

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs

IN THE UNITED STATES

July 28, 1993



Mr. Aaron Gordon  
Budget Rent A Car Corporation  
4225 Naperville road  
Lisle, IL. 60532

Dear Mr. Gordon:

This letter is our final report and accounting for the "Practical Word Power" literacy program operated as a community-based pilot project by the DPRCA under a grant from Budget Rent A Car Corporation.

As shown by the individual reports presented with Richard Cavalier's intrim report to you, dated April 5, 1993, six organizations conducted classes with volunteer tutors: Healthcare Alternative Systems, Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center, Mexican Community Committee, St Peter's Episcopal Church, Truman College, and University Popular. A seventh, Youth Service Project, has received books for future classes. All users had highly favorable results.

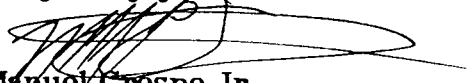
Students served: A total of 20 course cycles was conducted for both young people and adults; 140 finished all eight class sessions of the course among 199 who started. That's a highly satisfactory showing for six groups operating during a partial year.

Pro-rated costs: The cost per student "graduate" was only \$7.50 for those classes completed by February. Since all books are reusable and one organization has yet to implement, the cost per graduate will continue to fall. We feel the cost-effectiveness of this program was remarkable.

Books distributed: A total of 16 "PWP's" plus 144 dictionaries was distributed. We have 9 "PWP's" on hand now and will return 2 to BRAC and will send 7 to Alderman Billy Ocasio, whose office will continue the program. Your \$1.000 grant purchased 25 copies of "PWP" and 102 dictionaries. The extra dictionaries were part of an initial inventory provided by WSNS-TV/Channel 44.

DPRCA is pleased and proud that you chose to fund our project. Thank you for your concern for the Hispanic community and for your financial support for our project.

Very truly yours

  
Manuel Crespo Jr.  
Director

c. Alderman Billy Ocasio  
Channel 44  
Richard Cavalier

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 21, 1991

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
Maria Ojeda, 312/664-9377

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PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY PLANS  
UNIQUE ENGLISH PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

If you speak standard English and are concerned about the tens of millions of adult residents who are handicapped in English, then you have the makings of a tutor; and if you can donate a total of only 25 hours between Labor Day and Thanksgiving, then the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs would like to hear from you, according to Hector Luis Diaz, Director of the Department.

In a move that could redefine the working relationship between ethnic communities and the various governmental agencies and funded providers of literacy services, the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs has initiated a broad, community-based course in English pronunciation and conversation for middle-competency learners, Diaz announced.

Organizations serving the Puerto Rican community have been asked to sponsor these special classes on their own sites for their own members who already have intermediate but inadequate skill levels.

"Many people in our community can get by in English," Diaz suggests, "but are not satisfied with their present abilities. Some are working at jobs well below their training and capabilities."

Virtually no governmental or foundation funding is available at the intermediate level, Diaz explains, and so little help is available now except in formal community college sequential courses. Not all adults can match school schedules even if they wish to do so, he feels.

A particular problem, he stresses, is the fact that although public funding and most literacy network efforts end at basic

levels--that is, grade 5--a grade 8 reading level is needed for entry into most GED classes. "The educational system itself fails to bridge this gap adequately," he indicates.

According to U.S. Department of Education statistics widely disseminated by the Business Council for Effective Literacy, New York, all literacy programs combined are now reaching only ten percent of the nation's estimated 72 million residents with language handicaps ranging from illiteracy in both languages to marginal competence. In Illinois, the estimate is perhaps two million functional illiterates, with less than ten percent being helped. "The system is overwhelmed," Diaz emphasizes, "and it's time for the ethnic community as a whole to act in its own behalf."

Competent English is still a requirement for jobs with a future, he believes, and the public should have access to needed instruction free of charge, even if local governments don't fund them.

What sets this program apart, in Diaz' opinion, is its design, which eliminates most of the centralized administrative structure favored by traditional providers of literacy services. Consequently, "the community's limited funds can be used to buy books rather than pay salaries and overhead."

"The Department has already completed a pilot test of this program," Diaz notes, "and has discovered that it is most effective."

It's the intent of the Department that clubs, employers, churches, and even alternative schools sponsor classes at intermediate levels for their own members, Diaz continues, so their program dates and class hours will reflect their own members' needs.

Based on the tutor's script and workbook Practical Word Power by Richard Cavalier (Dundee, IL.; Delta Systems, Inc., 1989), the course teaches participants to pronounce standard English correctly from the dictionary, using the pronunciation codes. It also develops related conversational skills, such as phrasing for sense. Graduates are permanently independent in their vocabulary development and more capable and confident in English conversation after only eight sessions of two hours each, according to the

author. The text is structured for groups of up to ten students.

Developed in the classrooms at Truman College, where the author became a volunteer tutor in 1981, Practical Word Power was tested and refined over a period of three years. Cavalier worked with more than 100 students there, representing all major language groups and various skill levels--usually mixed in the same class. The course works, he says, because the subject matter is usually new to all students--they're on equal footing.

"Prepared in a corporate training format, this text empowers anyone who speaks standard English to tutor in this critical area for limited-English speakers," says Cavalier, "because it provides everything the tutor needs: verbatim explanations plus all chalkboard examples, drill charts, and exercises. Rote learning of symbols yields quick mastery for students."

The consulting editor for the book is Dr. John Haskell, Chairman of the Department of Linguistics at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago.

A specialist in group communications, Cavalier has published numerous articles and two books in that field, Sales Meetings That Work (Homewood; Dow Jones-Irwin; 1983) and Achieving Objectives in Meetings (New York; Corporate Movement; 1973). He grew up among foreign-born grandparents and has traveled in more than 40 countries--"usually language-handicapped."

With so small a percentage of language handicapped people being served, Cavalier feels, we can no longer wait for funding and administrative structures to catch up. "When the system ignores people at intermediate levels, it cheats those who can progress fastest with the least assistance. That's both illogical and counter-productive."

Reality demands that the model for the delivery of language instruction change, he insists. "Practical Word Power was designed to permit a massive response to massive problem. The concept should be adapted to other subject matter areas. The educational system should redesign materials for teaching in decentralized situations; and established literacy organizations should produce tutors prepared to tutor groups. Problem cases can go to professionals."

Maria Ojeda, on staff at the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs, will supervise initial arrangements and assist community groups with their first course cycle, according to Diaz. Then they continue at will.

"We plan to have the first orientation session for tutors right after Labor Day," Ojeda states, "with classes beginning at the community sites soon after." No classes will be held at the Department Offices.

"Volunteer tutors need not speak Spanish," Ojeda stresses, "because English is the sole language used in class." Prospective tutors are asked to call Ojeda at the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs in Chicago, 312/██████████.

STOP

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO  
Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs  
IN THE UNITED STATES



For Immediate Release:  
March 24, 1992

For More Information:  
Richard Cavalier  
(312) 784-3636  
Hector Luis Diaz  
(312) 664-9377

### **CORPORATE GRANT UNDERWRITES LITERACY PROJECT**

With a grant of \$1,000.00 for the purchase of books, Budget Rent A Car Corporation has assured the wide implementation in the Hispanic community of the "Practical Word Power" (PWP) literacy project under the sponsorship of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs, according to Héctor Luis Díaz, Director of the Department in Chicago.

The Department's PWP program was announced in September as a community-based effort to bridge gaps in the current national literacy program, Diaz explains. Only 10% of all language handicapped are being helped by all government and foundation funded programs together, and virtually all monies target basic levels through fifth grade. Individuals who can get by in English but are stalled at unsatisfactory skill levels can otherwise be assisted only in formal programs at community colleges; and not everyone can attend, he stresses, even if they wish to do so.

Unique among volunteer literacy programs because it is addressed to the intermediate adult learners, for whom little assistance is available, "Practical Word Power" teaches students to pronounce new vocabulary correctly using dictionary codes. That skill makes course "graduates" permanently independent in vocabulary development and enhances their ability to communicate in spoken English. Accent-reduction is a welcome side-benefit in existing vocabulary.

The course is free to adult students, who must buy their own paperback dictionary. Dictionaries will be provided free to teen students studying with youth groups, Diaz said.

The complete course requires only 8 sessions of two hours each and can be

tutored by anyone who speaks standard English, says author Richard Cavalier, "because the PWP tutor's workbook is structured in a self-help corporate training format for volunteers: all explanation, chalkboard examples, and drill charts are provided." Consequently, he feels, "PWP gives a tremendous boost to intermediates because it emphasizes a pro-active skill, not generic word lists. PWP is designed to help solve real-world communication problems."

"The course was developed at Truman College in Uptown by Cavalier, who has published two books and numerous articles in the field of group communications," Diaz relates, "and it was further tested by the Department before adoption; so the Hispanic community can be assured that results are worthwhile."

As proof he cites an early pilot course at a Hispanic social services agency. Participant response was so positive after only the first of the eight sessions for staff members that discussions are underway there regarding possible extension of the course to the agency's clientele.

Up to ten adult learners can be enrolled in each course, and one two-hour class per week is the recommended schedule. Sponsoring organizations need provide only seating for those ten students and their tutor, plus a blackboard.

With tutor materials now provided by Budget Rent A Car, there is virtually no start-up cost for sponsoring sites. "Any recognized organization--social clubs, churches, and employers--can form and operate their own classes on their own schedules for their own members," Diaz stresses.

Any Hispanic organization wishing to operate this program should contact its volunteer coordinator, Dick Cavalier, [REDACTED] Prospective tutors who can commit 25 hours to one course cycle (including advance preparation and class time), should also contact Cavalier, Diaz adds. Only English is used in the classroom.