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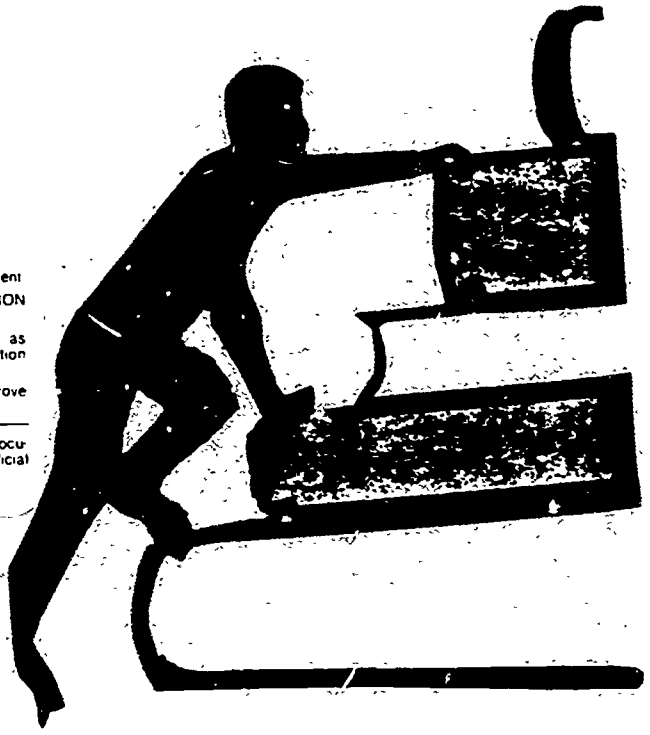
ABSTRACT

This report on one of the activities of the Maine State Library Literacy Project, which was funded in 1986 through the Library Literacy Program, Title VI of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), presents discussions of literacy, adult new readers, literacy programs in libraries, serving adult new readers, selecting materials, and how to use these publications. A brief description of the 40-page bibliography which resulted from the project notes that it is aimed at assisting local librarians and volunteers in selecting the most appropriate and desired materials for use with adult new readers, and was developed to give the user as broad a picture as possible of available materials for readers below the fourth grade level, with a few selections at the fifth grade level. The bibliography, which is then presented, includes a list of bibliographies and guides; the names and addresses of publishers of materials for, and about, new adult readers; annotated lists of fiction books, biographies, and comprehension texts; listings of reading and word mastery materials, content area and vocational materials, and films; materials for tutors of new readers; materials for learners of English as a second language; and books on religion, values, and cultural subjects. (CGD)



A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MATERIALS FOR AND ABOUT ADULT NEW READERS

Prepared by ***Mary Menair Hanson***

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE LIBRARY LITERACY PROJECT,
THE MAINE STATE LIBRARY. J. GARY NICHOLS, LIBRARIAN

PROJECT DIRECTOR — WALTER TARANKO
PROJECT ASSISTANT — PAMELA WHITAKER

SEPTEMBER 15, 1987

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INTRODUCTION

The Maine State Library Literacy Project was funded in 1986 through the Library Literacy Program, Title VI of the Library Services and Construction Act. The Library Literacy Program is located in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, The United States Department of Education.

In addition to this bibliography, other activities of the project have been to offer consultation and technical assistance to community literacy programs and to the libraries that relate to them. A series of workshops on adult new readers, their needs for materials and library services, was conducted in the Spring and Fall of 1987 throughout the State of Maine. All workshops were presented in small, local libraries for the benefit of library staff members, volunteers and tutors in the community.

The purpose of the Maine State Library Literacy Project is to assist local librarians and volunteers in selecting the most appropriate and desired materials for use with adult new readers. Only reading improves reading. And like all learners, adult new readers respond most successfully to reading material from which they can expect meaning and pleasure. This bibliography is an attempt to recommend only such material.

WHAT IS LITERACY?

Definitions of literacy range from the broadest, as enunciated by William J. Bennett in 1985,"the ability to read, write, speak, listen, compute and solve problems. . . " to the narrowest, as utilized in many third world countries, the ability to write your name and to read simple letters and contracts.

It is generally accepted throughout the world, however, that some ability to read and write is necessary for the exercise of liberty and personal power. The recognition of literacy's importance transcends political and economic differences among nations and their policy makers.

While approaches to gaining more universal literacy may vary greatly from country to country (and among educators within almost every society), there is a general consensus that the level of literacy in a particular population is one important indicator of the level of sophistication of the society and its ability to meet people's needs.

Given that consensus, it is understandable that Americans have become increasingly alarmed about an illiteracy rate in the United States approaching twenty percent of the adult population. While we have not made education our first priority in this country, we have recognized for over a century that access to education is an important equalizing mechanism in the society andwe have made it a fundamental right of citizenship.

Since the early 1970s, samples of the population have been given performance tests through a federally funded series of studies called The Adult Performance Level, in an attempt to assess the functioning of our educational system for specific sub-populations. Results of these tests reveal that some segments of our population are much less literate than the mainstream, some with illiteracy rates as high as 56% (Hispanics over 18).

There are two kinds of illiteracy problems, then. In the first, we have about one adult in every five Americans, who had some school opportunities, unable to perform such essential tasks as reading the directions on medicine bottles and making change accurately. The implications for our society need not be elucidated.

The other illiteracy problem is that groups such as Blacks over 18, among whom 44% are functionally illiterate, and senior citizens, among whom 35% are functionally illiterate, are not participating in the larger society, to the extent that they cannot, and that the larger society is carrying them.

Almost all social problems are related to each other. Working with people who have not been able to read and write makes clear how related to other social problems is functional illiteracy, indeed, those volunteers who work in prison literacy programs have provided valuable insight for the rest of us about the relationship between illiteracy,

poverty and criminal behavior.

These relationships result from the distinct lack of opportunity available in the larger society to someone who is not only unable to be technical in a highly technical job market, but to someone who is unable to function in any job which requires usingreading and writing,a comprehension of directions and what I call literate thinking, or the ability to be analytical in considering a task or problem.1

Literacy in American society must be defined within the context of the level of performance needed to function without major infusions of assistance from other individuals and agencies. It is the individual's ability to understand his or her basic rights and purposes as stated in simple contracts and documents and to express his or her basic needs and positions, as required in the encounters of daily life, whether they be personal, as in the case of a letter, or work related, as in the case of a set of directions.

It is clearly not possible for school, as we presently conceive of it, to provide the opportunity to master these skills for all the children in our society, let alone to remediate the lack of skills among the population already beyond school age. The reason why schools cannot be held solely responsible for meeting this need in our society is that the problems which prevent individuals from attaining the minimum required level of literacy are often beyond the realm of schools' influence in people's lives and in the community. Because of the following root causes of illiteracy, schools alone cannot solve this problem, even for children.

1. INABILITY TO ATTEND SCHOOL CONSISTENTLY A major factor in the normal adult's history, if he or she has significant reading problems, is usually an inconsistent school record. Migrant work, divorce and family upheaval and illness are the common causes of inconsistent schooling. Only by significantly raising the intrinsic value of school for people with more pressing survival needs will we attain a continuity of attendance among their children. Available education in smaller modules throughout the year may be one solution to this problem.

2. INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY Some people take a very long time to learn the same things that others learn very quickly. Some people forget what they have learned repeatedly and must be reminded repeatedly. Throughout life, caring volunteers and paraprofessionals in organized community programs may all but eliminate the need for continuing special education for the LD-a discouraging aspect of illiteracy. This is a solution superior to expending large amounts of money on one-on-one teaching that is more effectively spent on learning research on the problem itself, allowing schools to focus on children. 2

3. LEARNING DISABILITY Until very recently, some of the worst disabilities to affect reading and writing performance have been so little understood that schools could not spend the large amounts of money needed for individual instruction needed by so many learning disabled youngsters. With the recent legislation mandating these expenditures when indicated, coupled with the gains made in understanding how to teach the learning disabled, schools will take on more of the specialized teaching for learning disabilities. This is one aspect of illiteracy that can be expected to be effectively reduced by schools.

4. LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES The way children learn to speak their language of origin affects their literacy levels throughout life. Among Americans for whom English is not not the primary language, and who suffer language deficits in their language of origin, illiteracy at some level must be confronted. Because the individuals with the second language problems have other adjustment problems within the community, a combined effort between school and community seems to be indicated. Schools may not have the resources to conduct programs for second language students at the numerous grade levels in which they appear in a school system, much can be learned from the previous experiences of major metropolitan areas that have struggled with influxes of second language speakers and created programs to meet their needs. Often, an informed professional on the school district staff can coordinate with classroom teachers, volunteers and adult educators, using ideas from numerous urban programs.3

5. LANGUAGE DEFICIT This is the area in which the greatest incidence of illiteracy occurs. Individuals living in poverty, or even in the poverty of experience caused by excessive television watching, suffer from a language deficit which then becomes cumulative and more severe over a lifetime. Social attention to illiteracy, expanded programs to attract new readers to school and to the library, and the commitment of television to cooperate with other institutions to help alleviate the problem of illiteracy, as we have seen in project PLUS, can lead to increased interest in literacy, increased resources of interest to new readers and to a resultant re-commitment to literate activity. Meeting this need is a challenge not just to schools, but to the entire community.4

footnotes:

1 " Meeting the Literacy Challenge." Adrienne Chute. U.S. Office of Education. \march, 1987.

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3 " Literacy in the United States: What is the Status? What's Being Done?" John Micklos. READING TODAY. International Reading Association. October/November, 1985.

4 "The Relevance of the Adult Performance Level Program To LVA Tutors." Virginia K. Lawson. Literacy Volunteers of America. September, 1978.

WHO ARE THE ADULT NEW READERS?

About 16% of the White males, between 18 and 29 years old are illiterate. They are high school drop outs, may have learning disabilities, and usually have a record of nonattendance at school. They may be working and worried about confidentiality.

The smallest percentage of adult new readers exist in the 30-39 age group. Only 11% of them are functionally illiterate. But among that group who are, most are white women and black men.

Large numbers of new readers are over 50 years old-28% of those over 50 have serious reading problems. They had less access to education in their youth. They probably ha ' to work instead.

Over all, more adults with low reading levels are women, because women have had less access to education. But more adult new readers are men, probably because they have been more willing to seek help-they see not being able to read well as a more serious problem to them. More men have learning disabilities. Apparently this is related to developed learning patterns, the age at which children begin school, and, in some cases, to heredity.

In some areas of our state, the more rural, the need to go to work has had a profound effect on the literacy of the population, as in counties with high unemployment rates and more significant incidence of local poverty. There are communities with a high school drop out rate of greater than 50% in recent years. This indicates a greater need to quit school and go to work. Employers confirm this and have often in these areas expressed a desire to institute workplace adult education and literacy programs.

The increase in requests for literacy services in Maine have more than tripled over the last three years with the increase in publicity for the literacy programs. Tutors are also available for training in most areas of the state. Where we see the greatest need at present is for sustained, coordinated services to adult new readers which take into account the unique needs of the readers in the area, rather than for individual programs working alone in the isolated community or school district.

WHY LIBRARIES?

Libraries have a unique opportunity to be the catalyst for community literacy services coordination. Often, school districts must make artificial distinctions between high school students and adult education students in order to keep the programmatic distinctions required for funding. Within the setting of a library program, these separate entities can bring their expertise to the same project.

Clients of literacy projects may disdain school related programs because of previous history with school which may be negative. The new reader may desire the status coming to the library brings. Students may not initially see the library as the repository of materials at the beginning level, but they will do so if the library demonstrates an interest in obtaining these materials.

In most communities, the library is one tutoring site used by volunteers already working with new readers. Because libraries already exist as a system, the capability for cooperating, assembling community resources and networking is already in place, despite the varieties of organizational levels from community to community among tuto ing organizations and school programs.

It is in the self interest of libraries to promote literacy and therefore expand their services. Individuals with readinghandicaps usually highly value reading for their children. The library is often the primary entry point for the adult learner to re-enter the educational system. When librarians are trained to make referrals which support a smooth re-entry for those individuals, the literacy problem in the community is perceived as manageable and success is the expected result. This attitude is apparent in communities where the library has taken a strong role in community literacy efforts.

SERVING THE ADULT NEW READER

The primary task of all literacy programs is to match the new reader with a literacy program and method of instruction which takes into account his or her individual needs, learning style and preferences. Adults have limited time to spend on educational projects, despite the long term benefits such projects may have for them. Programs hoping to serve new readers effectively mustbe appealing, efficient and personally rewarding or they will be ignored.

While grade school children can be approached in small groups to learn to read, and may be approached with the current popular methods in learning to read, the adult has more specific needs. The first is for confidentiality. Most adult new readers want to begin in secret, with a discreet one-on-one tutor. Later the student will be willing to have others know about the reading lessons, but in the beginning, most have not even shared the decision to return to reading with their spouses.

Method is another delicate subject. We may be convinced utterly that a whole language approach is the only way to teach reading in the 1980s; however, the student may have a deep need to return to phonics and conquer what was such a source of confusion and embarrassment in the schoolroom. Tutors should be trained to use a variety of methods and to introduce them to the student. Each student will find a balance that meets individual needs.

The primary methods used to teach reading are these:

1. LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE This method encourages the student to put meaningful experiences together in his own words an then to read the results. It is highly motivating. Often with older students, practic is required to break the expectation that primers and phonics must be used to learn to read. The primary benefit of this method is that it springs from the reality that talking and listening and organizing speech are the essential prerequisites for reading. Therefore, it provides people who are deficient in practicing these skills with a built in opportunity to practice with someone who directly relates talking and listening skills to reading.

2. PHONICS Phonics is essential to adult new readers because they have taken in and used some concepts in reading, thereby relying heavily on them, while failing to take in others which are essential. This leaves the tutor with a diagnostic problem that must be shared by the student if it is to be solved. Using phonics to evaluate step by step, sound by sound, the student's ability to make and decode the sounds of the letters, tutor and student can figure out what the student doesn't know how to do in reading.
An individual's inability to read well is almost never simply the result of one problem. It is a mystery, highly organic and convoluted by a self-improvised solution, and reinforced by continued use until the advent of the tutoring. In this search for a solution, phonics provides a conceptual framework about reading that can be easily shared by both tutor and students.

They can discuss the letters, and combinations of letters, as a way of talking about how the student reads. This can be successful as long as both do not fall into the trap of believing that decoding the phonetic system is the same thing as reading. Phonics is, in reality, an intellectualization of the sounds of speech and not a method of teaching. An appropriate name for the method, properly used, would be phonic analysis.

3. WORD PATTERNS Used primarily by Literacy Volunteers, word patterns is essentially the phonics of vowels. It is successful with people who have not yet realized that some concepts in reading can be generalized, and provides them with an opportunity to practice generalizing so that they can do it later with more difficult generalizations, such as spelling rules and prefixes and suffixes.

4. SIGHT WORDS These are an important tutoring tool because most new readers have relied heavily on memorizing sight words all their lives and adding to the pool of sight words allows them to feel successful at an early stage in the reading process. It is very important to stress, however, that words not learned in context are much more likely to be forgotten.

One important postscript to method is the reminder that each individual has a distinct learning style and that people learning as adults deserve a great amount of respect for their needs as learners and recognition of their learning styles. Some people need to listen and say their learning, some to touch shapes which reinforce the learning and some to verbalize most of all. Teaching which utilizes a variety of methods and learning styles appears to have much more potential for long term success.

SELECTING MATERIALS

The watchwords in selecting materials for new readers have been: high interest, timely, short, and illustrated. Children's books will not meet the needs of adult new readers. Almost everything they have tried to read has been unsatisfactory. The documents they must relate to from the government, driver's license material, social security material, are all written at a 9th grade level or above. The instructions on products are usually at the 6-8th grade level. Adults want to practice on 0-4th grade level materials written about subjects they want to read about.

Only recently has such material been made available by more than a very few publishers. In the vanguard were numerous workbooks and collections of lifeskills material. While this is definitely interesting to adults, information on events, famous people and fiction have been very lacking areas in the realm of adult new reader products. Publishers are now paying attention to this need.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS

The desired materials have a balance of illustration and text. The margins are wide and contain clues to the content such as headings, arrows and diagrams. The text is organized in a clear and direct manner, with simple topic sentences. The book should look like it can be easily finished in a few sittings. It should not look like a child's book.

Whereas many new reader materials were only recently quite delicate, with soft paper covers, the newer publications are much sturdier and will not have to be replaced after every few uses.

The most desirable aspect of new reader materials is their cost. A community group or service club can provide the library with a few hundred dollars each year and a large collection of new reader materials can be assembled, most of which will also be heavily used by high school students. Their brevity makes it possible to place them on reserve and have them used in the library only.

HOW TO USE THESE PUBLICATIONS IN TUTORING

1. Always give an introduction and pre-organizers to the student.

2. Be sensitive to the fact that stories are organized in one way and textbooks in another. Tell the student about this.

3. Train the student in comprehension by asking questions which indicate how to attend to detail. e.g. "What color was Jane's dress?"

4. Provide an example of how to be interactive with the material. e.g. "Let's look at this diagram of the toaster and see how to repair it step-by-step."

5. Aim for high interest in the material you select. If possible, give the student a choice of things to read.

6. Always read the story or article yourself ahead of time. Have a summary prepared which uses some of the new words and define the words, even if orally. Have an opinion of your own about the material, so that you can have a conversation.

7. Explain that understanding the story is as important as reading it. Explain that understanding involves knowing what happened, in what order, remembering the descriptions and having an opinion about what happened. Many students have trouble reading primarily because they don't expect what they read to mean anything.

8. Every story has a main idea. Practice putting the main idea into the student's own words.

9. Assist your student in making inferences. Ask what he thinks happened to the characters after the story ended. How might they behave in different circumstances? How might other people have behaved in the circumstances of the story. Students will be at a level of ability to make inferences that may be quite different from their reading levels, because human development is not always consistent. Try to be supportive in your student's thinking development.

10. Workbooks are only helpful for practice. It is not good to assume that the organization of a workbook must be maintained as an order for presenting material. Use the student's need to know as a guide to the order and skip around in the workbook you are using. You be in control. This models for the student the way to have control of his own learning.

11. Whether you are using a textbook or a workbook or your student's own writing as the basis for your teaching, it is always your responsibility to help the student get up on top of the learning and put it into an outline or set of generalizations that serve his or her larger learning needs.

    Unnecessary struggles with grammatical terms, spelling rules, phonics rules and literary terms are usually what frustrated the student's learning in the first place. The student will indicate when he is ready to leave skill development and practice to begin intellectualizing about the material. If you impose this too soon, with too formal terminology, you may lose the student. A better tactic is to ask simple questions, such as, "What other story does this remind you of?" or "Where have we seen this problem before?"

12. Provide associative cues always. Nothing is retained by the mind without associations to relate it to. You can tell stories, give examples that are lively, or use mnemonic devices to achieve the associations. Always use the student's associations whenever available. Reinforce the cues often and bring up the subject in subsequent lessons through the use of the cue. e.g. "Do you remember the story that reminded you of your mother?"

THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography was developed to give the user as broad a picture of available materials for readers below the 4th grade level as possible. Only a few selections at the 5th grade level are included and these are in subject areas in which it seemed a detriment to leave out some item on a subject known to be highly popular with new readers.

The document is divided into sections: fiction, biography, content areas and life skills, reading practice texts, materials for tutors of new readers, films, English as a Second Language materials. The major sections, fiction, biography and content areas and life skills (which is analogous to nonfiction) are sub-divided into two sections, one of materials published for adult new readers and one of children's room selections appropriate for new reader's use.

All items included in this bibliography are selected. The author has not included some items frequently mentioned in other bibliographies because they are not often recommended by tutors. All the items which are included are materials tutors have used successfully or, by experience, the author believes would be used successfully by tutors.

It is inevitable that some items have been missed in compiling the bibliography. Several other bibliographies have been used as guides to memory and the annotations will in some cases be inevitably similar. Not all items are dated, either because they are current in this year's publisher's catalogue or because the dates were not available. Children's room materials are not dated. It is presumed children's librarians will be familiar with most of this material and its timeliness.

Much of the material in the bibliography is available in Maine. There is a key referencing where materials can be used at the end of each citation if the item is available in one of four collections: U.M.O. Staff Development Project, Shibles Hall, Orono; Literacy Volunteers State Office, Y.M.C.A. Building, Augusta; The Maine State Library; and, in a few cases, U.S.M. Anyone who wants to look at the materials should do so as a part of purchasing considerations, as the materials are not really sturdy enough to circulate. The user should always ask if material can be borrowed and, of course, all films can circulate.

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NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHERS OF MATERIALS FOR ADULT NEW READERS AND ABOUT NEW READERS

ACADEMIC THERAPY PUBLICATIONS. 20 Commercial Blvd. Novato, CA 94947

ADDISON-WESLEY PUBLISHING COMPANY. 1 Jacob Way. Reading, MA 01867

ALEMANY PRESS. 2501 Industrial Parkway West. Haywood, CA 94545

ALLYN AND BACON, INC. 7 Wells Ave. Newton, MA 02159

AMSCO SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS, INC. 315 Hudson St. New York, NY 10013

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY. P.O. Box 5656 Grand Central Station. NY 10017

ATHENEUM PUBLICATIONS. 115 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10003

AUDIO LANGUAGE STUDIES. One Columbia Dr. Niagra Fall, NY 14305

BOLMUTH, MIRIAM. Hunter College. 695 Park Ave. Box 22. New York, NY 10021

BRO-DART PUBLISHING CO. Williamsport, PA

CAMBRIDGE BOOK COMPANY. 888 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10106

CAMDEN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. 501 W. Ogden Ave. Hinsdale, IL. 60521

CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS. 3520 Prospect St. NW. Washington, DC 20007

CENTER FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS. Educational Testing Service. Rosedale and Carter Rds. Princeton, NJ 08541

CHARLES E. MERRILL PUBLISHING COMPANY. Columbus, OH 04326

COLLIER/MACMILLAN. 866 Third Ave. New York, NY 10022

COMPRIS. 6 Beechwood Ave. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada KIL 8B4

CONTEMPORARY BOOKS, INC. 180 Michigan Ave. Chicago, Il 60601

CRESTWOOD HOUSE. P O. Box 3427. Mankato, MN 56001

DAHLSTROM AND CO, INC. 76 Prospect St. Franklin, MA 02038

DILLON PRESS. 242 Portland Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55415

DODD MEAD AND COMPANY. 79 Madison Ave. New York, NY 10016.

EMC CHANGING TIMES. 300 York Ave. St. Paul, MN 55101

ESL ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER 500 S. Dwyer Ave. Arlington Heights, IL 60005

FEARON-PITMAN. 6 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002

FOLLETT PUBLISHING COMPANY. 1010 W. Washington Blvd. Chicago, IL 60607

GARRARD PUBLISHING CO. 29 Goldsborough St. Easton, MD 21601

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Darling, David J. DIANA, THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS. Level 3. Dillon Press, Inc.

Deur, Lynne. DOERS AND DREAMERS. Level 3. Lerner Publications Company.

Deutsch, Jordan A. DWIGHT GOODEN/ DALE MURPHY. Level 5. Avon Books.

Farr, Naunerle C. ABRAHAM LINCOLN/ FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT. Level 4.
Pendulum Press.
BEN HUR
BABE RUTH
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN; MARTIN LUTHER
CHARLES LINDBERGH/AMELIA EARHEART
DAVY CROCKETT/ DANIEL BOONE
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Hiatt, Peter and Drennan, Henry. PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE: A SURVEY OF PRACTICE. A.L.A. 1967.

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Meek, Margaret. LEARNING TO READ. Heinemann. $12.50. M.S.L.

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O'Neill. HAILSTONES AND HALIBUT BONES. Doubleday. 1961.

Reed. GENESIS: THE STORY OF CREATION. Level 3. Schocken Books. 1981. STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING. Poem in children's room appropriate for adult. Level 2. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers. Dutton. 1971.

Worth. SMALL POEMS. FARRAR. 1972.