environment to show and how we can protect the environment. Sometimes we do something concrete; go down to the spring to clean it so to make it a place where we keep clean and don't let animals inside. We have lots of committees to take care of the water, to show them where they should wash the clothes, the place where to take a bath, the place where they should let the animals drink water, and where they can tie the animals. We teach them about the problems that you have when you poop anywhere…When they use bathroom without a latrine they learn that that will bring disease or some of them may dig holes then to make latrine. (Participant C, interview 3).

In these remote communities the realities of life are quite different than what Westerners experience even in rural areas. One of these differences and perhaps, the most difficult to acclimate to at first, is the predominant use of latrines. In some of the villages, many homes will use one bathroom space and latrines, cement fixtures with a hole in the middle, were not always the norm. Some families continue to use only a hole dug into the ground. Without exploring these details too deeply, it is not the cleanest, nor most sanitary way of disposing of bodily waste. A latrine will contain the human waste, keeping away animals that may eat it and spread disease and also, keep the rain from washing the waste into the dirt and away from the enclosed area. Another phenomenon which is a daily fact of life in rural areas of Haiti and other developing countries is the raising of animals for various purposes. One common practice is to tie animals by the community water source where water is drawn for multiple purposes such as cooking, cleaning, bathing, and brushing teeth. When animals are allowed to drink from and are tied near this same source, disease is spread through defecation, etc. A common discussion theme then

was the proper care of the community's water source. Another important practice in the community, which is discussed in these classes, is proper care of a garden. Sustainable ways of growing food is crucial in areas where money to buy food is often not available. One of the benefits of this program is that practices passed down from one generation to the next and never questioned are shown to be ineffective, or more effective ways are illuminated through class discussion and teacher direction. For example, Participant D explains that, "before I used to burn the soil and now I don't do that anymore and when I till the soil, I use the fig to put around the garden to make it more fertile." (Participant D, interview 4). Because the themes discussed and skills learned are relevant to the community life, the participants continue to attend the classes. Community issues are also dealt with at the organizational level but are derived directly from the framework of this program. As described in the section above relating to replication of the program, teams for each zone composed of the literacy teachers in each program meet once a month to relate the issues/problems the community is facing and in this way, the program stays rooted in the life situations of the communities it serves.

Finally, one of the most poignant examples of situating the literacy within the community the program serves was the initiative to develop materials in the native language of the people, Creole. As explained previously, the school system in Haiti is modeled after the French system. The materials and classes in most schools are written in and conducted in French, though the majority language in Haiti is Creole which, while heavily influenced by French, is a mixture of a number of languages. This not only discredits the language of the people, but also makes it much more difficult for those who do not speak French to learn to read and write. The majority of these adults do not speak French because they have either not attended formal schooling at all, or did not go far. They speak Creole and the adult literacy classes are taught in Creole. Obviously one

needs to learn to read in part by reading, but for these adults who do not speak French and are

learning to read and write in Creole will not benefit much from materials written in French. AB

Organization 1 recognized this as an obstacle to the success of the literacy programs from the

inception and has sought to address this problem through the partnership with a publishing

company in the States through the development of materials written in Creole.

> So we adapted their methods and materials and one of their former staff members
> came and lived and worked with us in Haiti for a number of years and we
> developed a number of books that are text (very short text) where literates and
> semi-literates were able to sit, read, and discuss together. They were short and
> inexpensive which was ideal for us. And after students have a basic level of
> literacy they would start on this program and our experience was that students
> absolutely loved this program and it is used all over Haiti now. There are lots of
> different groups that use it and in different contexts too. (Participant A, Interview
> 1).

Furthermore, in developing original materials written in the language that the adults were

learning to write and read, allowed for the insertion of some of Freire's ideology. Issues such as

Child Servitude or Domestic Abuse were incorporated into the text and then employed in the

Reflection Circles. A book of Haitian proverbs was also developed as material for the classes.

Participant A states that. …they have developed a book of images and Proverbs. They take

images from wherever or they take proverbs like, "the machete strikes the water but it does not

leave a mark" (Participant A, interview 1). This is designed for pre-literates so that even as

people are learning to read they can already be in an environment where there is openness and

participation. So it is not simply the student looking at the board and tracing and mastering

sounds. From the very beginning they are using their voice and reflection.

Finally, the language of a people is part of their identity. It is implied in Haiti that Creole is somehow not worthy of being used for education as almost all classes and materials in Haitian schools are in French. The upper class in Haiti will most often speak in French and this would be the language one would hear in a business meeting in the more elite echelons in Haiti. If one characteristic of a population is stifled, scorned, discredited, it is a way to oppress that group of people. If a society tries to strip a people of parts of their identity, it is oppressive. Those who are members of the group with the undesirable characteristic are somehow viewed as less than ideal. These adults face this even as they assume the challenge of learning to read and write for the first time. By recognizing the native language in the attempt to produce educational materials in Creole, the program embraces that adult as a whole, fully accepting his/her entire identity. If one needs an example of what it means for a literacy program to be empowering, this would be an illustration.

Dialogue and Consciousness-Raising

Dialogue is the practice of open exchange of ideas, thoughts, and theories. Open dialogue naturally engenders democracy in that it is a horizontal relationship where two people are engaged in an ideally non-judgmental discussion where ideas are automatically valid until proven otherwise. Old suppositions and stereotypes, rigid ways of thinking and acting, can and should be challenged in this atmosphere. This is one of the ways that possibility for change is created and doors are opened to new practices. Furthermore, if done right, a dialogic classroom breeds a climate where students are encouraged to speak their minds, become brave about voicing thoughts and ideas, and even contradicting other classmates or teachers when not in agreement. One would think that in a country where the primary model of government has not

been one of democracy but one of totalitarian rule, despotic authority, and oppressive military presence, dialogue would not come easily. In observation, however, of the Reflection class and also of daily life, one may be confused at the overabundance of participation and equality of expression. The communities are actually natural breeding grounds for dialogue in that life generally revolves around a three mile radius or smaller of activity. People in Haiti generally work, eat, play, learn, and socialize within this small radius of walking distance. This is especially true in the rural areas, as would be true in any country, but also in the city. The Western reality of suburbia is not a reality in developing countries. There is no "urban sprawl". Villages outside the city are considered the country and one does not generally go there as a commuter-type activity. In the same way, if one lives outside the city, one stays in that general locale. Haitians are outside all day long, interacting literally constantly. This living situation leads to tighter communities. There is continual dialogue in the marketplace where four women will be working the same stand. Children can be seen in the streets in front of houses, at the marketplace stands all day long braiding each other's hair, playing rousing games of soccer, or just simply "hanging out". Talk is a constant manifestation in Haitian life.

In the adult literacy class observed there was a plethora of easy conversation centered on the topic of the lesson. In the interviews it was clear that dialogue was not a foreign practice. In traditional schooling in Haiti, one is likely to observe silent classrooms where students are dutifully copying from the chalkboard, quietly and religiously taking notes on loose-leaf papers. What was more to the point of this study then was what type of dialogue the adults were engaging in in these literacy classes. From the observation, it was clear that a basic discussion of the didactic story was underway. Some different points-of-view were discussed. At the end of the group sessions, the class discussed as a whole. Here, again, it was clear that discussion went back

and forth and that often, one person disagreed with another. In the interview with the teacher, however, what seemed most telling was that he mentioned that the students still come back to him for the answers. One of the goals of the program which AB Org 1 and HB Org 3 had developed was to purposely not give answers or provide material for class discussion which was easy to understand or had only one way of being understood. For instance, there was a book that was used that had images and proverbs in it and was designed to encourage and be a springboard for critical reflection and discussion. An interesting element of the book was that the proverbs did not relate to the images in most cases and if they did it might even be accidental. It seemed illogical that this was the intention of the author and when asked to explain it, Participant A stated that the author purposely designed the book to generate confusion that then necessitates problem-solving techniques.

> …you wouldn't want to necessarily connect the Proverbs to the images because that would be telling the students that this is what the image is about and there is an emphasis on letting them come up with their own interpretation and putting them in an environment where they are learning to not just decode words on a page but to practice comprehension and be exposed to various interpretations and so that when they become literate and they read a text, they aren't trapped into the belief which is very common in Haiti that there is only one way to understand and apply it…(Participant A, interview 1).

Furthermore, it was also important that the teachers learned to challenge the students in this manner which meant to ask them to solve a problem themselves. This was not an involuntary behavior for most teachers whose profession it was to give answers, direct and guide, and dissolve confusion. In Haiti, the culture is such that persons who hold any paid position or have family money (even if it is only identified by a nicer wardrobe) are somewhat revered. They are respected for their positions and material goods. Possessing higher status due to those things is

not uncommon in developed countries as well, but the extent to which it occurs and is manifested in Haiti is much more exaggerated. Even sunglasses can be a sign of status in Haiti. There is so little opportunity and so much poverty that Haitians crave an escape and tenaciously cling to any small prospect which they have even to the extent of disregarding the suffering and struggles of their fellow sisters and brothers. An unfortunate side effect of poverty is an attitude of self-preservation which excludes a concern for the welfare of others. This is relevant in describing the difficulty of creating a democratic environment in the classroom in Haiti. Not only do teachers in general struggle with creating a democracy in the classroom in part because the position is naturally one of power and command, but also, this is even more prevalent in Haiti because the overall attitude is that if one holds a position of prestige of any sort, one capitalizes on that. "…teachers are so used to an environment where there is a right and wrong answer or a moral to the story and it is hard to break them from that habit or from the tendency to favor one group of students over another because they happen to agree with them." (Participant A, Interview 1).

According to Participant A, the program engenders democracy through incorporating dialogue and problem solving into the curriculum. This allows the students to practice thinking about issues in a different way. Ideally, the students will begin to open their minds to other ways of thinking which will lead to other ways of living their daily lives which will then lead to solutions for the problems that are ongoing, chronic, and endemic. These adult students can begin to believe through this process that it is possible to change systems. One of the students, Participant D, who is probably 65 years old, summarized simply but poignantly, "yes, I like the discussions because when you are discussing it opens your mind" (Participant D, Interview 4). The discussions focus on the life situations which are problems such as malaria or issues which

are important to the welfare of the community, such as who is running for office and what the

Haitian government is doing to build infrastructure, provide better access to education,

healthcare, and employment/better practices such as how to fertilize a garden properly with the

natural resources available to rural communities. The students are using their voices and

developing their ability to reflect upon and think critically. The climate created is one of

openness and participation. In the session observed, it was still very clear that the teacher was

facilitating the whole process and the students very clearly looked with respect upon him and his

leadership. This did not present as a good or bad thing in the situation. It was clear that the

students felt comfortable discussing differences of opinion openly with their classmates as well

as with the teacher. Participant A described the Reflection Circles, which he posited was the

"essence of what it [the literacy classes] were about":

> it puts them in a place where they are practicing the skills that they need for
> *democracy* and they are using these skills to *practice democracy*. They are using
> these skills in their families and communities. Really, the goal behind *Reflection
> Circles* is to put literacy students in an environment where they are practicing
> democracy and to build it from the ground up at the same time that they are
> learning practical skills. (Participant A, interview 1).

Participant A also described what he saw as a "thirst" for democracy in Haiti. He spent an

extended period of time in Haiti after Duvalier (former president) fell from power and recalled

that people everywhere were talking about democracy "without having a real sense of what it

was" but he believed that at least there was a growing concept of what responsibilities and

actions are part of building and practicing democracy. There was no further comment on whether

progress had continued in the general populace in regards to an understanding of how to practice

democracy. It does not take much more than a cursory study of Haiti's elected officials response

to and involvement in the recent 2010 Earthquake in Haiti to comprehend the lack of a solid

governmental structure or body. Certainly, it could be considered logical to look to education as

a platform upon which to slowly change this situation and teach young Haitians how to

understand governmental affairs and politics.

Another way that AB Organization 1 and HB Organization 2 and 3 developed democratic

practices through their programs was in a method called Open Space (OS). This was a manner of

developing an agenda with the participation of all the members who had been brought together

for the meeting. In this manner, the issues discussed and concerns addressed were ideally more

representative of each member present and the communities they represented. Another

component of Open Space is that there was the expectation that if a member presents an issue or

problem, then that member is also responsible for identifying and executing a solution. It was

emphasized that this was not a place or time for merely complaining without planning to do

something about it. In describing Open Space technique, Participant A said, "You bring people

together and they have real freedom to create the agenda and talk about the things that are

important to them. One of the principles of OS is passion and responsibility- so if you feel

passionate about something, you have to do something about it" (Participant A, Interview 1).

In the classroom, basic literacy skills were taught alongside dialogic skills. In the first

year, this was done primarily through the Reflection Circles. When asked for a specific example

of dialogue, discussion, and consciousness-raising in the classroom, Participant C described a

Reflection Circle that had been done using a story which was intended to create discussion.

> So we had a subject with something about 2 people who were living somewhere.
> One of them was making a garden and the other was not. The one who was
> working was successful in his garden planted millet. He prepared it to eat and he

didn't give the other man any to eat. The worker was able to eat and the other stayed hungry. The one who wasn't working came to the worker and he said let's work together now. So, they make an agreement and this time he asked the first guy, let's plan something that is going to grow on top of the soil and everything that grows on top will be for me and everything under will be for me. So the worker changed everything and planted sweet potato which grows under the ground and so he tricked the other guy. (Participant C, interview 3).

After the story was described, Participant C discussed the reaction of the students in regards to the issues embedded in this story and it seemed the discussion was quite varied and interesting with many different opinions presented. At the end, Participant C stated that the students asked him for the answer.

So the problem as they wanted an answer about that and they wanted me to give the answer. So I was explained to them that I ask them questions to push them to think about it. So when they came to me to give them the answer, I told them it was a story to help them discuss so everyone can give their opinion. (Participant C, Interview 3).

Participant E, one of the students, discussed other types of topics that were raised in class. She said that they talked about the money that they heard the Haitian government received from International Aid and about the money from the World Bank. She mentioned that many of them questioned where that money goes and why the effects of it were not seen in their communities. "Sometimes we have heard lots of news from the radio that Haiti has a lot of money from US and World Bank and we don't see any of this money. They never come to see us or buy us some rice or something" (Participant E, Interview 5). Further, Participant D gave an example of ways that the community had learned to solve problems through these Reflection Circles;

I remember one story reflection circle. There were two mice that had a piece of cheese and they wanted to share but they didn't believe in each other. So they went to the court and asked the judge to help them and the judge was a chimpanzee. So he cut the cheese and every time he cut it he ate it until the cheese

> was done. In the community if they have trouble between them they should
> discuss and come to a solution between themselves. (Participant D, Interview 4).

So whether it was a story that helped to encourage improved communal relations through discussion and dialogue, or the raising of awareness about injustices and inequities present in their lives which they wondered how to change, the literacy classes brought about critical reflection and an element of democratic practice. Participant D stated that she enjoyed the Reflection Circles and viewed them as a positive aspect of the program, "people can express themselves about the text and how they would relate the text to their life and then they can discuss whether they agree or disagree and then they can take the responsibility to teach themselves" (Participant D, Interview 4).

Transformation

In taking the responsibility to change oneself, transformation has occurred. Ultimately, the only sure thing one can change is oneself. This is the only person/thing we truly have control over and in changing ourselves, it is possible that the world around us will change, but if that transformation is not made, change around us is random, not a product of personal effort. Freire views transformation as the moment where the consciousness has gone from a submerged state to being fully aware of self in relation to others and the world. At this point, the person truly has a choice as to whether there is change necessary or if the current state of affairs is acceptable. Many followers of Freire and perhaps Freire, himself, would likely argue that change is always necessary, that systems can always be improved, that there will always be oppression to be confronted. Whether this is true or not is not the crux of this marker. Rather, it is a new consciousness, an openness of mind which is ready to challenge accepted norms, and the

knowledge that each person has a profound possibility of impacting the world around them. It already did, merely by means of participation in the World through working, eating, buying, and creating that encapsulated the essence of transformation as defined by Freire.

Perhaps the ideal way to chart transformation as a product of a program such as the one studied here, would have been to frame the study so that research would be conducted over a series of visits. I was lucky enough to be able to revisit the exact location of my research and speak with the exact participants in my research six months after I had collected my data. The two-year program had ended in this time period and I found that the perspective I gained from returning was interesting and would have been useful for reflection on my earlier assumptions and as a valuable extension of my original data. Since an extended study was not deemed possible at the time that my research was being framed, transformation will be reviewed in the same manner the other markers have been discussed, through the words of the participants. In reading through the data, specific categories emerged underneath this marker; transformation of those being served and those serving, observable transformation with recordable examples, and transformation signified by a change in attitude or thinking.

In discussing the mission, which in two words can be described as "mutual liberation", of AB Organization 1, Participant A discussed why he and the other founder had created the organization:

> In our experience, for those like us who grew up with lots of privilege relative to
> most people in Haiti, there was an opportunity for us to find more meaning in our
> lives if we go to a place like Haiti as learners rather than as people who are going
> to fix the problem and who simply look at Haiti as a problem that needs to be
> fixed. That was really the spirit behind the creation of ___ and had an influence
> on the kind of pedagogy that we try to promote that creates in the classroom an
> opportunity for students to be real active participants in the educational

experience and to not just be the recipients of the teachers wealth of knowledge. (Participant A, Interview 1).

The words "mutual liberation" themselves signify transformation because to be liberated is to be changed. Mutual liberation happens when both parties authentically seek knowledge from the other recognizing the inherent worth of the other. Participant A pinpointed an element of service upon which many volunteers have not reflected. In serving, one has the opportunity of engaging in dialogue with the party being served and in this manner, becomes "the served" as well. In the classroom, the teacher and student exist in a horizontal relationship described by Freire as one of mutual giving, a continual exchange of lessons to be learned.

There were many instances within the research in which concrete examples of a tangible transformation as a product of the literacy classes were identified. Many of these were repeated in each interview signifying the importance of that specific benefit of the literacy classes. Each of these were illustrated only through one of the participants words. The primary examples of concrete transformation cited by the research participants were the ability to sign one's name, the ability to record business transactions, improved practices in community living in reference to cleanliness, disease prevention, and social behaviors, increased knowledge of how to grow one's own food, increased sense of privacy and independence, and knowledge of their children's academic progress.

Every participant mentioned the benefit of being able to produce a signature as a real benefit of the program. When asked to give an example of the importance of the literacy program, Participant C said:

> There is a young woman who went to get food in a center and she used to use her finger as a fingerprint to sign her name. Since she came to my program I helped her to learn to write and when she went back to the food center, the people who used to make fun of her could see now that she was writing and she felt proud about that. She came back to the center and said thank you. She was so happy and that encouraged other people to come. (Participant C, Interview 3).

Each of the participants also cited the ability to keep better records in business transactions as a tangible benefit of the program. One of the primary ways of making a living in Haiti is through very small businesses such as selling bread, candy, or eclectic items such as batteries, phone cards, and windshield wipers. In rural areas, many women sell what is grown in their own gardens, or water that they take from the one community source and bag to sell to thirsty travelers whose main mode of transportation is walking everywhere. Participant B excitedly explained that this was, in his mind, the first and foremost area impacted by the literacy classes.

> The first benefit: most of them are little market women or men and they always have a deficit when they sell. They go into debt and they go into debt because they used to sell to people without money and then would not be able to take down the name of that person they sold to who didn't have money. They just put a cross on the wall of the house to signify the transaction. Now they write down the name of the person who buys from them and who still owes them, so now even if you don't want to pay them, you have to. (Participant B, Interview 2).

Through the discussions in the Literacy classes, issues such as proper care for the environment as well as disease prevention and cleaner living habits were discussed. These discussions brought about concrete change in the communities. Participant C illustrated this when he said:

> Yes, sometimes we talk about environment and identify the problems we have in the environment to show and how we can protect the environment. Sometimes we do something concrete such as going to the spring to clean it to make it a place where we keep clean and don't let animals inside. We have lots of committees to take care of the water, to show them where they should wash the clothes, the place where to take a bath, the place where they should let the animals drink water, and where they can tie the animals. (Participant C, Interview 3).

[IC: generally, the animals were tied next to the water source so that they could drink while water was being gathered, but this caused the problem of animal feces contaminating the water, so those who were educated against this try to encourage new practice in this]

I found it particularly interesting when I had the chance to compare a village very similar to this village on one of my other journeys in Haiti. The two areas were both very rural, up in the mountains, and occupied by very poor Haitians sustaining themselves in very similar manners. Perhaps one of the most blatant differences was the bathroom practices in both communities: in the one where I had done my research, the village members used either their own latrines or a neighbor's to pass a bowel movement. In this other community, the habit of defecating in the open, not too far from where one lived was still quite common and accepted. In the literacy classes studied, this exact issue was addressed, because it is small adjustments in behavior such as this that could make a significant difference in the overall lives of the community. In this specific case, the spread of disease was minimized through the improved practice of using latrines and keeping the waste in a contained environment. In the same vein as improved hygiene practices, AB Organization 1 and the other organizations stressed Sustainable Agriculture as a teaching point. There was a series of five books dedicated to this topic, which were part of the program. How much of these books was covered depended upon frequency and focus of each individual program. However, it was standard that improved agricultural practices were part of this program. Reflection Circles and open discussion which stemmed from using words, phrases, and themes centering around issues such as better gardening techniques taught valuable information relevant to progress. Participant C listed a number of benefits he felt he personally

experienced due to being able to read. One such benefit specifically related to his growing of his own food. He said:

> Because I can read and write that helps me to live in a better way. Like I can make a garden and I make sweet potato. Sometimes someone can make a garden but doesn't get anything from it because that person doesn't have any knowledge of how to be successful with a garden. For me, I have a good knowledge, so as long as it rains I know I will be successful. So reading and writing helps me to do lots of things in life. For instance, reading has helped me to learn that I don't need to put fire in the soil to make it rich. I can use leaves and compost to make it very fertile. Because of knowledge I have a life and I have a garden and I eat from it. (Participant C, Interview 3).

This last sentence taken at face value clearly showed the benefit this man had received from learning to read, learning to grow food successfully, which in itself was supportive of a transformative event. But when read symbolically and digested as such, there was a much more profound and arresting meaning present; the life-giving nature of food was analogous to the life-giving nature of literacy training.

Not only had the literacy classes made a difference in technical practices in the community, but also in social behaviors. Participant D recounted how often men and women would argue loudly and inappropriately in public and could be heard throughout the village. She stated that the adults spoke about proper ways to resolve disputes and she insisted that it had made a concrete difference in changing this negative behavior. "Sometimes when two people have some trouble, they should go to the court in the Main Town. Sometimes they are yelling at each other in public, but now people meet each other and solve the problem without them having to go to Main Town" (Participant D, Interview 4).

Another important result of the literacy classes had been the increased involvement in the children's academic affairs. Parents who could not read or write felt embarrassed to go to the child's school to speak with the teachers and did not feel competent in assisting their children with their homework.

> "Parents especially want to be able to follow the progress of their children's schoolwork and it is very difficult for them. They feel very reluctant to even go to the school, very timid about that until they themselves become literate. It is a mystical place for them and a scary place for them, school is. So in terms of getting parental involvement in schools, adult literacy is very important" (Participant B, Interview 2).

A more interesting and somewhat amusing problem was the inability of these parents to confirm that their children are telling the truth about their grades. Just like parents here often do, some Haitian parents would give their children incentives to achieve higher grades. Children would receive a piece of candy or a party as a celebration of good grades, therefore, many students who knew that their parents could not verify the grades would simply say that they achieved a higher score than they really had. "The kids will lie in order to get the gifts even if they have not done well. Now that the parents know how to read and write, they can verify if the kids are telling them the truth," Participant C said. (Participant C, Interview 3) As mentioned earlier, Haiti is one of the countries with the largest amount of income source generated by remittance and often, relatives from the diaspora will send money, letters, and other correspondence. Those who cannot read or write must put aside their desire for privacy and ask someone to read the incoming letters and write the responding letters. When they go to the bank to receive a wire, there must be someone with them to sign for the money. Haitians can be very private people who often will not trust each other in financial matters. As Participant B said, "they don't want anyone else to know about this [money sent via the Diaspora] so if they can read and write, no

one else needs to know about it. Now they can read and sign for themselves" (Participant B, Interview 2).

Probably one of the most powerful transformative events detailed in the data gathered had both observable and immaterial manifestations. There is a section called *Education is a Conversation,* which is part of the second year of the program and had a three set series to it focusing on Sexual Reproductive Health, Sustainable Agriculture, and Child Servitude. This program had been used in many places around the world for over 15 years at the time of my research. HB Organization 2 began to use this program in 2002 training community leaders or persons with similar stories to share their experiences and passions in promoting communal growth and the advancement of health and human rights. This part of the literacy program was designed to have two effects. One was to take away the shame associated with sexually-transmitted diseases, former slavery and abuse, and to stop the practice of keeping children as domestic slaves. This part of the program not only encouraged the practice of open and critical thinking, there was a healing possible in the creation of a safe environment within which victims could voice their shame and hurt often for the first time. Participant D gave an example of a concrete result showing the influence of *Education is a Conversation*:

> Last week, I got some photos of people who had participated in this program…-
> the *Education as a Conversation* on the Children's Rights program- There were
> participants in this program who had sent their children away to live in the city
> and they had lost track of those children and I got stories back that they decided to
> go find their children and bring them back home. So there are the dramatic stories
> that their kids tell them about the treatment they received and then the dramatic
> stories of the reunion and being back at home, and getting kids into school.
> (Participant D, Interview 4).

The last piece of concrete evidence of the transformative nature of this program is the improvement of employment opportunities. Many of the adults who went through the programs became employees of the organization as in the case of Participant C, who stated that because he could read and write, he was able to get paid to teach others to do the same and with the money, he had expanded his garden which provided food to his family. Despite those stories, it seemed that, in general, there just simply was not enough opportunity for employment particularly the more rural the area to be able to find a job simply because one had learned to read and write in their native tongue. Participant C suggested that one could search in another area such as Port au Prince for a job and might have more success due to being literate.

One of the social outcomes of becoming literate was an inner transformation that seemed to take place with the new literacy skills. Shame accompanied illiteracy according to the majority of the participants and the sense of well-being was diminished. Some of them discussed how it was embarrassing and limiting not to be able to read the words to the music or read aloud a verse from the Bible at the Church service. This kind of transformation dealt with the psycho-social being. But there was also the mental transformation that took place when these adults witnessed the power of discussing issues until solutions were found. There was an awakening of the consciousness that changed ways of thinking which were negative and inhibitive and released the ability to critically review old and new practices, government structures and elected officials, involvement of non-governmental organizations in the affairs of Haiti, and the reality of the impact that the individual could have upon culture through simply interacting with and participating in the world in which they lived.

Participant A stated,

> When people really become literate in the fullest sense of that word they
> are able to pick up something written in their native tongue and read it and
> understand it and discuss it. They are able to pick up their pencil or pen
> and write a letter. And they are able to talk openly with other people and
> they are also able to read the world. They become more conscious of all
> the various forces around them and systems that they are a part of and that
> to some degree control their lives. They become much more powerful in
> building the kind of life and community that they want. (Participant A,
> Interview 1).

Participant D, the oldest participant, concluded her interview with the words, "I would like for Haiti to have a new face" (Participant D, Interview 4). Her dreams for Haiti and for her future children had expanded and become more substantial, just as the young woman, Participant E, admitted that now, she had a dream for herself and for the future of Haiti, "Yes, I have a dream. If I got a good education I would like to come back here and start a school. If someone couldn't pay, I would say okay you can send your kids to me anyway, and I think in this way I could help Haiti" (Participant E, Interview 5). The organizations which had partnered to develop, facilitate, and operate these adult literacy programs believed that as more Haitians began to think in these ways, the country as a whole had a chance at transformation.

In the next chapter, the conclusions drawn from the results of the interviews will be discussed. Recommendations for replicating this program and suggestions for further research will also be detailed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Chapter V discusses the findings, significances, limitations and assumptions, implications for further research, and conclusion in light of one purpose of this research which was to discover what economic, social, and communal value there is, if any, in teaching literacy to adults who had never learned to read or write in their own language. The chapter begins with my view of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Then, the recommendations for replicating the program are stated. Subsequently, a discussion of the limitations of the research as it was conducted and the generalizability of conclusions is discussed. Finally, recommendations for further study are given followed by the conclusion, references, and appendices.

Paulo Freire's framework was used to describe the ideology of what is meant by empowerment when related to literacy and social-communal progress as a result of literacy learning and parallels were drawn between the data collected and Freire's major precepts delineated in this thesis as four markers: (1) humanization, (2) consciousness raising, (3) dialogue and democracy, and (4) transformation. Though other frameworks could have been used, for example the Participatory Rural Appraisal model or Transformative Learning Theory, the context in which the research took place was well-suited not only to Freire's culture, teaching methods, and understanding of oppression, but also to his examination of what makes us more fully human, and how critical thought brought about by dialogue can be life-changing. Freire's markers were not specifically outlined in any of these books, but were my own formation

identified through reading Freire's works and adapted through other critiques of his work. There were several of Freire's own books used to select markers, as well as writings of others who employed Freire's ideology in some manner. His framework was also used to analyze the effectiveness of the program as a socially and personally empowering vehicle. The assumption was that there would be evidence of empowerment socially and communally, but not economically. Generally, this assumption was to be accurate, though in regards to economic gain, there was no obvious evidence of direct correlation. A longitudinal research study, however, might show that there is a correlation between economic growth in succeeding generations and the literacy program.

After reviewing the relation of the data to Freire's framework, it was clear that not all the evidence fell within his markers. Many of the answers given by the two program students were vague in regards to how they would like to see Haiti change and what they could do to promote change. Moreover, there was the presence of "magical consciousness" (Participant A, Interview 1) or the attitude that some problems could only be fixed by a higher power. Suggesting that only God can fix problems relieves us of our responsibility to act in ways that could change the things we want changed, but also, it voices a belief that we are powerless to make changes. If one still believes that only God can fix his or her problems, then he or she is not "empowered", particularly not by Freire's definition of empowerment. When I asked Participant E to identify a couple problems in her community, she stated that the biggest problem they faced was lack of a reliable road connecting their village to the main town and that another problem was lack of school for the young children. I knew that they did have a school, so I asked her to clarify (example of vague answer). She clarified that the problem was that the parents often lacked the money to keep their children in school year round. Next, I asked Paricipant E what the remedy to

these problems was in her opinion. She responded, "I think we should pray to God to help us. I think everything could be solved while we are praying" (Participant E, Interview 5). This represents the belief that transformative power comes solely from somewhere else, not oneself, and thus has a tendency to disempower people if they believe it is the only solution, that they have no agency in supporting their prayers to God. It also expresses a deep lack of faith in the possibility that viable solutions to her problems might be offered by the government or other entities. She also gave a rather vague answer when asked what she would like for her country; "I would like for Haiti to have a new face" (Participant E, Interview 5). When asked to explain this more clearly, she could not give a more defined answer. I wondered if she was using what we call "buzz" words, without really any idea of what a "new face" would be or how the country could progress in that direction. On the other hand, it is possible that she simply did not really want to talk to me, for the fact that I was a foreigner and did not speak her language, clearly a limitation of this study. At the end of the interview she mentioned that she thought Participant C, the literacy teacher, should continue to try to teach in this program so that he might eventually get a better, more stable job "to help his family" (Participant E, Interview 5). There was another point which I found to fall outside Freire's markers; Participant C mentioned that his literacy students would still expect him to give the answers in the end. They would discuss and debate different ethical, political, and social positions represented in stories they read in the Reflection Circles, but would come to him for the final word once they had debated among themselves. "Sometimes I ask them questions to push them to think about it. So when they came to me to give them the answer, I told them it was a story to help them discuss so everyone can give their opinion" (Participant C, Interview 3). The gradual release of responsibility had circled back to the teacher in the end.

Not only did certain themes of liberation not correspond with Freire's methods, but also, the manner in which the program was established was not exactly as Freire advocated. Perhaps the reason for this is that it lacked practicality. He recommended when setting up the program in any given community that there should be a needs assessment team which would go into the community to get volunteers from the population to be served, to collect data which would inform the curriculum, to establish genuine concerns to be addressed, to observe the people in many different contexts visiting the community frequently, to gain the trust of the participants, to ensure knowledge of goals and objectives of the program, and to compile reports to be analyzed by the team members in order to dissect the language components and create codes by which the curriculum is developed. The codes were organized into themes which were broken down into 'generative' words which were then represented by pictures, film, photos, or drama. Themes could be added that the team decided were necessary but were not part of the data collected originally (Freire, 1970, pp. 110-124). There was no data collected that showed this process actually having been carried out in the community researched for this case study. In fact, the research showed that the community members searched out HB Org 1 and requested that the program be instituted in their village. Two members of AB Org 1 visited the community according to the interviews and eventually Participant C was fully trained to be a literacy instructor. In terms of authentically positioning the outreach in the context of the people, the process was exemplary. Freire's method was more complicated and elongated, but not necessarily more suitable. In this situation where there were limited financial resources and geographic obstacles, a drawn out process of initiation might have been considered hard to attain. Ideally, the forum of the monthly meetings could have provided current information on the community's needs and then been imported into the format of the program. The curriculum for

this literacy program was intended to serve all similar communities that Organization AB 1 and Organization HB 3 serve and was not tailored specifically to each small village in which the program is located which again could have originated in the lack of human and physical resources.

It was the purpose of this research, to identify successful steps towards implementing a program of this sort in Haiti, or among a group of persons similar in status, opportunity and education to those studied in the program. Because this research was a case study of one program in one very small rural community in Haiti, generalizability was very limited. This research can only suggest that the program might be successfully implemented in another such community following the prescribed steps delineated here. AB Org 1 only operates in Haiti and primarily only in small rural communities there. To broaden generalizability of the research findings on this type of program, it would be helpful to study similar programs in other areas such as REFLECT.

Strengths of the Program

The demographic studied in this thesis could be accurately described as marginalized, but another way this group of learners could be defined is immature. Freire's ideology encompassed both meanings. On the one hand, subordination or marginalization suggested an oppressor, a 'someone' or 'something' that is the active agent in marginalizing or subordinating. On the other hand, Freire also made it clear that the learners he worked with were immature or at a level of thinking that was neither self nor contextually aware, more specifically, intransitive consciousness. Theorists of transformative learning theory suggest that knowledge should go beyond acquisition of information and how to use it, and delve further into the why we use it. "Transformative Theory's focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others-to

gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers" (Mezirow, 2000, p.8). This kind of learning requires educators who invite dialogue, authentic participation of the students, and recognize and promote the deep connectedness of all life.

The greatest strength of this program was its emphasis on critically examining cultural, religious, and societal norms and practices and their usefulness or lack thereof. This was done largely in the reflective and dialogue focused circles. All of us are born into a specific culture, religion or absence of a religious structure, and social practices and we are trained unconsciously to respond to life through the lens of those realities. Critical thinking strives to uncover these biases and examine our decisions and beliefs consciously enabling decision making with a clearer mind. Beyond this, knowledge in itself and for its own sake is empowering, which harkens back to Freire's underlying position termed in the paper as humanization. Though the problem of limited opportunities to make changes will exist whether or not learners begin to see other ways of living, the real advantage is in the legacy passed down to the next generation and then to the next, which is the only way the marginalized will become free of oppression and a country will progress.

The literacy program studied not only emphasized content learning in the form of signs, symbols, letters, numbers, and words, but also encouraged what Freire termed "consciousness raising" by asking students to go beyond their experiences and ways of knowing informed by largely unchallenged practices and beliefs, into a more critical dialogue of cultural, moral, and societal norms. I was most inspired and enamored of this aspect of the program while also convinced of the empowering nature of learning to write and read for the first time. What might account for the lack of progress generation after generation in Haiti if not, in some part, a less

than adequate educational system? How might one generation after the next repeat the same behavior with little to no progress in terms of just about every factor that determines the economic and social health of a society? There are undoubtedly many causes for this lack of progress, but one significant mode of human development is unarguably quality education. Why is it that Haiti is, in every way, so far behind not only countries such as America, Canada, and Mexico, but also other Caribbean nations? Is it possible that such asymmetrical dynamics are supported by the country's own educational system, one where delivery of education is characterized primarily by rote memorization and top-down instruction, rather than self reflection, critical thinking, dialogue, and interconnectedness? Freire coined the former as the 'banking method' in which the student is seen as the empty bank account into which the educator who remains very removed from the learners, deposits knowledge. Ownership of new skills or knowledge is characterized as higher level thinking skills. At this level the student can manipulate the information gained creating something new and personal, hence something owned. Freire (1994) stated, "The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades" (p.124). As students progress through the stages of consciousness-raising, they have to learn to separate themselves from whatever it is that is oppressing their free and clear thought. Essentially, they must recognize the voice of the oppressor inside which is still affecting thinking processes, biases, assumptions, practices, beliefs, and decisions. To better understand this concept, it may be helpful to substitute "oppressor for oppressive" and to give an example. An example to which I believe many people can relate, is the process that many of us as adults go through uncovering the cultural, social, economic, and religious framework of our

upbringing. As I began to seek clarity, particularly over this past year, on why I believe certain

things, why I am biased towards others, why I have made many of the decisions I have made, I

have discovered just how much elements of my youth and adolescence such as growing up in a

traditional Catholic environment, being steeped in my parent's views, watching how my older

siblings responded to this environment, negotiating the social webs of making and keeping

friends, as well as many other both positive and negative experiences have impacted the person I

am now and the world I have created for myself through the decisions I have or have not made.

This process of discovery is a consciousness-raising experience. It is enlightening to discover

just how significantly other voices influence my thoughts and decisions. Many are positive, but

there are oppressive voices there as well. Recognizing the inner "oppressor" or the oppressive

voice is essential to liberation.

Another benefit of this program was that it provided a forum for the adult members of the

community to discuss problems they faced and envision possible solutions. This was

incorporated into the program and was supposed to be allotted time in each class. From these

discussions, better practices evolved, on social, economic, and physical levels as was supported

by evidence from the data gathered. Behaviors such as open domestic abuse, child abuse, and

negative sexual practices were addressed and changes were made, as in the case of the family

who brought their children back from the city where they had been living as Restavecs. I will

state here that because this literacy program was developed primarily in and by Western culture,

which has a completely different view and practice in regard to domestic servants who are not

compensated monetarily, and towards sexual and domestic abuse, there was the danger of

imposing those views on the participants. Child slavery is not viewed the same in Haiti as it is in

the US or in Canada where there are laws against it. In Haiti, it is an ancient and ingrained

practice that, while it presents an opportunity for abuse, has never been viewed there as criminal or abusive by nature. Sometimes, the arrangement of domestic service is the only way a child will be fed, clothed, and educated if the parents are too poor to provide these services. The chores the child performs are payment for accommodations and living expenses. The system is so susceptible to abuse because it is not regulated by any formal measure or governing body and the subjects are more susceptible. In Haiti, one does not have to register one's Restavec and no one visits regularly or ensures regular reports of such cases allowing these children essentially to be treated any way their current 'owner' chooses. I do not believe that this is acceptable and furthermore, there is plenty of evidence available that suggests that children are better off with their parents except in the most extreme circumstances. Jean-Robert Cadet, Haitian by birth and a former Restavec who resides currently in the United States, has talked extensively on the problem of this system and of his own abusive history, starting his own organization, Restavek Freedom Foundation, to raise awareness around this issue. Since it is not within the scope of my thesis to explore this topic further, I recommend *Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle Class American*, written in 1998 by Cadet as an excellent read providing invaluable insight into this issue.

Finally, I believe it important to again mention that a solid strength of this program was its situated position in the real life context of the learners and the deliberate and sustained effort to engage the community in the process and operation of the program. The program administrators in Haiti were actually approached by the community members of this village where the literacy program took place. There were a number of these programs in this area of Haiti, but certainly they did not and could not cover every village. There was an effort to determine the places most in need, and then initiate a branch of the program there. This

community actually searched out HB Org 3 to ask if they would please visit and determine whether a program could be launched there. This was the ideal situation because the voice of the people was being heard. A solution was not being imported from the outside regardless of need or want. Often, because we, who live in primarily capitalist and wealthier countries with different laws governing education, are the ones designing these programs and then importing them into entirely different cultures, there is a somewhat colonizing type of effect that occurs. Our views and our intentions are imposed upon the communities that are being served, as if all would fall into place. The real needs of the people are in danger of not being addressed and furthermore, there is an ethical breach in such behavior. History has shown that colonialism and imperialism were destructive to many nations both during and after the colonist's rule. For example, one of the causes cited for the violence that occurred in Darfur and Southern Sudan between 2003 and 2009 as well as in the 1980s, can be traced back to arbitrary boundaries drawn by British colonists on their way out of Africa. What is underneath the colonial or imperialistic movements is that our way of life, our governments, our codes of conduct both private and public, are just better. We do it better. It works here, so it will work everywhere. There will be a mutual benefit to us imposing our world view and rule on you; we will gain access to your resources and you gain a better, more civilized, way of life. Ethically, this is simply not supportable, and yet, it still happens today, but through a different medium and one that is not so recognizably oppressive. Organizations and businesses under the guise of offering opportunity and aid to poor countries impose programs that have not been requested or accepted by the people meant to be served and it is argued are instituted to perpetuate the life cycle of the non-profit. There is often the premise of "we know better" than you do. This attitude does not uphold

human rights or democracy at all and I do hear this complaint in different words from some of my friends who live in Haiti and experience on a daily basis the effect of these programs.

An interesting example of what can happen when the subjects of a program are not consulted was an occurrence in the relief efforts addressing the cholera crisis, which hit Haiti in October, 2010. The cholera virus took a strong hold in the village of St. Marc, in Western Haiti, and at the request of World Health Organization, MINUSTAH, the Haitian police force, established an emergency makeshift clinic to treat the victims of the disease. Not one day later, there was an organized public demonstration comprised of Haitian residents outside the tent clinic. It was discovered after some confusion that the people of St. Marc were outraged that a clinic treating a highly contagious disease had been erected across the street from an elementary school. There had been no preliminary discussion with the townspeople which is actually quite typical for foreign aid agencies and causes preventable disruption and negative public feeling. Quite the opposite occurred in the situation of the literacy program I studied. The community actually sought out HB Org 3 and practically begged them to bring the literacy program to their village. The adults of this community had gathered at the house of the literacy teacher who was viewed as a leader and organizer and discussed the problem of high illiteracy and the desire to learn to read and write. Members of AB Org 1 and HB Org 3 visited the community, spoke with the members, and decided to run a program there. For this reason, the focus of this program was a demonstration of empowered involvement of the community that it served.

Weaknesses of the Program

I believe the two greatest weaknesses of the program, at the time of this research, were its short duration and lack of resources, particularly a lack of a variety of reading

materials. After the two years, the students had generally learned to read basic texts and at

the very least could sign their names in Creole. They had also practiced voicing their

opinions, listening to others, and in the case of the community I studied, actually put aside

old assumptions and practices for new ones identified as being more effective and efficient.

The way the program incorporated dialogue as a fundamental element created a more fertile

ground for the learners to take ownership of their learning by first questioning their tacit

assumptions and then deciding for themselves if they would choose something different or

stay the same. It was disappointing for me to see that at the end of two years, those who at

the start of the program truly could not read or write a thing in their native language could

just manage their name and a Bible verse or two at the end of the two years. Though it was

clearly better to be able to write one's name than marking an "x", it is simply not enough

that this was essentially the result, speaking only of increased reading and writing ability, of

two years of literacy classes. With an extended program, so much more progress is possible.

It seems reasonable, however, that the financial considerations of a small non-profit come

into play here.

It was an interesting finding of this study that the teachers who had spent the most

time immersed in the program appeared to be the most liberated from the inhibiting ways of

thinking so prevalent in their culture. For example, the young gentleman who served as my

guide and translator during my week of research exhibited such a different set of

expectations and beliefs about himself, his future, his community and its future, the role of

government, and economic, political, and social realities and responsibilities, that it was

impossible not to notice. He himself had the fortune of a college education, a decent job

with a non-profit, a savings, a vision of success that was solidly based in principles of critical decision making, real opportunities, and creative habits of thinking. Creative thinkers are emotionally balanced, realistic, critical, and know how to circumnavigate the restrictions of time, place, and inhibitions. He had the advantage of education and time spent with Americans, but this does not always make the difference. One must learn how and be willing to think critically and creatively. This literacy program in which he was also a teacher engenders these skills. If the program were extended, perhaps this reality would also be true of the students. Perhaps there would be a more concrete, measurable, and comprehensive path towards lasting improvements. There is in Haiti, unfortunately, a lack of reading materials written in Creole and I did not see any other books used in the group I studied other than these materials: the manual with signs, symbols, letters, and words, the Bible, the book with proverbs and images, and a small book containing different didactic short stories. There was no evidence of other materials for discussion. In the third chapter of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1994) suggested the use of posters, films, slides, newspapers, and photographs as material for discussion. Some of these, under the circumstances, were simply impossible to obtain or use such as film strips, and others such as newspapers are very hard to find in Creole. Photographs could be used, but I did not see any. I believe strategic use of these materials, especially newspapers, would engender higher level thinking and discussion. From the interviews and the observation, I gathered that most topics discussed focused on the community issues such as agriculture, lack of jobs, and hygiene. While these are essential for discussion, topics such as how Haiti compares to other nations economically and environmentally, average number of children born to each woman, family planning, solutions for the waste problem in the country, the need for

reforestation, the patterns of Haitian presidents and rulers, and the various political parties, the lack of infrastructure, civil laws, and regulatory policies are also essential and build higher-level thinking skills than the former set of questions. One of the interviewees actually said that the group discussion generally shied away from politics. Newspapers, film strips, photographs representing white versus black, developed versus underdeveloped, rich versus poor, presidents and rulers of the past could be useful in the development of critical thinking and dialogue skills.

Observable benefits of the program

In terms of tangible outcomes of this program, the most frequently mentioned are as follows:

- Job related: ex- small business owner learning to operate more efficiently

- Education of children: ex-parents can now recognize what the child's report card is saying and keep up with the children's grades and progress in school/ importance of education is conveyed to kids

- Independence and freedom from relying on others- particularly allows for privacy; ex. claiming money at the bank sent from family members of the Diaspora

- Protection from financial abuse: ex-recognize fair interest rates

- Better environmental practices: education opens their eyes to the necessity of taking care of their land/community

- Ability to read and write at a basic level: ex. Can write ones name and follow along at Church services by reading the Bible.

Recommendations for Replication of this Program

Recommendation 1: Assess the needs of the community

Know the community that you are going to serve. Carefully and thoroughly examine the actual needs of the community before beginning the program and continue this process using the program structure itself throughout its duration. This was done here through Open Space meetings or simply community meetings in communities targeted as possible sites for literacy programs in the initial stages. People from the targeted community are asked to participate in a town meeting and discuss the needs of that community. Once a program is established the teachers and supervisors will meet periodically as described in Chapter 4 to discuss the specific needs of their community.

One of the defining features of this program was that it relies heavily upon a local Haitian organization to carry out the operations of the literacy program on the ground. There is very little immediate management from the funding organization which allows for flexibility in decision making such as when and where to open a literacy program or when to replace a specific teacher or supervisor. As mentioned before, there is one primary difference in the way that non-governmental organizations will operate their programs: directly or indirectly. In the first case, the organization will have a base in the country in which the program has been established. They have some of their immediate administrative and executive team actually living and working there. Sometimes, natives are part of the administrative/decision making team on the ground, but it is not a necessity. For example, the secondary school near Port au Prince I mentioned previously that my husband and I became involved with early in this process was started by an American Catholic Church in the late 80's and to this day, there is always at least one or more

American from the executive team directly involved in the operation of the school itself in Haiti. The school also brings international volunteers, primarily from the United States, every year to assist with teaching. In the other instance, the non-governmental organization is indirectly operating the program. In this case, you will often see a trail of organizations leading to the actual program, as in the case of the program studied in this thesis. According to this research, the primary benefits of this are the creation of jobs for Haitians and the direct involvement of people who represent the demographic being served. From the research it can be assumed that the program more authentically serves the real needs of the people because it is operated by those very people. Though this did not come out of the research, it may be deducted that money goes farther in this scenario as paying Haitian salaries is exponentially cheaper than American salaries. After viewing the program, and admittedly being influenced by my other experiences in Haiti, I would recommend that there be direct and consistent involvement in the daily operations of the organization by the primary organization. I believe that if there is not continual and direct involvement from the organization responsible for providing the funding for the program, it is too easy for reports of success to be exaggerated, or for the need for a specific program to be overstated simply because those benefiting by employment will lose their jobs if the program ends. Furthermore, it is easier to ignore the weaknesses of the program if it is being viewed from a distance. So, the first recommendation is to remain directly involved in some capacity in the program that you are starting.

Recommendation 2: Seek appropriate and sufficient staff for the job

Ensure that you have the personnel and other human resources to fulfill the programs needs, (i.e., the teacher, the fundraiser), "…approach a school teacher among their membership or they may

have someone…"(Participant A, Interview 1). One of the ways in which teachers are secured in this program is through approaching current schoolteachers in the community directly being served or in the surrounding communities and asking if they would be interested in teaching adult literacy in this program. At that point, the teachers who are interested submit to the interview and training process as described in Chapter 4. An advantage that AB Org1 has is that it has established a number of its literacy programs in the vicinity of a secondary school which is intimately connected in mission, vision, and human resources to it. There is an overlap of teachers and methods that mutually supports the programs. The need for each program and the effectiveness of each teacher and supervisor is continually assessed and evaluated. The community in which the program will take place is asked to seek resources to buy the required texts. Sometimes, the government is appealed to for this need as well as other non-profits or individuals interested in supporting adult literacy. If the community cannot garner the support, an appeal is made to AB Org 1 for the materials.

"Some orgs will ask them to buy materials and there are contexts where we will ask them to buy materials like for example if we are working with a local org who is receiving funding for their work then they will contract us to do teacher training and provide materials as well and then that allows us to provide services to groups that can't afford it" (Participant A, interview 1).

Recommendation 3: Find the funding

The first step in this recommendation is to find the overall funding and the next is to assess what each community needs in terms of funding. For example, some communities may have access to donated materials and resources through which they can obtain the money to pay the teachers. Some of these communities are located near other educational institutions that will

lend or give what they are not using. This can both be determined and sought after by the community itself or by the organization facilitating the program. It is a very good idea to form a core team of Haitians invested in the project/program who know the avenues in Haiti or in whatever country the program is being established that may yield monetary support. For example, in Haiti, there are a number of international organizations present as well as larger national organizations that have a budget for literacy programs. In Haiti, the Bill Clinton Foundation is actively working to support education at all levels and a mixed team of Haitians and foreigners can join efforts here to first create the proposal and then submit according to the guidelines established by the Foundation. It is recommended to have Haitians work on this because they can speak more reliably about what is needed there and why. The foreign component, however, is more likely to have the expertise in formulating the proposal and sending it out.

There are national organizations within each of these "third-world" countries also created to support development programs and these organizations often operate the same way the larger, international non-profits by obtaining funding for programs that they themselves do not personally operate but for which, they identify smaller local organizations to execute. In this instance again, it is advisable that there is a local presence on the core fundraising/administrative team because ideally, they would be more familiar with these options. For example, there is an organization in Haiti called Fonkoze that funds a number of literacy as well as other projects. They obtain money through grants sent to organizations such as Oxfam, USAID, or UNICEF. Fonkoze essentially contracts out to smaller organizations in Haiti that then carry out the program with the channeled funds. These smaller organizations can identify and pursue such funding opportunities.

Generally speaking, nearly any program that you are planning on developing has been developed before and you can likely find a suitable template on the internet on which you can base your proposal. Most philanthropic foundations do have their own regulations for grant application and it is very advisable that you follow that process when applying.

Having said that, it is amazing what can be done with little to no start-up funds. The program I studied and its counterparts in various other communities were quite economical. Partnering with a publishing company to develop the materials is one way to keep costs down from the start. Furthermore, some materials can be donated from other educational institutions or organizations. For example, if your organization was focused on agricultural initiatives, it might appeal to an organization like Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization (ECHO) for free starter seeds. The physical dimensions of the school in which the program can operate can range from an actual educational facility, to a community center, to a community church building, to benches and chairs arranged in a circle outside as in the case of the program I studied. The remaining cost for the program is then simply paying the instructor and supervisors, the logistical costs for the main office that often is the central location for numerous programs in an expansive surrounding area as opposed to an entity such as Brighthouse Networks that has multiple offices for one area such as the Tampa Bay region.

Recommendation 4: Training the Personnel

Once you have received the funding, the next step should be training the personnel identified previously from the community surrounding where the program is to be held. Each teacher, as it was described by the literacy teacher participant, was first interviewed as one among other job applicants. When one was chosen, he or she first went through a week-long

training session and then if that stage was successful, went on for more intense and extended training sessions. Generally, the level of education needed to be a teacher in Haiti for this adult literacy program was the approximate equivalent of a high school degree. In many other countries that is not sufficient qualification to teach, but in some communities in Haiti, to reach this level of education placed that person well above the average inhabitant. As well, Haitians tend to not be afraid to teach which could be a result of Haiti's strong oral literacy where the young learn from their parents and grand-parents to tell/perform stories with or without morals. For example, I have merely handed my twenty- year old Haitian friends, with little formal education, an English/Creole book and they teach. Training is well received and begins with an easy method.

The training, while focusing on the practical skills of reading and writing and how these will be taught, also focuses on teaching the instructors how to engender authentic, engaging dialogue. Teachers are taught to allow the students to be confused, to not give them the answers readily or possibly not at all. This is actually quite a difficult concept for a Haitian person in leadership position to embrace. The Haitian culture holds great respect for persons in positions of leadership such as teachers and it can be considered insulting to question the opinion of such persons. This can be inhibiting for the development of critical thinking which comes about in some part by challenging established views. It is somewhat reminiscent of the sage or even oracle in Greek plays, such as in Oedipus. As a generalization, North American culture has removed itself from this idea of deep respect for and deference to the elders of our society, to the point where they are viewed even as a economic and intellectual drain. But in other cultures, there is still great reverence for leaders and elders. Therefore, these teachers who are being asked

to not give their students the answers, to not explain the "moral behind the story" are required to voluntarily shift their paradigm.

Finally, the instructors are trained to discuss through their classes the issues faced by their villages, such as water purification, sanitation, and agricultural practices. In this way, the program promotes holistic development. If one spends time in a number of traditional Haitian schools (the majority of the schools) one will find almost a style of teaching that in North America is often associated now with nuns, priests, and boys and girls homes. In other words, Freire would describe it as the banking method where parcels of wisdom are handed down and stored, and then regurgitated exactly on the exam. This program is very unlike this method and the instructors must be taught to teach in a different manner from how their teachers taught them.

Recommendation 5: Evaluate the program continually

According to the administrator for the American based organization, the better programs will involve evaluation where there are both internal and external evaluations so one can truly measure the impact you are having with the students. He did admit, however, that very little formal evaluation was being done due to a general lack of financial resources and coordination. The organizations involved are very close to being grassroots organizations and it is hard for them, as such, to organize very standard evaluative procedures. Despite this, there is a strong semi-formal evaluative structure in that the teachers and supervisors meet on a regular basis and report community progress, issues, and concerns. These reports are then compiled and sent to the main offices in Haiti and then make their way to the funding organization in the States. The process is actually probably the most efficient and effective for the circumstances in which the program is operated.

Whatever the method, qualitative or quantitative, the evaluations must be done. For the purposes of maintaining or gaining funding, it is best to have both forms of evaluation done on a continual basis.

Limitations of the Research

Probably, the most significant limitation of this research is the brevity of its duration. In order to see the full impact of adult literacy education as it was structured in the program herein described, there would be a benefit to conducting research in the geographic environment of the program for an extended period of time or stratify the research visits and interviews at three month intervals. In such a manner, the researcher can truly observe the reality of the impact and its day to day operations. This research was planned in such a way that the subjects were prepared to exhibit the program in a small window of time, which allowed for more control over what was seen. The classes and information presented could have been almost minutely controlled for that time period with little discrepancies. What was chosen to be shown could have been orchestrated purposely by the participants who have a vested interest in 'putting their best foot forward'. For a week, for one interview, for one class, this works. I was not there to see the classes where only four or five students show or to observe the reality of very little or no identifiable change. The word of those interviewed was the primary source of knowledge and in Haiti, people are so accustomed to believing that if they present a certain picture of success, need, or motivation, the foreigner will remain involved in their lives. Haiti is a country where foreign aid, both private and public, is significant factor in the economic health of the country and its people, which in the end is not 'healthy' at all. If one stays long enough, details cannot be manipulated on an ongoing basis. A truer picture emerges.

This is not to say that there are not real and positive impacts of an adult literacy program such as the one studied that cannot be identified in a brief visit. Some of the most compelling evidence of this is in the lives of the participants or those who are part of the process, such as the gentleman who served as translator. If this young man had not been educated to the degree that he was, he would not have had the job as translator that week. The teacher interviewed would not have been employed for two years if he himself had not learned to read and write in Creole or had not had a high school education. Jobs, such as teaching for the adult literacy class are open to those who have the equivalent of a high school diploma because there are actually few that do so and exponentially less that attend university. They simply cannot afford what has come to be an accepted step in the educational process in many countries such as the United States and Canada. Furthermore, there is virtually no way to take a loan out in Haiti to continue education. In fact, lack of monetary resources keeps a large sector of the Haitian people from ever going to high school or even past what would be middle school here. Lack of education is crippling the country. This leads into one of the primary benefits of this adult literacy program, which is that it emphasizes becoming educated, and makes it accessible by providing it for free. When education is emphasized in whatever manner, people begin to make it a priority in their lives. Many Haitian parents will struggle to find the means to educate their children even if this means going hungry many days. This program plants a seed in one generation and grows to fruition in consecutive generations.

Recommendations for further study

This study found that there were definite gains in social and economic status, as well as in personal image when viewed in the framework of the Freirean markers I used. This was the

lens through which I viewed the data; however, if a different framework were used it is conceivable that gains would be perceived differently. The format of the literacy classes and the material used were found to be very amenable to analysis on the backdrop of Freire's ideology and pedagogy. In determining whether this program is valuable, liberating, and useful for human development of marginalized persons, Freire's framework outlined in the structure of the four markers previously identified was very useful, shedding light upon the objectives and desired results. Freire's own work with marginalized demographics in Brazil and understanding of the Brazilian consciousness was also helpful in gaining a deeper understanding the unique situation of the demographic studied for this thesis.

A simultaneous concern of this thesis research was to identify the basic steps that went into creating this program. Though the general process was determined, more research is necessary to detail further each step of this process particularly in regards to the training process for the teachers.

A wider scope of research of adult literacy programs in a Haitian urban setting is also recommended to gain a more comprehensive picture of the psychological, economic, and social outcomes of adult literacy training in Haiti.

Other general recommendations include:

- More research into Haitian cultural and societal practices is recommended.

- A more detailed description of the educational system in Haiti would be very useful.

- Use of a wider base of critical literacy educators is recommended.

- Extended case studies following the children of these adults are recommended and would be a very good indicator of the usefulness of this program.

- Expanded use of Transformative Learning Theory to supplement theoretical framework

- Finally, research of classes using REFLECT methods in comparison to classes such as the one studied here would much more explicitly illuminate possible benefits to employing Freire's pedagogical framework since it is explicitly based upon Freire's pedagogy.

Final Word

At the beginning of this research I had been to Haiti two previous times and had witnessed extreme poverty with little understanding of the systemic weakness and lack of infrastructure that arrest the possibility of sustainable development. Influx of international aid and an overwhelming presence of humanitarian organizations did seemingly very little to affect consistent or significant change. I had heard of literacy programs established in rural communities specifically for women but essentially targeting marginalized, under-served adults and wondered what kind of lasting impact, if any, these programs might have. With both of these questions- what a program designed to meet the needs of rural, disadvantaged women might provide and how this might relate to systemic failure of an entire nation- fresh in my mind, I began to explore further the rural program. In doing a bit of reading about the community, one of the results that stood out to me was that the women were less likely to be abused by their husbands simply because of the mere fact that they could now read and write. It amazed me that something so seemingly small had such a significant impact. I began to wonder what kind of

nationwide impact programs like this, if replicated dozens of times, might have on a country such as Haiti where the illiteracy rate is approximately fifty percent.

In researching information on the impact of education, specifically literacy education, along with extensive study of Freire's pedagogy of critical literacy and others who were heavily influenced by his work, I became convicted that education was one of the most prime platforms upon which to change an entire nation. This led to the purpose of this research which was to (a) discuss an adult literacy program serving a marginalized population in Haiti, (b) analyze the program based upon Paulo Freire's framework of liberatory education and discover contextual, logistical, practical, and beneficial aspects of the program, and (c) identify elements of the process by which the program could be replicated.

I had believed at the start of this research, that the results I would hear and see would be breathtaking and irrefutable. In many ways, the results were indeed phenomenal, such as in the case where dialogue in this program on the disadvantages of sending children to the city where often they would become Restavecs or child slaves resulted in the return of two such children or in the case of the woman who could finally read her Bible during the services at the community Church. Sadly, there was still the feeling of hopelessness and naïve belief that God was directly responsible to remedy problems. It is likely, however, that the new value placed upon education and the joy with which the literacy program was accepted into the community, would impact future generations, thereby effecting change. The democratic, dialogic nature of this program engendered discussion that had never before occurred in this community and initial stages of critical thought were evident. Long established practices, such as tying animals near a drinking source, was practically eradicated in this area as a result of this program and ones like it.

Ultimately, the relationship between major themes in the data and Freire's theoretical

framework of a liberatory education or emanicipatory education according to the transformative

learning theory was evident. The principle upon which this literacy program was built "assumes

the perfectibility of human beings when this refers to improving our understanding and the

quality of our actions through meaningful learning" (Mezirow, 2009, p.8).

I found the words of Awuah to be most inspirational and apt when the question is

whether this literacy program and all the ideals that it espouses could actually change a nation:

> Every society must be very intentional about how it trains its leaders…we are
> trying to train a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders. …of
> exceptional integrity who have the ability to confront the complex problems, ask
> the right questions, and come up with workable solutions…discuss the real issues
> that they confront, that their whole society confronts, and [we] give them skills
> that enable them to engage the real world ... (Awuah, 2011, np).

After traveling to Haiti and studying this adult literacy program, I have great hope that such

initiatives can and will have a lasting impact upon the country and her people. This program

exemplified what Awuah, Mezirow, Shor, and Freire have called a democratic education that

will generate leaders who develop the habits of a critical mind, thereby, learning the ability to

confront the problems of their communities and society as a whole and work with integrity for

the common good.

My original beliefs held true to a point. Based on the particular program that I researched,

the unique time and circumstances in Haiti at the time of data collection, much of the interview

and ethnographic data could be categorized through the Freirian markers. However, true to

qualitative research methods, I now stand back from the data and acknowledge that time and

circumstances at the time of this study were also somewhat like the extreme political times that

Freire experienced in that the subjects of both are people oppressed by poverty and that this poverty is not necessary. Freire aimed the burden of responsibility towards the powers of government at that time, whereas I place the onus of poverty alleviation on the resource gifted of the world today. Freire formed his message around his specific cultural and political milieu, not unlike what I have done here, but it comes with a specific perspective and limits to how my conclusions can then be seen. Freire worked to empower the people he served so that they could change the oppressive forces surrounding them; I speak to the international community to suggest that action is necessary. This is not a political statement in that I place blame specifically on one government or another. National systems are discussed to answer questions of how and why there is such a lack of access to necessities of life and basic accommodations, but my research is not intended to be a political protest. It is a 'call to action' for those of us with the resources and intelligence to take our positions as global citizens and provide the same opportunities that we enjoy and appreciate to those who are not able to access them alone.

I began this thesis with these words spoken by a "functionally illiterate" woman who was part of a program at Massasoit Community College in Massachusetts for unwed mothers and an attendee at a conference presented by Professors Donald Macedo and Henry Giroux, both contemporaries of Freire and critical pedagogues. In arguing that the language of social inequalities is quite clear, Macedo gave the example of this illiterate woman who after hearing a talk on inequality, marginalization, and disadvantage was able to say, "…all my life I felt the things you talked about. I just didn't have a language to express what I felt. Today, I have come to realize that I do have a language. Thank you." (Freire, 1994, p. 22).

Through this research, I have come to realize that there are many different ways to have a voice and to be heard. Some of these ways do not involve words at all. Our word in this world is spoken first by our existence and then by our creations. Each manifestation of this, such as the food cooked from water brought from a stream four miles away, the shoe made from busted tires, the smile of a small naked girl playing in dirt with stones, or the first markings of a fifty -year old woman attempting to write her name, are expressions of life and possibility. My own vocabulary assimilated from birth to adulthood, the voices I have carried back within me from Haiti, and the words of my own potential, have forged a language for me, which I can use to be a powerful vehicle of change in our World.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Schedule of Questions for AB Organization 1 Administrator:

1. Background Information

a. How did you become involved with AB Organization 1?

b. How long have you worked with AB Organization 1?

c. Which programs do you specifically oversee?

2. AB Organization 1

a. What is the mission in your own words of AB Organization 1? Can you give me an example of how the organization carries out that mission?

b. How was the organization created? Why was the organization started?

c. How long has the organization been in Haiti? What general areas of Haiti?

d. How did AB Organization 1 proceed in identifying the needs of the Haitian people? Are assessments done at continuing intervals to ascertain changing needs?

e. Why did AB Organization 1 target illiteracy as an issue to address? Can you give me any concrete examples of obvious need for literacy classes?

3. The Program

a. What were the steps taken to create the literacy programs?

b. How has the program in _____ addressed the needs of the people in this community?

c. What do you think is the purpose of this literacy program?

d. Please list specific outcomes that you have noticed as a result of the literacy program.

e. Does the literacy program enable people to experience empowerment? In what ways?

Appendix II

Schedule of Questions for Program Administrator:

1. Background information

a. Where do you live? Where are you from?

b. How did you become involved with AB Organization 1?

c. What has been your experience working on teaching adults to read and write here?

d. Are people very thankful that they know how to read and write? Why? What can they do when they know how to read and write?

e. When did you learn to read and write? How has this helped you?

f. Why do you think it is important that people learn to read and write?

g. Is it important here in Platon Yeye?

h. Is your life different here now that you know how to read and write?

2. Pre-assessment of the geographic area

a. How were the specific needs of the community determined? Who asked what these needs were?

b. How did AB Organization 1 help organize or collect information about the area?

c. What things about your community life were examined in the assessment?

d. How were observations of the community carried out? Can you give me an example? What were some of the issues or themes noticed in the observations?

e. How does literacy program content reflect these themes? Can you give me at least two concrete examples?

f. How were the findings of the need's assessment evaluated? By whom? Did the community tell the organization what they needed? Do you feel that the organization has answered or is trying to answer that need? How is the organization doing this?

g. What were some of the differences noticed between people in the community? Do some people have jobs and others don't? Why do some have them and others don't? Do the people that read and write have a better chance at getting a job?

h. How many literacy programs for adults do you have in this community?

i. When did the first program begin here?

j. Do many more people know how to read and write that didn't before?

k. Do people try to hide it if they can't read or write? Are they ashamed?

l. How are political matters in this community decided?

m. How are legal matters decided?

n. Are women involved in the leadership of the community?

o. Are there more men here that can read and write than women?

p. Are women more likely to become leaders in the community if they can read and write? Men?

q. Do people talk lots about politics? Is it mostly men that talk about it? Are the women welcome to talk about politics? Do people listen more to men and women who know how to read and write?

r. Are there things to read here that tell you what is happening in the world? Or in Haiti?

s. Do most people that can read in this community read pamphlets and newspapers?

t. What is read mostly?

u. What do people need to write for usually here?

v. What types of jobs do people here have mostly?

w. How does reading and writing help with those jobs?

x. What are some things that happen in the community that are talked about in the classes? Can you give me 2 examples of this?

y. Has anything changed in the community because of the literacy program? Please give me two examples.

1. Program participants

a. What kind of investigation was done prior to the development of the program regarding the way the people to be served think? What would one of the questions have been that you asked?

b. How did the community for whom the program was being created help to frame the program itself? Can you give a specific example from the curriculum? Did the people in your community get involved in planning the program?

 c. How was the program presented to the community prior to its implementation?

 d. Was it important to try to gain the trust and understanding of the people in this community? Why?

e. Did the community have meetings about the literacy program before it began here? What were the meetings like? Who was there? Who talked? Who decided to bring the literacy program here? How were potential program participants identified?

f. What was/is the organization's specific philosophy regarding the participation of the participants in the creation of the program? Can you give me an example of one thing someone in the community was asked to do to help the program?

g. In what ways was resistance to the program shown? What are some of the reasons the community may have resisted the implementation of the program or the presence of the organization?

h. Are there people who live here who do not think that it is necessary to read and write? Why do they think this?

i. Do people here get involved in the politics of Haiti?

j. Do people in Platon Yeye find a way to vote for their potential leaders?

k. Is it possible for people in your community to run for public office? Why or why not?

l. Would learning to read and write help this at all?

m. How might learning to read and write bring more money into your community?

o. Do they talk about the affairs of the community (needs and problems) in the classes?

3. Curriculum

a. What are the goals of the program? How were these determined?

b. Who decided what was necessary to teach?

c. Who created the curriculum?

d. How was program content determined?

e. What was the process of creating the curriculum?

f. How did the geographic location of the area factor in when determining the program content? Can you explain what the Circle of Change is?

g. How were you trained to work with this program? What do you do exactly? What are your responsibilities? Do you like this job? Do you think you would have this job if you did not know how to read and write?

h. What are the specific steps in this program? What are some of the specific issues the programs talk about? What do these programs teach?

i. How many years is each student in the program?

j. Is something given to the student when he or she graduates from the program?

k. How are the teachers trained to teach?

l. Have some of the teachers gone through this program too before becoming a teacher?

m. What are some things that people can read in the classroom? In their daily lives what do they come across that they might read if they knew how to? Are there many books written in Creole? What kind of books that are written in Creole do the people here have access to?

4. Teacher

a. How does the organization recruit teachers?

b. What kind of training did the teachers undergo before beginning the literacy program?

c. What is the organization's view on obtaining teachers of the same culture as the adults enrolled in the classes? Has there ever been a teacher that is not Haiti work in this literacy program?

d. Is there anything specifically required of the teachers regarding how or what they will teach? Examples?

e. What attempt is made to familiarize the foreign teachers into this culture?

f. What is the nature of the dialogue between teachers and program administrators? Can you describe the environment created to facilitate this dialogue?

g. How would you describe the role of the teacher in the class?

5. Evaluation of the program

a. What is the formal evaluation process of the program?

b. What is the informal evaluation process of the program?

c. Who conducts the evaluation of the program and how often?

d. If I wanted to find out how effective this program is in terms of outcomes, how might I do that?

6. Personal additions

a. Is there anything you would like to add regarding anything we did or did not discuss?

Appendix III

Note: The Schedule of Questions for the teacher of the literacy program and the two program participants will follow guidelines according to themes found in Freire's liberating pedagogy in order to aid in the analysis of the data collection in light of that pedagogy.

Markers: the questions for the teacher and two program participants will be formatted according to the below markers:

- Gee: situated literacy

- Freire: humanization, consciousness-raising, dialogue/problem-posing education, transformation (including teacher and students), action/ continued dialogue

Schedule of Questions for the Teacher:

1. Background Information: [Marker: Situated Literacy]

a. Where do you live? Where are you from?

b. How did you become involved with teaching in the literacy program?

d. What was teaching here like for you in the beginning? How long have you been instructing here? How has your experience changed over the course of your time here?

e. How has the community here responded to you?

f. Do most of the children here know how to read and write? What grade do the kids usually get to?

h. Do most of the adults here know how to read and write? Where did the adults that do know how to read and write learn to do so?

2. Personal Beliefs about Literacy: [Marker: Situated Literacy]

a. What is the value in your opinion of reading and writing? Has that changed based on your experience teaching here?

b. In what ways is reading and writing valuable to this community? What kind of things can you do if you can read here? What kind of things can you do if you can write here?

c. Can you give me one specific reason why literacy is important here in this community?

d. Are there things that are important in this community that you can't do here if you can't read and write?

e. Do people in the community look down on those that can't read and write? Is it embarrassing if you can't?

f. What is the most important reason to learn to read? To write?

g. Do you think learning to read and write would change the lives of the people in your community who can't read and write? Why or why not?

3. Classroom practices: [Markers: Humanization, Consciousness-raising, Dialogue/problem-posing method]

a. What is the mission of this literacy program?

b. How is the mission reflected in the classroom practices?

c. What physical resources do you use in instruction? Example; textbooks, chalkboard, computer, paper…

d. How is the local environment brought into the classroom procedures? Example: do you talk about the things that happen in your community in class? What things?

- Do you teach the types of issues that are important in your community? What issues?

- Do you teach about how to do jobs that are common in your area?

- When you teach how to read and write, do you use words that the students are familiar with because they see and use them in their daily lives? Give me an example. Is this helpful for the students?

- How do you generate dialogue with and among the students?

- Do the students talk with you and with each other a lot?

- Do you discuss political things that are important in this community and in Haiti?

- What is one example of a political discussion that your class had?

- Do your students sometimes disagree with you or with the other students about an issue? Is it common in Haiti to allow students to discuss issues in class?

- Is this something that you do often in your classes?

f. Are your students generally open to talking in class with each other? With you?

g. What subjects do your students most like to talk about?

h. Can you give me a specific example of a particularly lively conversation that you have had in your class?

i. What are some materials that people can read from in the classroom? In their daily lives? Are there many books written in Creole?

4. Observations: [Marker: transformation]

a. How would you describe your role in the class? How do your students view you? How has their view of you changed over the course of the program?

b. In what other ways have you observed the students attitudes and behaviors changing over the course of taking these classes?

5. Beliefs about the Program: [Humanization and Transformation]

a. How does this literacy program serve the people in this community?

b. What are some of the daily struggles the program participants face that the literacy program might target?

c. In what ways does the literacy program change the way the students think of themselves?

6. Observed outcomes: [Marker: Action/Continued dialogue]

a. In what ways do the program participants benefit from the program in relation to their occupations?

b. Can you describe an instance in which the literacy program changed a participant's life noticeably?

c. Can you think of anything any of the participants have said to you about the literacy program?

d. What do you think are the strengths of this program? Weaknesses?

e. Are people who can read and write more likely to participate in the leadership in the community?

g. Would females in the community be more likely to be in leadership positions if they could read and write? Do you have an example of this?

h. Are people more likely to get a good job if they know how to read and write?

i. How would it help children if their parents could read and write?

7. Personal Additions

a. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion?

Appendix IV

Schedule of Questions for Program Participants:

1. Background information on the program participant:[marker: situated literacy]

a. Where were you born? How long have you lived here?

b. What is your job?

c. How many years have you gone to school?

d. How many languages do you speak?

e. What language do you read in?

f. What language do you write in?

g. How did you learn to read and write in these languages?

h. How well do the other people in your family read and write?

2. Individual, General Community and Life Context: [Marker: situated literacy]

a. What are some difficult issues that you face in your daily life?

b. Describe how you feel about your community.

c. What are some problems that you face here in this community? How are these problems

different here than in other communities?

d. In what ways are these problems being addressed in your community? In what ways was the

community not able to address the concerns themselves?

e. What do you think would help these problems?

f. How many people in this community receive education? What level do most people reach? Is there a way to take college courses if you wanted to? Does anyone here have access to computers? Does anyone here have the internet?

g. How is education viewed in your community? Do people think it is important to learn to read and write? Do people think it is more important for boys to learn to read and write than girls? What grade do most kids usually get to? Do most of the kids in this community know how to read and write? Do most of the adults in this community know how to read and write?

h. If a parent does not know how to read or write, is it hard to help their kids in school?

i. What might a child be able to do for a job if he or she learns to read and write?

j. Can you give me an example of someone in your community who has a good job because he or she can read and write?

3. Pre-Program: [Marker: Transformation of 'objects' into 'subjects' in the initial phase]

a. How did you learn about the literacy program?

b. When did the program come to your community? What did you think of them being here? What did others say about the program at first?

c. How were you asked to participate in the literacy program?

d. What kind of questions were you asked about yourself before participating in the program?

e. How did you help in the collecting information about your community's needs for the organization?

f. What did you see people from the program doing in your community before the program began?

g. What meetings did you participate in to discuss the organization and what they wanted to do in your community?

h. How were you invited by the organization to help in any way?

4. <u>Classroom practices: [Markers: Humanization, Consciousness-raising, Dialogue/problem-posing method]</u>

a. If I had been in the program with you, what might I have seen you do or what might I have done myself? What usually happened in class? Did you talk a lot with the teacher and other students? Did you copy from the board a lot? Did you have many books to read from? What were these books?

b. In what way were you able to discuss during class? Did the teacher tell you what to talk about or did people in the class decide what issues were important?

c. If I was to answer a question or ask to speak in class, how would I do that?

d. How should I expect to be treated by the teacher when I speak in class?

e. How should I expect the other students to respond to me when I speak in class?

f. As a female, would I follow a different way of talking or questioning in class?

g. Should I expect a different response from my teacher or classmates because I am female?

h. Do you, your classmates, and the instructor discuss your daily life in the classes? Can you give me an example of this? Do you learn about how to do certain jobs that are common in your community? Do you learn about issues that affect your community, like health, clean water, proper sanitation?

i. What do you read about? Write about? Talk about in class?

j. Does the instructor try to discuss your daily life and the society you live in during the lessons? Do you talk about politics?

k. Do you talk about how you feel about the leaders, the laws, the problems, and the good things about your country?

l. How would you describe the role of the teacher in the classroom? How do your teachers act?

m. Is there anything else about the way the classes were taught that you would like to speak about?

5. Participant motivations: [Marker: Consciousness-raising and transformation]

a. What job did you have before taking the literacy program? What job do you have now? In what ways do you find this job good or not good?

b. How did you feel about your education before taking this literacy program?

c. Did you want to read and write? Why?

d. How did you feel about the literacy program before joining the program?

e. What do you think the purpose of the literacy program is for you?

f. Do you feel that you are reaching that goal through the program?

g. How might others view you now that you have or are learning to read and write?

h. Is it more likely that you can have a leadership role in the community if you know how to read and write?

i. If a parent knows how to read and write, how does this help their kids?

j. Are you more likely to get a better job in this community if you learn how to read and write?

k. How does learning to read and write help with Agricultural jobs here? Farming jobs? Building jobs? Security jobs? Owning your own business?

l. Do you think people in your community will respect you more if you know how to read and write?

m. If a woman knows how to read and write, will men treat her differently? Will other women treat her differently? Will her husband or boyfriend treat her differently?

6. Results of the program: [Markers: Transformation and Action/Continued dialogue]

a. In what ways has the literacy program changed education in your area?

b. Why did you enter this literacy program?

c. Is there something that you can do now that you could not do before taking the literacy

classes?

d. In what way has your opinion of yourself changed?

e. Has the opinion of others about you or their behavior towards you changed since you entered

the program?

f. How has your job/life occupation changed since you entered the program?

g. What do you feel you have gained from the program?

7. Additions:

a. Is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion?