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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography contains 34 references on issues concerning adult literacy listed in the ERIC database. It contains citations from the period between 1987 and 1989 and is divided into four sections. The first section provides an overview of adult literacy. Articles and papers in the second section describe and discuss adult literacy programs and projects. The third section presents citations on recent research. Issues concerning politics and women are annotated in the last section. (MS)

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Adult Literacy: Overview, Programs, and Research

by Michael Shermis

The influx of materials on and about adult literacy and the changes in the field make it appropriate to keep this important topic updated. There are many unanswered questions, including the extent of the problem of illiteracy. A search of the ERIC database produced the following citations on adult literacy, all from the period 1987 to 1989. The first section of this FAST Bib provides an overview of adult literacy. Articles and papers in the second section describe and discuss adult literacy programs and projects. The third section presents citations on recent research. Issues concerning politics and women are discussed in the last section.

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Overview

Adult Literacy & Technology National Conference. Pennsylvania State University, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, University Park, PA, 1988. 75p. [ED 298 291; paper copy not available from EDRS]

Provides advance information on the symposia, workshops, and presentations of a conference developed to teach about new techniques and methodologies for applying technology as a solution to adult illiteracy.

Bhola, H.S. "At Issue: Universal Literacy by Year 2000." Indiana University, School of Education, Bloomington, IN, 1988. 2p. [CS 009 374]

The call for universal literacy is not much ado about nothing. One billion adults, one in every four, living on the earth today are illiterate; 98% of them live in so-called Third World countries. Unable to participate effectively in the economic, social, and political life of the society, the illiterate adult is almost rendered superfluous. The principles for the organization of literacy are functionality (literacy tied to economic, social, or political functions); integration (literacy integrated with development work); participation (literacy planned in participation with the people involved);

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and diversity (literacy delivered through diverse modes of organization and methods of teaching). Literacy is "potential added" to human beings.

Chall, Jeanne S.; and others. "Adult Literacy: New and Enduring Problems," *Phi Delta Kappan*, v69 n3 p190-96 Nov 1987.

Analyzes the extent of adult illiteracy in the United States and identifies the major problems and needs found in the literature and in interviews with adult learners. Recommends ways to improve educational efforts and discusses what is known about effective adult literacy programs.

Coy, Joye Jenkins. "Adult Literacy from a Sociocultural Perspective." Paper presented at the 26th Annual Meeting of the Florida Reading Association, 1988. 18p. [ED 298 450]

Sociocultural concerns have provided the framework for literacy expectations throughout the history of the United States, and have determined how much national emphasis has been placed on adult literacy programs. Development of adult literacy programs must continue to assist and educate individuals in preparing for and adapting to the technological changes which are being implemented.

Heathington, Betty S. "Expanding the Definition of Literacy for Adult Remedial Readers," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n3 p213-17 Dec 1987.

Reviews some of the current definitions of literacy and suggests that an expansion of the definitions is needed.

Hunter, Carman St. John. "Myths and Realities of Literacy/Illiteracy," *Convergence: An International Journal of Adult Education*, v20 n1 p1-18 1987.

Examines three myths concerning illiteracy: the Third World remains poor because of high illiteracy rates; nations can be rated on a scale that compares relative literacy rates; and a reliable definition of literacy is needed. Concludes the real issue is not literacy, but equity and justice.

Johnson, Calvin. *Adult Learners: Needs, Problems, Disabilities, Development, and Solutions*. Bibliographical Review 1978-1987. Arkansas University, Little Rock, AR, 1987. 46p. [ED 297 099]

Provides an abstracted review of 75 available sources on the subjects of adult learning problems,

disabilities, development, and solutions in adult education.

Kitz, William R. "Adult Literacy: A Review of the Past and a Proposal for the Future," *Remedial and Special Education (RASE)*, v9 n4 p44-50 Jul-Aug 1988.

Provides a brief review of the literature regarding current practices for teaching reading to adults and children. Much of the methodology that has been proven effective with school-aged poor readers, such as the teaching of phonics through direct instruction, may also be appropriate for use at the adult level.

Limage, Leslie J. "Prospects for Adult Literacy in a Period of Economic Austerity," *Comparative Education*, v24 n1 p61-73 1988.

Evaluates the outlook for adult literacy during the ongoing international economic crisis. Describes liberal, conservative, and socialist views on relationships among education, poverty, and governmental policies.

Stedman, Lawrence C.; Kaestle, Carl F. "Literacy and Reading Performance in the United States, from 1880 to the Present," *Reading Research Quarterly*, v22 n1 p8-46 Win 1987.

Reviews literacy and reading achievement trends over the past century and places the current debates in a historical perspective. Concludes that upgrading literacy skills now requires new initiatives by coalitions of educators, community groups, employers, and governments.

Programs/Projects

Bean, Rita M.; Johnson, Rhonda S. "The Pittsburgh Adult Competency Program: A Model for Effective Literacy Programming," *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, v11 n1 p1-12 1987.

The Pittsburgh Adult Competency program is a literacy and vocational program based on six elements: (1) assessment, (2) flexible grouping, (3) a strong math and reading curriculum, (4) strategies for self-direction, (5) staff development, and (6) evaluation.

Combating Illiteracy among the Elderly: A Cost-Effective Strategy. National Council on the Aging, Inc., Washington, DC, 1987. 17p. [CS 009 342]

This final report of the Literacy Education for the Elderly Project (LEEP) provides a description and the results of the project designed to target literacy education to the older adult.

Cornell, Thomas. "Characteristics of Effective Occupational Literacy Programs," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n7 p654-56 Apr 1988.

Highlights the need for occupational literacy programs and provides brief guidelines for reading specialists interested in helping to develop such programs.

Diekhoff, George M. "An Appraisal of Adult Literacy Programs: Reading between the Lines," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n7 p624-30 Apr 1988.

Presents a critical review of the research on the effectiveness of adult literacy programs. Suggests that the methods used in current literacy programs offer students little chance of significant improvement.

Keefe, Donald; Meyer, Valerie. "The Literacy Prescription: Profiles of Adult Readers with Recommended Instructional Strategies." 1988. 27p. [CS 009 586]

The Literacy Prescription Project has served 250 clients in Illinois by providing individualized instruction and complete diagnostic reports—developing four profiles of adult disabled readers who can be treated with associated instructional techniques. These techniques include text mapping, key word search and prediction strategies, and summarizing strategies.

LIFE: *Literacy Is for Everyone*. Final Report. South Plains College, Lubbock, TX, 1988. 150p. [ED 298 335]

Describes Project LIFE, a model program that involved a coalition of community agencies in addressing the problem of adult illiteracy in a community college setting, enhancing participants' employability, and providing them with career adaptability.

Malus, Susan. "The Logical Place to Attain Literacy," *Library Journal*, v112 n12 p38-40 Jul 1987.

Describes the design, development, and implementation of an adult literacy program incorporating adult learning centers within the Brooklyn Public Library system.

Sanborn, Victor R. "For the Love of Reading," *Humanities*, v9 n6 p27-28 Nov-Dec 1988.

Describes Vermont's "Connections" project, a book discussion program designed to move newly literate adults from practical literacy to "literate" literacy by engaging them in discussions of texts

and ideas in the tradition of liberal education in the humanities.

Turner, Terilyn C., ed.; Stockdill, Stacey Hueftle, ed. *The Technology for Literacy Project Evaluation*. Saint Paul Foundation, St. Paul, MN, 1987. 188p. [ED 295 028]

Describes the Technology for Literacy Center, designed to find a new and better way to teach literacy skills to adults by using computers and other forms of technology.

Wechsler, Jill. "Going Back to the ABC's," *Appalachia*, v21 n1 p34-37,39-42 Win 1988.

Considers motivations of adult illiterates involved in literacy programs, and gives examples of available programs. Describes difficulties, frustrations, and rewards for individuals completing such programs. Includes an estimate of the size of the adult literacy problem.

Woods, Nancy. *Beginning a Literacy Program*. Metropolitan Pittsburgh Public Broadcasting, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA, 1987 27p. [ED 284 987]

Offers practical advice to those in charge of, or attempting to develop, a small literacy program. Discusses the following topics: beginning a literacy program; assessing the need; program structure; building a program; financing a program; recruitment; promotion; training of volunteer tutors; and "horizons" (perspective on adult literacy programs).

Research

Balmuth, Miriam. "Recruitment and Retention in Adult Basic Education: What Does the Research Say?" *Journal of Reading*, v31 n7 p620-23 Apr 1988.

Reports on a survey of adult literacy programs in the United States, focusing on the issues of student recruitment and retention. Suggests that personal sources are better than non-personal for recruitment, and that extrinsic motivation and a pleasant social environment are factors that can prevent attrition.

Bowren, Fay F. "Adult Reading Needs Adult Research Models," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n3 p208-12 Dec 1987.

Describes the lack of a substantial knowledge base about the nature of adult reading schemata and adult skill acquisition processes, posits reasons for the lack, and suggests areas in adult

reading for research, including materials, programs, and instructional methods.

Bruder, Mary Newton; Biggs, Shirley A. "Oral Reading and Adult Poor Readers: Implications for Practice," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n8 p736-39 May 1988.

Reports on a study that found that most adult poor readers reported negative memories of reading aloud in school. Also found that dislike of oral reading increased with reading ability, was present equally among men and women, and was less common among Blacks than Whites.

Chall, Jeanne S. "Reading Development in Adults," *Annals of Dyslexia*, v37 p240-51 1987.

The development of reading ability among adults is compared with that of children. Discusses the characteristics of adults at each developmental level; instruction for skill enhancement; difficulties experienced at various levels; a historical overview of literacy needs and standards; and the growing recognition of dyslexia in adults.

Fagan, William T. "Concepts of Reading and Writing among Low Literate Adults," *Reading Research and Instruction*, v27 n4 p47-60 Sum 1988.

Examines the reading and writing concepts of two groups of low literate adults (prisoners and adults in mainstream society). Finds that both groups possess a restricted view of literacy, viewing reading as a decoding task and writing as a handwriting and spelling activity.

Nickse, Ruth S.; and others. "An Intergenerational Adult Literacy Project: A Family Intervention/Prevention Model," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n7 p634-42 Apr 1988.

Reports on a research project in which adults who were involved in an intergenerational literacy program made significant progress in literacy skills. Emphasizes the importance of well-trained, caring tutors for successful literacy programs.

Quigley, B. Allan. "Learning to Work with Them: Analyzing Nonparticipation in Adult Basic Education through Resistance Theory," *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, v11 n2 p63-71 1987.

Assuming that many undereducated adults resisted schooling in early years and are now resisting adult basic education (ABE) programs for similar reasons, this study examines young adults in literary fiction who resisted schooling.

Other Literacy Issues

Fingeret, Arlene. "The Politics of Adult Literacy Education." Paper presented to the National Urban Literacy Conference, 1988. 7p. [ED 292 053]

Recent attention to literacy, rather than focusing on literacy for social mobility as in the 1960s, promotes literacy for basic, entry-level employment—training adults for specific tasks rather than helping them learn to read, write, solve problems, and continue learning.

Howard, Joseph. "Adult Literacy in West Germany: The Paradox of Success," *Journal of Reading*, v32 n3 p257-61 Dec 1988.

Assesses adult illiteracy in the Federal Republic of Germany, reinforcing some observations on the situation in the United States and other industrialized nations.

Kazemek, Francis E. "Women and Adult Literacy: Considering the Other Half of the House," *Lifelong Learning*, v11 n4 p23-24 Jan 1988.

Discusses one central characteristic of "women's way of knowing," some immediate implications for adult literacy instruction, and possible directions for further research.

Moss, Michael. "Reporting on Literacy: Soft-Selling a Complex Political Story." Paper presented at the National Seminar of the Education Writers Association, 1988. 20p. [ED 296 176]

Much of the story of illiteracy is about the powerless, and reporting on it can focus on who lacks power and why. However, much of the untold story about illiteracy is about people with power who are choosing not to wield it in support of changing poverty-related illiteracy. Reporting on illiteracy and other poverty issues requires immersion, context, and repetition.

National Adult Literacy Policy: A Proposal from the Working Group on Adult Literacy. International Reading Association, Newark, DE, 1988. 13p. [ED 297 312]

Presented to Americans and addressed to presidential candidates, this proposal: (1) identifies the extent of the literacy problem in America; (2) outlines current efforts to address the problem; (3) discusses the roles of the sectors; and (4) recommends actions.

Salice, Barbara. "Women and Illiteracy in the United States: A Feminist View." 1988. 26p. [ED 299 434]

Throughout history, American women have had less access to education than their male counterparts. Because of discrimination based on traditional ideas of inferiority and subjection, female adult literacy rates did not even approximate male rates until well into the 19th century. It was not until the 20th century that the need to educate women for careers and professions was recognized. More recently, feminist literature has reflected the need for education of women that enables them to take charge of their own lives.

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