

JOBS

by Kenneth Werner, Deputy Director

I. OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 1963, the Job Opportunities through Better Skills (JOBS) program of the Chicago Boys Clubs, the Chicago Youth Centers, and the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago has attempted to provide academic vocational, pre-vocational and supportive services to the Spanish speaking as part of its overall thrust in meeting the manpower needs identifiable with the unemployed, inner-city "disadvantaged" young adult. The Spanish, as well as other ethnic groups, comprised those enrolled in the various operating units of the early JOBS program and undertook the various types of training and curriculum

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offered. However, their numbers were few in comparison to other groups and in proportion to their numbers residing in Chicago.

As an attempt to attract more Spanish speaking and to provide a particular program designed to their needs a separate unit for the Spanish speaking was begun in the Fall of 1965. This unit, located in a heavily concentrated Spanish area on the Northwest side focused upon their needs academically and socially while providing pre-vocational developmental skills. By utilizing a bi-lingual staff, special materials and equipment and structuring the program for those lacking certain language and communicative skills the unit was able to better serve the Spanish in the area, as well as others who come from throughout the city. While most of the trainees were Puerto Rican, countries such as Mexico, Cuba and various Central and South American areas were also represented.

II. TRAINEE CHARACTERISTICS

As the Spanish enrollees represent many countries they also enter having varied intelligence, capabilities and individual traits. For example:

A. 1. The Cuban, coming from primarily the urban, industrial areas are better educated and profess a higher degree of ambition and motivation.

2. The Puerto Rican, generally coming from a rural environment seem to be less educated and less educationally orientated.

3. The Mexican and other Central and South American Spanish generally are patterned either similar to the Cuban or the Puerto Rican depending upon their country of origin and/or the specific region within the country.

B. In terms of ability there seems to be four (4) ranges:

1. Those who are in need of both basic literacy and language training, in varying degrees.

2. Those who need much less literacy training and much more language.

3. Those who need either literacy and/or language training and some degree of social development.

4. Those needing orientation to "big city life" and employment.

In recognizing the above a program designed for the Spanish speaking has a dual purpose; to provide basic English language skills to those whose comprehension is below acceptable norms and to provide to those in need, the basic literacy skills and life orientation so necessary for future

up-grading.

C. As culturalization plays an important part in one's growth it should be noted that there is a difference between the recent arrival to this country and the person who has resided here a number of years. The Spanish, like all non-American cultures, would like to maintain their unique ties, traditions, life styles and language patterns separate and apart from the existing non-Spanish around them. Thus for security, social development, value judgements and identification, one's role in life, in a strange and foreign environment, is to maintain that which has meaning, which is understandable and familiar. Thus, one can easily understand the struggle that exists between the family (that is trying to maintain "Latinism" in spite of the American culture to become "Americanized") and the offspring whose "Latin roots are not as deeply set and therefore are trying to breakaway and become Americanized." For the recent arrival the problem is intensified as the struggle to (maintain) is pitted against the struggle to (let go). As the person becomes more accustomed to his new environment the struggle becomes less intensified.

D. Not withstanding the above, there are also the traits common to all.

1. Girls tend to be shy and reserved.
2. Family ties are usually strong, closely knit and protective.
3. Contact outside of one's local is usually limited.
4. Employment and housing opportunities are selective and limited.
5. Public recognition and response to Spanish needs are limited.

It is soon realized that all "Spanish" are not alike. Although the language is the common binding element (and even that varies with the culture) there are many factors which tend to isolate one from another, i.e., culture, background, values, ability, and economic status.

III. CURRICULUM AND METHOD

In meeting the needs of the Spanish speaking two important aspects are:

1. A suitable curriculum (one that is geared to the primary problem of the Spanish in America-language).
2. Suitable methods (those geared to meeting the problem in an educationally sound, individualistic way).

However, the most important aspect is still the teacher and/or counselor who, being bi-lingual and knowing the needs of the Spanish, can motivate and stimulate, can relate to the person and encourage learning, and encourage learning, and can promote understanding and develop potential and skills. In meeting the challenge one needs to rely upon all forms of approaches such as:

1. Innovative and experimental class prepared materials: these should in all cases be student-centered and level based.
2. Educationally sound commercial materials, books, pamphlets, language lessons, and programmed learning materials.
3. Audio/Visual aids, i.e., maps, charts, films and film strips, t.v., radio, tape recorders, language training machines, records, etc.
4. Outside resources, i.e., speakers, field trips, etc.
5. Small, informal classes usually no more than 15 per class.
6. Both inside and outside opportunities to be the recipient of and to participate in activities and situations enabling exposure to spoken English. An example of this might be some actual experience allowing one to practice English, as shopping in a store or ordering in a restaurant.

7. In order to promote and develop a high degree of proficiency, English as a Second Language classes should be daily and encompass all areas of curriculum. The language learning process cuts across all subject matter lines so a daily academic program, although structured to cover many

areas, should focus upon English.

8. To facilitate both class and non-class work, special tutoring will be necessary in certain cases. This should also be on a regular basis.

An example of an approach previously used by the Spanish speaking unit of JOBS, with much success is the Individual Language Lab utilizing many methods and materials, i.e.; workbooks, tapes, individual classroom work, and teacher coordinated activities.

INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE LABORATORY

A. General Information

1. The purpose of this lab is to permit the Spanish Speaking trainees to hear, learn, write, and speak more English i.e., drill, vocabulary building, pronunciation, etc.

2. This Individual Lab. goes hand-in-hand with the regular language lab or "English Workshop."

3. The text (workbook) entitled *English Your New Language* along with tapes (adapted to the text), class developed mimeographed lessons, and dictionaries are used.

B. Procedure

1. Two tape recorders are used.

2. One tape recorder plays the original tape (English Your New Language), and the other is used by the trainee for the purpose of recording his voice (answering the questions posed by the speaker on the original tape).

3. At this time the following skills are developed:

a. The individual is exposed to correct pronunciation; he in turn repeats after the speaker (on tape) trying to imitate (if at all possible) the speakers correct English accent; the trainee at this time also attempts

to comprehend what he is listening to having done the exercises in his text book prior to the lab session.

b. At the end of each exercise the trainee is ready to playback his recorded tape. This gives him a second chance to the original tape played, and also to his own voice, he has the opportunity to observe pronunciation mistakes made and make the necessary corrections.

c. The trainee, with others in his class, reviews the material, giving the opportunity for additional practice.

The approach should be based upon an Audio/Lingual concept and the curriculum should be patterned similarly.

IV. TESTING

The following is based upon experience gathered from the Spanish program of the JOBS Project. At present there are four tests that can be administered in order to properly evaluate, determine ability, and properly place the trainees.

1. GATB - given in Spanish as a means of providing data on ones capabilities.

*2. Beta Intelligence - a non-verbal I.Q. test given to determine ones general intellectual ability.

*3. Stanford Achievement - An English test to determine ones achievement.

*4. Examination in Structure & Grammar Placement Achievement test.

*To meet the needs of the Spanish modification would be legitimate as an attempt to obtain as valid a score as possible. Directions should be given in Spanish so as to make the task easier. However, all tests designed for the English speaking, to be given in English are invalid as they are based upon English norms. With this in mind, but offset by modification one can still determine progress and achievement.

V. RECRUITMENT AND REFERRALS

The following is a suggested outline of procedures relative to an enrollee's initial entrance into the program.

Initial Entrance

Upon entering the program an enrollee is assigned to a counselor who gives him a brief orientation to the unit, then although not necessarily in this order, he is assigned to classes, tested (Achievement & I.Q.), records are made for him, i.e.; control cards, personal information form, progress sheet, and comment sheets, etc. These make up part of his personal folder. *(Note: this is done in a group setting at the beginning, as many trainees usually enter on the same day. If individual problems are presented they are handled immediately by the counselor to insure maximum involvement during training.)*

Training Schedule

The person is placed in class initially on a random basis, but is reassigned, if need be, on the basis of his test scores, his class performance and personal observation.

Post Training

Toward the end of the training period the trainees are retested to determine their progress and their future disposition. During training the staff and the enrollee are in close contact to determine the best possible disposition for each trainee. This is based upon test scores, trainees expressed desires, progress and achievement, the availability of future programs, and our evaluation of him. On this basis some are referred for additional basic education, some to vocational training, some to finish their formal education, and some to employment.

It is worth noting that besides academic training, but equally important, is the social and emotional growth derived from association in the program. This is most meaningful when one takes into account the character of the trainee. The shy, reserved girl or boy who is thrust upon the American urban scene with a grasp of his own values and culture, pits them against the "American way" in a battle that produces frustration, anxiety, bewilderment and, in many cases, a loss of pride and identity. Helping trainees ease the pain, bridge the gap, and make the adjustment is worth the effort.