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ABSTRACT

This handbook, which is an outgrowth of educational workshops for Portage County (Ohio) Literacy Coalition members, is intended as an introductory text for individuals desiring to become effective supporters of adult literacy efforts in local communities. The context and purpose of the handbook's development are explained in the introduction. Presented next is a decade-by-decade review of the historical context of adult literacy in the United States from 1900 to the present. The next (main) section examines the following current issues in adult literacy: the definition of what it means to be a literate adult in U.S. society, the findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), the lack of sufficient funding for most adult literacy programs, challenges regarding recruitment and retention of adult literacy students, and the status of teachers and philosophy underlying instruction in adult programs. Concluding the handbook are a list of important acronyms and terms in adult literacy, a 17-item list of suggested readings, and the address of the Ohio Literacy Resource Center. Appended are a list of six national education goals by the year 2000, major provisions of the National Literacy Act of 1991, and major findings from the NALS. (MN)

Handbook

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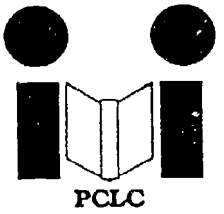

Portage County (OH) Literacy Coalition
Funded by the Ohio Department of Education

HANDBOOK
OF
ADULT LITERACY ISSUES
FOR
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PORTAGE COUNTY LITERACY COALITION
FEBRUARY, 1994

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A. INTRODUCTION

In September, 1989, representatives from Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) service providers, libraries, educational institutions, social service agencies, businesses, and other organizations in Portage County formed the Portage County Literacy Coalition (PCLC). The PCLC was established as a not-for-profit, community-based group with a purpose framed by the following goals:

1. **To assist in developing Portage County as a community of adult learners who can use literacy proficiently to function on the job and in society, to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential.**

2. **To promote and increase awareness of the scope and impact of illiteracy in Portage County.**

3. **To improve the effectiveness of the literacy network in Portage County.**

4. **To promote the growth and expansion of literacy programs and services.**

Between 1989 and 1993, the PCLC was successful in recruiting an active Board of Trustees, building an organizational framework (e.g. by-laws, committees, job descriptions for officers, promotional literature), and engaging in a series of activities (e.g. corporate spelling bees, booths at local fairs, balloon ride raffles) which promoted community awareness of adult literacy services.

Despite these successes, PCLC members never were able to engage in a concerted effort to develop short-term or long-term strategic plans focused on achieving the stated goals. In addition, although PCLC members had an interest in and understanding of adult literacy from their personal perspectives, they frequently expressed the need to learn more about adult literacy issues and practices from broader perspectives (historical, national, local) in order to improve their effectiveness as planners and members.

In an effort to strengthen the adult literacy knowledge base of its membership and develop strategic plans, the PCLC applied for and received 353 Special Demonstration/Training funds from the Ohio Department of Education for the 1993 year. Two educational workshops on major issues and trends in adult literacy were conducted for PCLC members in April and May of 1993. Members then reevaluated the original PCLC goals and successfully developed long-term and short-term plans at a retreat session in fall, 1993. These plans have been submitted for approval by the full PCLC Board of Trustees in 1994.

This handbook is an outgrowth of the 1993 educational workshops for PCLC members. In addition to documenting some of the information use in the training effort, this handbook is intended to be an introductory text for **any individual** who desires perspectives beyond personal observations in order to effectively support adult literacy efforts in local communities. Because the information explosion in recent years has hit the field of adult literacy as hard as it has hit other areas of society, the information provided in this handbook is by no means inclusive. However, the content contained herein should provide a promising point of departure for reflective thought and continued knowledge acquisition for those who invest their energy in support of adult literacy.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ADULT LITERACY IN THE U.S.

Four years ago, our nation's governors developed a series of six national educational goals that ideally could be achieved by the year 2000 (see Appendix A). Goal 5 specifically focuses on the issues of adult literacy, lifelong learning, and productivity in the workplace:

> **Goal 5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.**

In part, establishing this goal was a response to a perceived "crisis" in adult literacy in the United States that has been decried by numerous observers (Harman, 1987; Kozol, 1985). The inference is that our national social problem of illiteracy is a recent phenomenon in our society. But an overview of adult literacy education in the 20th century indicates that the current "crisis" has been echoed before and that **Goal 5** could have been established just as easily in 1900 as in 1990.

(The following synopsis of adult literacy is indebted to the work of Wanda Daukszа Cook (1977) and Amy Rose (1991).)

1900-1910

Heavy immigration to U.S. from primarily European countries occurred in the early part of the century. Many immigrants had low educational levels and English as a second language barriers. This created a challenge to the existing social order although the issue of adult literacy was not widely identified as a national social problem.

- Business and labor leaders see the necessity of adult literacy education to improve productivity/efficiency and to have an informed and educated workforce.

- Some state governments encourage federal government to enact legislation which excludes foreign-born adults (age 14 and over) who cannot read or write from entering the U.S.

- Community effort to provide evening literacy classes for foreign-born adults begins in the textile town of Passaic, New Jersey.

1910-1930

Adult literacy was identified as a genuine crisis in the U.S. for the first time. Involvement in World War I created strong anti-foreign born sentiment in the country and precipitated efforts to "Americanize" the foreign population. In addition, the federal government learned that approximately 25% of WWI military service inductees were near-illiterate and 7% were totally illiterate. After the war, the adult literacy crisis waned as relative economic prosperity ensued (after a short-lived depression) and the country attempted to return to normalcy.

- Some businesses begin 'workers classes' to provide elementary education for adult workers. Classes meet during the workday, and the curriculum focuses on reading, basic mathematics, and speaking and comprehending English.

- Federal immigration legislation restricts numbers of immigrants entering U.S. and thus indirectly affects illiteracy. Approximately 60% of the states pass legislation which specifically encourages adult education. The National Department of Adult Education is established in 1924.

- Kentucky initiates moonlight schools for illiterate soldiers and draftees. Volunteer teachers instruct men using simple reading texts about why the country is at war with Germany.

- Short-lived National Illiteracy Crusade is conducted in 1924, but little is known about its goals or processes. President Hoover forms the first national committee to study illiteracy and make policy recommendations in 1929 - the Advisory Committee on National Illiteracy.

1930-1950

During the 1930's, any national concern for illiteracy was overshadowed by the socioeconomic hardships of the Depression. Some of President Roosevelt's New Deal relief legislation had an indirect impact on adult literacy education. For example, the Works Progress Administration conducted a 4-year illiteracy campaign in New York City as one of its many projects.

Adult literacy was identified as a national crisis for the second time with the entry of the U.S. into World War II. Again, thousands of illiterate registrants for military service could not perform simple reading and writing tasks. Federal officials were forced to defer illiterate men from military service and instruct them using materials related to the soldier's functional role (e.g. Your Job in the Army) in order to ready them. This literacy training was judged to be successful, and it focused attention on the relationship between literacy levels and the quality of national defense.

- Local efforts to combat illiteracy are the primary delivery system in lieu of a sustained, comprehensive national effort. In South Carolina, "opportunity schools" provide instruction for illiterate girls and women only. Carnegie Corporation grant to evaluate "opportunity schools" reveals that lack of appropriate instructional materials and lack of instructional methods appropriate to adults rather than children are the greatest obstacles to success.

- Advisory Commission on National Illiteracy national study reveals that problem of inmate illiteracy in prisons is extensive. Study also reveals that sufficient time for instruction is the major problem in providing literacy education to prisoners because the ratio of short-termers to long-termers is 3.1.

- No legislative progress in adult literacy at the national level. There is growing awareness that volunteer campaigns to solve the problem of illiteracy will not be enough and that the help of professional educators will be needed.

1950-1960

Nationally, this period was characterized by a post-WWII settling into a Cold War. The reality of Communism and threat of additional armed conflict stimulated a concern that American citizens be educated for the purpose of a strong national defense. The Korean War revealed that the problem of the illiterate soldier had not disappeared. The launching of the Sputnik satellite by the Russians in 1957 created a national educational crisis as U.S. educators scrambled to improve math and science curricula to keep pace.

- States continue to pass legislation related to adult literacy education and to serve as a source of funding for programs which slowly expand nationwide. Local tax dollars and contributions from private sources continue to be the primary sources of program funding.
- Industry's concern for adult literacy was minimal in an era of relative economic prosperity and social stability.
- The Laubach method gains prominence as a way to provide literacy instruction to adults. Developed by American missionary Frank Laubach, this method was designed to be used universally by volunteer literate adults on an 'each one, teach one' basis. This instructional approach was laced with strong self-help, religious, and political undertones, particularly when used with citizens of underdeveloped countries.

1960-1980

Led by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, the federal government became a major force in social legislation related to areas such as civil rights, economic improvement, and education. The important link between education and improving economic status of those who are disadvantaged was clearly drawn. The Adult Education Act, passed in 1966, finally established a meaningful federal financial presence in addressing the problem of adult illiteracy. The literacy standard for full participation in American society was raised; thus *functional illiteracy* began to replace *grade-level* in measurements of adult literacy skills.

- In 1962, Congress passes the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA). This act formally establishes a linkage between literacy education and vocational training when it is discovered that many program participants lack the basic literacy skills to be successfully trained in a vocation.

- Libraries become involved in the adult literacy effort as many programs for functionally and totally illiterate adults are sponsored by local librarians throughout the country. As the period progresses, library programs begin to build cooperative relationships with adult basic literacy education programs although the strength of these partnerships is highly tenuous.

- Concern for the literacy levels of special segments of the American population expands from soldiers and ESL immigrants to include migrant workers, Native-Americans, and inmates in correctional facilities.

- A nationwide attack on illiteracy is launched with the National Right to Read program. The goal of the program is to ensure that by 1980, 99% of the individuals under the age of 16 and 90% of the individuals over 16 will be able to read and write.

- Research efforts into adult literacy education begin to blossom. This research on instructional methods, instructional materials, program effectiveness, adult motivation for learning and numerous other areas is an important contribution to a growing sense of professionalization in the field of adult literacy practice.

1980- present

The Reagan administration increased the focus on the crisis in adult literacy during the early part of this period. However, this 'renewed' interest in combatting illiteracy hinged on waging the battle with volunteers in order to decrease federal financial costs. In the 28 years since the passage of the Adult Education Act in 1966, the early 1980's represents the only time that federal appropriations for adult literacy education did not increase. As the 1980's decade progressed, the link between literacy and national as well as personal economic development grew stronger in the minds of policymakers. The passage of the National Literacy Act (NLA - See Appendix B) in 1991 provided American society with a new, broader definition of literacy which suggests

that literacy is the key to solving a variety of social problems. Adult literacy educators point to the NLA as a positive step in creating a long-awaited, much-needed strong infrastructure of substance in the field of adult literacy.

- The private, non-profit Coalition for Literacy is established in 1981. The purpose of this group is to provide national publicity for literacy issues, increase volunteer activities in support of adult literacy, and respond to public inquiries. The work of this coalition signals the onset of the 1-800 literacy hotlines.

- The Secretary of Education announces the federal Adult Literacy Initiative in 1983. This initiative strongly emphasizes using volunteers in literacy efforts, a stance which causes much concern among the existing body of "professional" adult educators.

- Local task forces to support literacy are created throughout the country under the auspices of Project Literacy U.S.(PLUS). These task forces are comprised of community members from religious groups, business and industry, education, human services etc. who work to organize the resources of the community in support of literacy activities.

- The federal government attempts to "legislate" coordination of literacy with human services and work training through regulations connected to the Adult Education Act, the Job Opportunities and Basic Skill Training Program (JOBS) and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). There is some evidence that this coordination is working on a state level if not at the local level.

- There is increased emphasis on accountability and evaluation in adult literacy as the National Literacy Act requires all states to develop indicators of program quality and use them to evaluate program effectiveness.

Summary

Clearly, concern for adult literacy in American society has been prevalent for nearly a century. However, focused, widespread national response has occurred only in times of crisis such as the discovery of large numbers of illiterate soldiers as the U.S. prepared to fight World War I and World War II. Even recent emphases on eliminating illiteracy such as the federal Right to Read program and the Adult Literacy Initiative were driven by a short-term crisis mentality.

It is interesting to note that adult literacy's link to workforce productivity, economic development, and preserving the established social order dates back to business and industry's response to waves of immigration at the beginning of the century. In this perspective, the current concept of workplace literacy is not a new phenomenon. In times of economic prosperity throughout the century, adult literacy was a crisis deferred. Historically, adult literacy has been emphasized primarily as a means to solving important social problems. Rarely has it been accorded center stage as an end in itself -- the promotion of lifelong learning and human development for a better quality of life.

Until the passage of the Adult Literacy Act in 1966, the federal government assumed no meaningful leadership role for focusing attention on or funding adult literacy. With the passage of the National Literacy Act in 1991, newly-created federal structures such as the National Institute for Literacy and a network of state literacy resource offer hope that a long-term commitment is being made which will allow "literacy development to take its place as part of a larger pledge to lifelong learning in society" (Fingeret, 1992, p.2).

C. CURRENT ISSUES IN ADULT LITERACY

Community members who are interested in supporting adult literacy efforts need to be aware of the important current issues being addressed in the field. The issues presented in this section are by no means the only ones central to adult literacy at this time. However, they do provide a basic framework for understanding, and they are relevant at national, state, and local levels.

Issue #1

The definition of what it means to be literate as an adult in American society is once again under close scrutiny.

As might be expected, the definition of literacy, and therefore the number of individuals who are categorized as illiterate, has changed over time. Until the late 1920's, literacy was regarded simply as the ability to read and write. However, educators were concerned about the vagueness of such a basic definition, particularly since its liberality posed accuracy problems for census takers.

In the 1930's, the definition of literacy began to shift as the National Education Association suggested a sixth grade level as the basis for literacy. Grade-level measurements of adult literacy were eventually widely accepted in adult literacy skills assessment. William S. Gray, noted guru in the field of reading, also attacked the issue of defining illiteracy in the 1930's. He posited three levels which included distinctions among technical literacy, functional literacy, and the need for background enrichment (Cook, 1977, p. 43). Thus, the notion of literacy as a function of what was necessary to be successful in society was introduced.

The federally funded Adult Performance Level (APL) project in 1975 expanded the definition of functional literacy. This project identified the literacy skills necessary for accomplishing tasks in society in the areas of a) consumer economics, b) occupational knowledge, c) health, d) community resources, and e) government and law. Despite its importance in moving adult literacy from a grade-level to a social context assessment scheme, the APL was criticized for a middle-class bias inherent in the definition areas.

The National Literacy Act of 1991 has provided the most recent revision of literacy by defining it as:

An individual's ability to read, write and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

While this definition maintains a social context for literacy much like its functional literacy forerunners, it goes beyond traditional notions of literacy as reading only by explicitly emphasizing writing, mathematics and problem-solving as well. It also attempts to move literacy beyond any potential semblance of class bias into the broader realm of developing human potential. It makes no attempt to define "levels of proficiency" either as grade levels or other concrete measurements, thus leaving the judgement of literacy competence open to broad interpretation.

Definitions of literacy reflect changing demands in American society as evidenced by the technological advancements during the past 100 years and those in years to come. By the year 2000, estimates are that more than 50% of all jobs will require education or technical training beyond high school. Despite their changing nature, these definitions also serve as barometers for social progress, especially when literacy is viewed as the key to solving complex social problems. It is important to note well our current definition of literacy because at the national and state levels it will drive social and political policy regarding adult literacy for the foreseeable future. At the local program level it will drive curriculum and instruction and, therefore, the outcomes of adult literacy learning.

Issue #2

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) has provided the richest information on adult literacy skills in our country's history.

In 1988, the U.S. Congress required the Department of Education to determine the nature and extent of literacy among adults in our country. The resulting

National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) is the richest data base ever compiled on adult literacy and should provide a sound basis for future planning.

Approximately 400 trained interviewers administered the NALS in households to over 26,000 participants randomly selected to represent the adult population in the country as a whole. This sample also included 1,100 inmates who were interviewed in 80 federal and state prisons.

Consistent with the NLA definition of literacy, the NALS measured ability on three literacy scales:

- ***Prose literacy*** - the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, new stories, poems, and fiction.
- ***Document literacy*** - the knowledge and skills needed to locate and use information contained in job applications or payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and indexes.
- ***Quantitative literacy*** - the knowledge and skills needed to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, that are embedded in printed materials such as balancing a checkbook, figuring out a tip, or completing an order form.

A more detailed description of sample tasks is provided in Appendix C.

Literacy abilities on each scale were reported in a range from 0 (low) to 500 (high). Five literacy levels were developed from these scores with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 being the highest. As the chart in Appendix C indicates, the average national proficiency on the scales was 272 for prose, 267 for document, and 271 for quantitative - all near the high end of Level 2. The literacy abilities of Ohio adults compare favorable to both the national and Midwest regional results.

The NALS results also revealed:

- nationally, large percentages of adults (47% -51%) performed at the two lowest literacy levels. However, these approximately 90 million adults did not perceive themselves as being "at-risk" as many

of them described themselves as being able to read and write "well" or "very well,"

- adults who completed the tests of General Educational Development (GED) or high school equivalency demonstrated literacy skills comparable to adults who earned a regular high school diploma,
- older adults were more likely than middle-aged or younger adults to demonstrate limited literacy skills,
- those with limited literacy skills are likely to find it more challenging to pursue their goals in job advancement, consumer decision making, citizenship, and other aspects of their lives.

It is clear that a country in which over 50% of the citizens display limited literacy skills possesses fewer resources with which to meet its social, economic, political, and civic goals. It is also clear from the NALS, that universally achieving National Education Goal #5 will be virtually impossible by the year 2000, if ever. However, the NALS will be an important tool in informing future social policy since it demonstrates that literacy is highly correlated with economic development, crime, jobs, and voting -- all priority issues to policymakers.

Issue #3

Despite progress in the last three decades, insufficient funding remains a primary concern for most adult literacy programs.

Since 1980, there has been a significant increase in both federal and state funding for adult literacy. This funding has risen from $174 million in 1980 to $893 million in 1992. In particular, the state and local share of this funding has increased markedly since 1985 with three dollars invested for every federal dollar invested in adult literacy education.

But how much funding is enough? In discussing their concerns, the majority of adult literacy program administrators continue to pinpoint the need for more funds as a crucial concern. In fact, the number of adults enrolling in adult literacy education programs has nearly doubled between 1980 and 1992 from 2 million to over 3.8 million. Given this expansion, administrators

say funds are needed for a) quality training for staff, b) books and other instructional materials for learners, c) computer systems for classrooms and program data management, and d) recruiting and marketing efforts for new students and promoting literacy awareness.

Data from the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium's 1990 The Adult Education Program Annual Report illustrate the inadequacy of funding. In Ohio, a total of $11,239,150 was allotted for adult literacy education. Approximately 53% of this total was provided by the federal government with the remainder expended by the state and local entities.

This total allotment was used to served 95,476 students during the program year or only 34% of those eligible for services (i.e. those over the age of 16 with no high school diploma). **This translates into a per student cost of only $117.72 per year**, by no means a major investment in adult literacy education. It also represents **only those who were served and not the 66% of additional adults who were eligible to be served**. As the following chart indicates, Ohio is not alone in being underfunded for adult literacy education:

1990 Expenditure per adult literacy education student

Ohio	$ 117.72
Michigan	$ 57.42
Illinois	$ 139.60
Pennsylvania	$ 149.83
New York	$ 209.55
Florida	$ 133.62
Texas	$ 75.41
California	$ 21.22

Hanna Fingeret (1992) notes that many of the private dollars contributed to adult literacy functions in the past few years have been cut back "reflecting difficult economic times as well as disappointment that the literacy 'crisis' has not been 'fixed' (p. 17). It is ironic that a country which twice viewed illiteracy as a 'crisis' central to the national defense (World War I and World War II) has never invested dollars in adult literacy education equivalent to those invested in national defense.

Issue #4

Recruiting and retaining adult literacy students are major challenges facing service providers.

As previously stated, enrollment in adult literacy education programs has nearly doubled in the last decade. The greatest increase has occurred in the number of English as a Second Language students which has risen from 19% to 32% of the total enrollment. Adult Basic Education students (ABE) represent 36% and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students comprise 32% of the 3.37 million learners served. The largest concentrations of adult literacy education participants are located in the Western and Southern regions of the U.S. Members of traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups (African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American) comprise almost 2/3 of the total adult education enrollment.

Despite these enrollment trends, recruiting and retaining students remains the major challenge of adult literacy education programs today. Data from the aforementioned 1990 Annual Report indicate the extent of the challenge, as **only 5.8%** of the national adult population over the age of 16 without a high school diploma enrolled in adult literacy education services.

Why so many adults do not enroll in educational programs designed to help them is puzzling to adult literacy observers and professionals alike. Studies on motivation to participate in adult basic literacy education (Beder, 1990; Beder & Valentine, 1990) have identified the following factors:

Why Adults Participate	Why Adults Do Not Participate
- educational advancement	- low perception of need
- self-improvement	- situational barriers
- literacy development	- perceived effort (school is difficult)
- economic need	- dislike of school
- family responsibilities	
- diversion	
- job advancement	
- launching into a new life	
- urging of others	
- community and church involvement	

Quigley (1993), in particular, has focused on adults' resistance to schooling. He found that many adults have dreams of attaining an education, but their willingness to participate in adult literacy education programs is offset by their memories of negative experiences in past schooling with teachers, peers, course content, and the school environment. Quigley concludes that adult literacy education programs must "de-school" their marketing and image if they are to attract new adult literacy learners.

As the previous information suggests, there are many factors which influence whether or not adult students enroll that are beyond the control of adult literacy programs. However, adult literacy program administrators **do** have great influence over the **quality** of their local programs. By striving to improve that program quality, and helping adults who do attend realize that developing literacy skills is a lifetime rather than a short-term process, adult literacy educators can successfully meet the retention challenge.

Issue #5

The status of teachers in adult literacy and the philosophy underlying instruction have a significant impact on program effectiveness.

One serious concern related to the effectiveness of adult literacy education programs is the great number of part-time instructors. In 1991, part-instructors represented **88%** of the **salaried teachers** in adult literacy education. This marked a 17% increase in paid, part-time instructors since 1980.

In addition, the use of volunteers as tutors and teachers has dramatically increased by 186% since 1985! Today, volunteers comprise **48%** of the total workforce in adult literacy education. While the increased involvement of volunteers is a testimony to the success of the Reagan adult literacy initiatives of the early 1980's, conclusive evidence that they have improved the effectiveness of adult literacy programming is lacking.

The predominance of paid part-time instructors and volunteer tutors reflects the weak infrastructure in adult literacy education today. Utilizing this type of workforce enables adult literacy administrators to

expand program offerings to multiple sites and stretch scarce resource dollars. But it also disproportionately multiplies administrative stress with its potential for instability, high turnover, low morale, lack of interest in professional development, and instructional isolation. The lack of a career path in adult literacy education serves to compromise the potential effectiveness of teachers and, consequently, programs.

The past 10 years have witnessed much debate over the best ways to teach adults literacy skills. Issues such as Laubach vs. language experience approach, individualized tutoring vs. small-group instruction, and skills first vs. holistic methods continue to be the focus of staff development sessions. Regardless of where individuals stand on specific strategies, there are basic instructional guidelines that can contribute to the effectiveness of an adult literacy program:

- *instruction should capitalize on the strengths all adults bring to the learning process -- their language and their experiences,*
- *instruction should respect and invite adults' ownership in making decisions about goals, materials, strategies, and evaluating outcomes,*
- *instruction should ensure that adults experience success early and often and that the link between literacy instruction and meaningful uses of literacy is clear,*
- *instruction must be viewed as one part of the adult's whole life and should never be divorced from that life's historical and cultural contexts.*

Summary

In striving to meet the goal of universal adult literacy by the year 2000, adult literacy education service providers must build effective partnerships beyond the confines of their programs with groups and individuals in their communities who value and support literacy development. Community literacy coalitions are one method to forge such partnerships. The information about current adult literacy issues contained in this section will broaden community members' knowledge of adult literacy and enable them to more effectively participate in these partnerships.

D. IMPORTANT ACRONYMS AND TERMS IN ADULT LITERACY

Like many other fields, adult literacy has a language of its own. The following list of 25 items provides a basic guide to what at times can be a confusing alphabet soup. Please note that while this is a list of important terms, it is not comprehensive. In addition, the list is intended to primarily facilitate reading in context, thus no detailed explanations of these terms are provided. Individuals seeking more information about these terms or encountering other unknown ACRONYMs or terms are encouraged to contact their SLRC (*State Literacy Resource Center*) or the adult literacy program in their community.

1. **AAACE** (*American Association for Adult and Continuing Education*)
2. **ABE** (*Adult Basic Education*)
3. **ABLE** (*Adult Basic and Literacy Education*)
4. **ASE** (*Adult Secondary Education*)
5. **COABE** (*Commission on Adult Basic Education*)
6. **ESL** (*English as a Second Language*)
7. **ES** (*Even Start*)
8. **FL** (*Family literacy*)
9. **GED** (*General Educational Development*)
10. **IRA** (*International Reading Association*)
11. **JOBS** (*Job Opportunities and Basic Skills*)
12. **JTPA** (*Job Training Partnership Act*)
13. **LD** (*Learning Disability*)
14. **LLA** (*Laubach Literacy Action*)
15. **LVA** (*Literacy Volunteers of America*)
16. **NALS** (*National Adult Literacy Survey*) and **OALS** (*Ohio Adult Literacy Survey*)
17. **NCAL** (*National Center for Adult Literacy*)
18. **NIL** (*National Institute for Literacy*)

19. NLA (*National Literacy Act*)

20. OAACE (*Ohio Association for Continuing and Adult Education*)

21. ODE (*Ohio Department of Education*)

22. OLN (*Ohio Literacy Network*)

23. OLRC (*Ohio Literacy Resource Center*)

24. TABE (*Tests of Adult Basic Education*)

25. WL (*Workplace Literacy*)

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Additional references on topics in adult literacy may be obtained by contacting your State Literacy Resource Center. In Ohio, contact the:

Ohio Literacy Resource Center
414 White Hall
Kent State University
P.O. Box 5190
Kent, OH 44242-0001
(phone) 800-765-2897
(fax) 216-672-4841
(E-mail) olrc@kentvm.kent.edu

Appendix A

The National Education Goals

Goal 1

By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

Goal 2

By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Goal 3

By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Goal 4

By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

Goal 5

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Goal 6

By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Appendix B

The National Literacy Act (1991)

Here are the major provisions of the 1991 National Literacy Act

TITLE I - STRATEGIC PLANNING, RESEARCH, & COORDINATION

This title establishes an infrastructure for federal and state leadership, research, planning, and comprehensive quality program delivery. Among its major provisions are:

The establishment of a National Institute for Literacy to be a central repository of information and expertise for federal programs, agencies and also for Congress, states, program providers, business and industry. The Institute will conduct research, provide program assistance, evaluate policy, disseminate information, and provide assistance to various agencies to implement the Act.

Title I establishes State/Regional Literacy Resource Centers to link the National Institute to program providers, upgrade the system of diffusion and adoption of state-of-the-art teaching methods, assist in coordinating the literacy system, provide technical assistance to states and local governments and service providers, encourage government-industry partnerships, and provide training to instructors.

TITLE II - WORKFORCE LITERACY

- Establishes a National Workforce Literacy Assistance Collaborative to provide small/medium-sized businesses with technical assistance.
- Establishes a large-scale grant program for evaluating replicable strategies based on local, regional, statewide, and industry-wide partnerships. At least five grants will total not less than $500,000.

TITLE III - INVESTMENT IN LITERACY

This title assists the states and local programs in providing literacy services by investing in program improvement, expansion, coordination, and staff training. Major provisions are:

- Increase the authorization of the AEA grant program from $200 to $260 million in FY 1992 and subsequent years as may be necessary.
- Require the state agency receiving funds to provide assurances that all public and private non-profit programs which serve the educationally disadvantaged are given direct and equitable access to those funds. In determining which programs shall receive assistance, states must consider past effectiveness, coordination, and commitment to serving individuals most in need of literacy service
- Modify the State Plan under the AEA including the requirement that states must set forth measurable goals for improving literacy levels, retention, and long-term learning gains, and describe a comprehensive approach to achieving those goals
- Broaden the membership and mandate of the state advisory councils on adult education and literacy authorized under the AEA. Among other requirements, each council must develop a plan for literacy service that identifies the literacy needs of the state's citizens and specifies a means for addressing these needs
- Require states to develop, within two years, indicators of program quality to evaluate programs which use the state grants of the AEA.
- Increase the Adult Education Act's 10% set-aside for innovation and staff training to 15% and require that two-thirds be used for teacher training and staff development.
- Provide that basic state grant funds shall be used for competitive two-year "Gateway Grants" to public housing authorities for literacy programs and related activities.
- Amend Even Start Family Literacy Program to:
  - Establish $75,000 minimum under the state grant program and allow 5% to be used for administrative and technical assistance;
  - Reserve 2% of the funds for technical assistance and evaluation;
  - Reserve funds for migrant programs and U.S. territories;
  - Establish CBOs and other nonprofit organizations eligibility for grants;
  - Establish a child's program eligibility from birth to age 7;
  - Provide that eligibility remains until child and parent are ineligible;
  - Authorize $2 million for contract with the Corp. for Public Broadcasting to develop and disseminate literacy related materials.

TITLE IV - BUSINESS LEADERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

This title authorizes the Sec. of Education to make grants to public and private entities for the training of commercial drivers.

TITLE V - BOOKS FOR FAMILIES

- Gives priority in the selection of programs by Reading Is Fundamental to programs that serve children and students with special needs.
- Gives priority for grants under Section 601 of the Library Services and Construction Act to library literacy programs and services which are delivered in areas of greatest need and that coordinate with other literacy organizations and community based organizations.

TITLE VI - FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS FOR STATE AND LOCAL PRISONERS

This title creates a "compliance grant program" to carry out demonstrations or support system-wide functional literacy programs for incarcerated adults, and a life skills training grant program to reduce recidivism and promote reintegration into society of incarcerated adults by helping them to develop self-esteem, job, financial, family development, stress-management, and other skills

TITLE VII - VOLUNTEERS FOR LITERACY

This title creates "Literacy Challenge Grants" administered by the ACTION Agency for partnerships between the agency and literacy providers to establish, expand, or operate community or employee literacy programs which include volunteers Applications must be submitted to the Director of the Action Agency, and federal share of funds to support each project will decline each year for three years.

Appendix C

National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

Difficulty Values of Selected Tasks Along the Prose, Document, and Quantitative Literacy Scales

	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
0	149	Identify country in short article	69	Sign your name	191	Total a bank deposit entry
	210	Locate one piece of information in sports article	170	Locate expiration date on driver's license		
	224	Underline sentence explaining action stated in short article	180	Locate time of meeting on a form		
			214	Using pie graph, locate type of vehicle having specific sales		
225	226	Underline meaning of a term given in government brochure on supplemental security income	230	Locate intersection on a street map	238	Calculate postage and fees for certified mail
	250	Locate two features of information in sports article	246	Locate eligibility from table of employee benefits	246	Determine difference in price between tickets for two shows
	275	Interpret instructions from an appliance warranty	259	Identify and enter background information on application for social security card	270	Calculate total costs of purchase from an order form
275	288	Write a brief letter explaining error made on a credit card bill	277	Identify information from bar graph depicting source of energy and year	278	Using calculator, calculate difference between regular and sale price from an advertisement
	304	Read a news article and identify a sentence that provides interpretation of a situation	298	Use sign out sheet to respond to call about resident	308	Using calculator, determine the discount from an oil bill if paid within 10 days
	316	Read lengthy article to identify two behaviors that meet a stated condition	314	Use bus schedule to determine appropriate bus for given set of conditions	321	Calculate miles per gallon using information given on mileage record chart
			323	Enter information given into an automobile maintenance record form	325	Plan travel arrangements for meeting using flight schedule
325	328	State in writing an argument made in lengthy newspaper article	342	Identify the correct percentage meeting specified conditions from a table of such information	331	Determine correct change using information in a menu
	347	Explain difference between two types of employee benefits	352	Use bus schedule to determine appropriate bus for given set of conditions	350	Using information stated in news article, calculate amount of money that should go to raising a child
	359	Contrast views expressed in two editorials on technologies available to make fuel-efficient cars	352	Use table of information to determine pattern in oil exports across years	368	Using eligibility pamphlet, calculate the yearly amount a couple would receive for basic supplemental security income
	362	Generate unfamiliar theme from short poems				
	374	Compare two metaphors used in poem				
375	382	Compare approaches stated in narrative on growing up	378	Use information in table to complete a graph including labeling axes	382	Determine shipping and total costs on an order form for items in a catalog
	410	Summarize two ways lawyers may challenge prospective jurors	387	Use table comparing credit cards. Identify the two categories used and write two differences between them	405	Using information in news article, calculate difference in times for completing a race
	423	Interpret a brief phrase from a lengthy news article	395	Using a table depicting information about parental involvement in school survey to write a paragraph summarizing extent to which parents and teachers agree	421	Using calculator, determine the total cost of carpet to cover a room
500						

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992

Appendix C

National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

Description of the Prose, Document, and Quantitative Literacy Levels

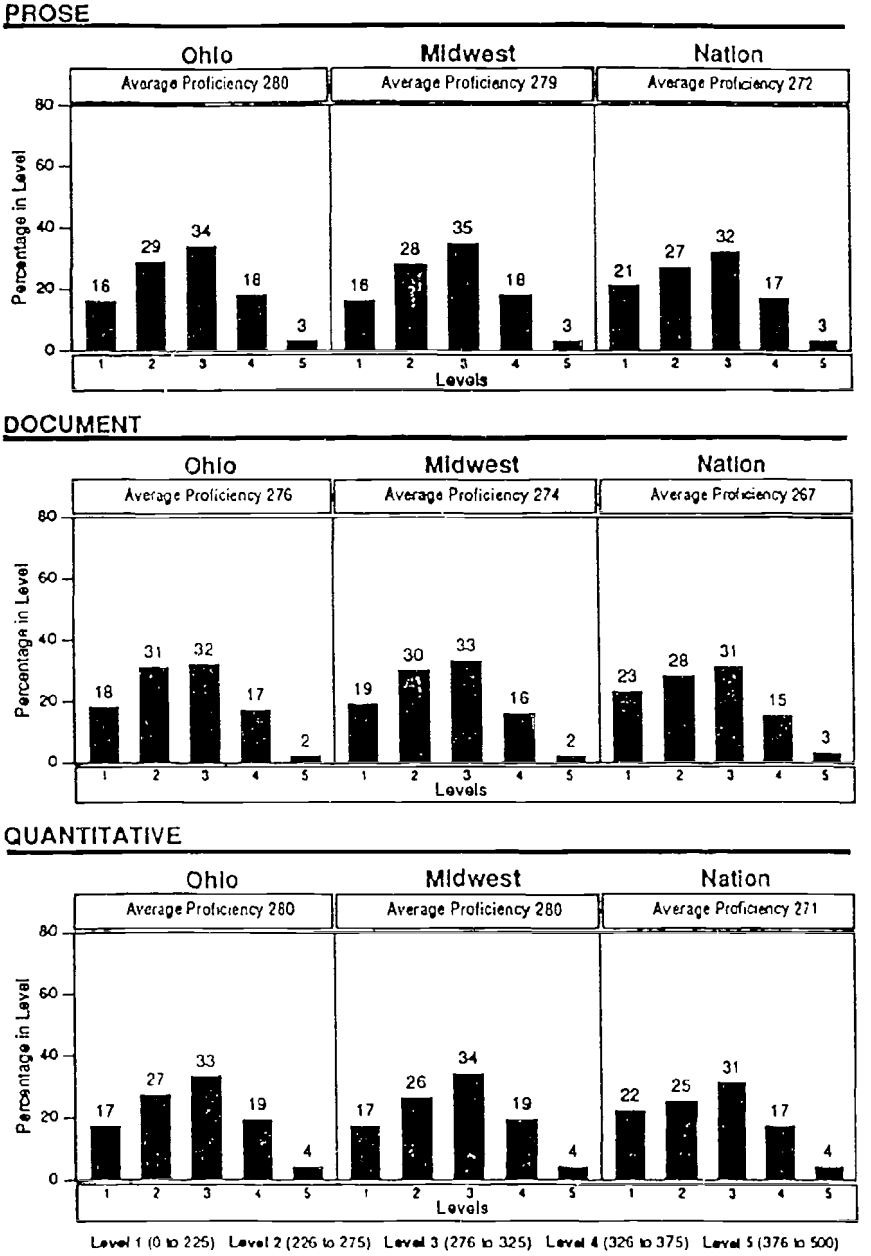
	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Level 1 0-225	Most of the tasks in this level require the reader to read relatively short text to locate a single piece of information which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. If plausible but incorrect information is present in the text, it tends not to be located near the correct information	Tasks in this level tend to require the reader either to locate a piece of information based on a literal match or to enter information from personal knowledge onto a document. Little, if any, distracting information is present.	Tasks in this level require readers to perform single, relatively simple arithmetic operations, such as addition. The numbers to be used are provided and the arithmetic operation to be performed is specified.
Level 2 226-275	Some tasks in this level require readers to locate a single piece of information in the text; however, several distractors or plausible but incorrect pieces of information may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Other tasks require the reader to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast easily identifiable information based on a criterion provided in the question or directive.	Tasks in this level are more varied than those in Level 1. Some require the readers to match a single piece of information; however, several distractors may be present, or the match may require low-level inferences. Tasks in this level may also ask the reader to cycle through information in a document or to integrate information from various parts of a document.	Tasks in this level typically require readers to perform a single operation using numbers that are either stated in the task or easily located in the material. The operation to be performed may be stated in the question or easily determined from the format of the material (for example, an order form).
Level 3 276-325	Tasks in this level tend to require readers to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make matches that require low-level inferences. Other tasks ask readers to integrate information from dense or lengthy text that contains no organizational aids such as headings. Readers may also be asked to generate a response based on information that can be easily identified in the text. Distracting information is present, but is not located near the correct information.	Some tasks in this level require the reader to integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents. Others ask readers to cycle through rather complex tables or graphs which contain information that is irrelevant or inappropriate to the task.	In tasks in this level, two or more numbers are typically needed to solve the problem, and these must be found in the material. The operation(s) needed can be determined from the arithmetic relation terms used in the question or directive.
Level 4 326-375	These tasks require readers to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages. More complex inferences are needed to perform successfully. Conditional information is frequently present in tasks at this level and must be taken into consideration by the reader.	Tasks in this level, like those at the previous levels, ask readers to perform multiple-feature matches, cycle through documents, and integrate information; however, they require a greater degree of inferencing. Many of these tasks require readers to provide numerous responses but do not designate how many responses are needed. Conditional information is also present in the document tasks at this level and must be taken into account by the reader.	These tasks tend to require readers to perform two or more sequential operations or a single operation in which the quantities are found in different types of displays, or the operations must be inferred from semantic information given or drawn from prior knowledge.
Level 5 376-500	Some tasks in this level require the reader to search for information in dense text which contains a number of plausible distractors. Others ask readers to make high-level inferences or use specialized background knowledge. Some tasks ask readers to contrast complex information.	Tasks in this level require the reader to search through complex displays that contain multiple distractors, to make high-level text-based inferences, and to use specialized knowledge.	These tasks require readers to perform multiple operations sequentially. They must disembed the features of the problem from text or rely on background knowledge to determine the quantities or operations needed.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992.

Appendix C

National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

Figure 1.1: Prose, Document, and Quantitative Literacy Levels and Average Proficiencies: Results for Ohio, the Midwest, and the Nation



Level 1 (0 to 225) Level 2 (226 to 275) Level 3 (276 to 325) Level 4 (326 to 375) Level 5 (376 to 500)

Source: Educational Testing Service, State Adult Literacy Survey, and the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992.