Adult Literacy:
An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction and Scope

This bibliography consists of scholarly literature on adult literacy. It is comprised of articles that deal closely with definitions of literacy, both current and historical. The resources included also consider in depth the characteristics of low literacy and illiterate population, as well as providing a survey of institutional involvement in literacy programs. Critiques of past and present research strategies and suggestions for future research is are also commonly found in the literature. The resources included in the bibliography were published between 1999 and 2011, though only three of them are greater than five years old. These three were included because they contain valuable information. However, the emphasis was placed on more recent research in order to accommodate recent technological advances and include the latest perspectives on literacy education and evaluation. The majority of the articles were published in the United States, although three were focused on adult literacy in English speaking European countries. These were included to incorporate and international perspective, while remaining focused on English language literacy.

Description

Adult literacy generally refers to the ability to read and write, though the exact scope of the definition is somewhat ambiguous and highly contested. This is a topic of special importance because literacy is closely related to the field of library and information sciences. Libraries have been involved in adult literacy education efforts historically (McLoughlin and Morris, 2004). Libraries seek to provide information services, and the formats in which libraries
are best suited to do so require literacy skills. Additionally, as information science continues to progress with the advancement of technology, a broader and more technical set of literacy skills are necessary to engage with various information interfaces.(Cullen and Cobb, 2011).

**Summary of Findings**

The literature considering adult literacy demonstrates that it is very difficult to define literacy in a way that is comprehensive and universally applicable. This is largely because the concept of literacy is not static. Ntiri argues that literacy must be understood as historically constructed concept that is in a constant state of change (2009). Buschman explains that older models of literacy conceived of it as a sort of tool that worked through an alphabetic code while ignoring the social and cultural context of the individual (2009).

As technology advances definitions and expectations of literacy must move with it. Cullen and Cobb assert that to be functionally literate individuals need to be able to do more than read or write, they need the ability to use basic computer applications and to understand information that they engage with through technology (2011). Additionally, Buschman and Chu argue that the dichotomized conception of literacy as literate/illiterate that has been very common in the past is not accurate or useful. Buschman suggests that literacy should be considered more broadly to accommodate for multiple literacies while Chu, viewing literacy as a discourse of power, declares a need to account for the language and cultural knowledge of linguistic minorities (2009, 1999). According to the literature, the definition of literacy must be flexible and easily contextualized.
A large portion of the literature on adult literacy calls for a change in the way research is conducted. Some researchers argue that data collection methods are not measuring literacy in the way that they are expected. Wagner argues that attempts to monitor and evaluate literacy on a national and international level rely on data collection that cannot possibly accurately represent the real literacy rates (2008). Chu suggests that many of these data collection tools actually measure surrogate indicators, such as grade level completed, which do not always accurately reflect literacy skills (1999, pg 350). There is a lack of serious scholarship in adult literacy research, as St. Clair points out, which is as a problem because there are too few people and no international journals dedicated to adult literacy research (2008). McCook and Barber agree and suggest that there should be more focus on adult literacy within the field of library and information sciences. They make the claim that virtually no scholars in the field who hold a doctorate from a different discipline earned them through programs focused on adult education or literacy (2002).

Much of the literature on adult literacy pays specific attention to identifying populations with low levels of literacy. These populations with low literacy skills do not tend to accurately reflect the larger community to which they belong. Ntiri addresses the fact that minorities are disproportionately represented among the functionally illiterate (2009). In particular, immigrants and non-native English speakers, in English speaking countries, are more likely than any other group to be among the population with low or inadequate literacy levels (Batalova, 2010). This is significant because low levels of literacy are closely related to many other social and economic disadvantages. Rose and Atkin explain that individuals who are illiterate or have low literacy skills are more likely to be poor and working in low-skilled employment or to be unemployed or
underemployed (2007). Though there is no clear cause and effect between illiteracy and poverty and low-skilled or underemployment, the correlation cannot be denied.

Additionally, Rose and Atkin add that these compounding factors often result in the social isolation of low-literacy or illiterate individuals (2007). This isolation is closely related to the fact that those populations with low literacy skills, as Chu points out, do not have the same access to opportunities as other groups, and as such are likely to be in or near poverty (1999). As such, they are more likely to be incarcerated than other populations and suffer from self-esteem issues or be distrustful of the government (Cullen and Cobb, 2011). Beyond this, Schafft and Prins explain that social isolation and economic instability that are often associated with low levels of literacy can also lead to a high degree of residential mobility. This mobility can present numerous challenges that make it difficult if not impossible for students to attend and remain enrolled in literacy classes. (2007)

Cullen and Cobb describe the ways in which the digital divide can affect populations with low literacy skills, as they often have less access to recent technologies and consequently have difficulty developing the requisite skills (2011). The challenges faced by non-native English speakers are compounded when computer literacy is taken into consideration. Cullen and Cobb expand upon this notion, pointing out that, while developing computer skills can be difficult with low literacy skills, working with a computer interface while seeking to learn concepts in a foreign language (2011).

The experiences individuals lacking literacy skills often differ across urban, suburban and rural settings. This is particularly true because many students attend volunteer literacy programs offered by libraries, which are much more common in urban areas (Cullen and Cobb, 2011).
Additionally, Chu explains that individuals in suburban and rural areas may have a harder time getting to literacy classes and fitting them into a daily schedule (1999).

The literature on adult literacy also considers the roles that various institutions play in this field. On an international level, the UN declared a Literacy decade in 2003 to improve literacy rates worldwide, as described by Wagner and Rose and Atkin (2008, 2007). Much of the literature indicates that public libraries are often involved in literacy efforts. McLoughlin and Morris identify the fact that historically public libraries in the United Kingdom have always been able to assist with literacy learning in order to enable more patrons to utilize their materials (2004). Similarly, Cullen and Cobb note that public libraries frequently administer volunteer literacy programs (2011). Chu explains that, in the United States, libraries have historically assisted with literacy programs in order to help immigrants assimilate (1999). A seldom mentioned institution is brought to light by Chlup and Tomaszewski, who point to the important role that state literacy resources centers play in literacy education, though they are often left out of the conversation in scholarly literature (2008).

**Bibliography**


**Abstract:**

“This article examines the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) to develop a profile of immigrant adults with varying levels of oral English proficiency. The NAAL data on adult limited English proficient (LEP) immigrants are used here to examine their education levels, workforce involvement, incomes, use of public benefits, participations in English as a Second Language instruction, and English literacy levels. The purpose of this article is to contribute to the body of research and policy literature on importance of English skills and literacy for adults’ education and workforce development. The authors conclude that adults with
low and medium oral English proficiency differ significantly along a number of dimensions that should be considered by policymakers and educators as instructional services are developed and program funds allocated for LEP adults.”

Annotation:
This article examines the realities immigrant and non-native English speakers with low literacy levels. It notes that often the children of these populations, who often act as translators for their parents, are more likely to fall into cycles of incarceration, poverty, and low literacy. It points to the specific challenges faced by these populations, including difficulty in achieving naturalization and employment. Importantly, this article makes real suggestions for developing programs with differentiated levels of language and literacy education.

Authority: At the time of publication, Jeanne Batlova was a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute. In addition she holds a Ph.D. in sociology with a specialization in demography from UC-Irvine. Michael Fix was the senior Vice President and Director of studies at the Migration Policy Institute.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb lists Peabody Journal of Education as fully reviewed and refereed. Upon further exploration, the journal’s website indicates that all submissions are fully refereed.

Search Strategy: I conducted a search through FirstSearch in the ECO database. I limited the results to subscriptions held by Hagerty Library to be sure that I could immediately access the results. I tried this search as an introductory search to gain an idea of the kind of results that could be found, many of which were of interest.

Database: Electronic Collections Online

Search Method: Keyword Search

Search String:
“adult literacy” –keyword
2007-2012 -year


Abstract:
“Literacy was once thought to be well understood and well defined. However, it has been argued that the digital world has disrupted previous notions of literacy, supplanting them with “new” forms of literacies—first in various new literacy studies and now in the library and information science (LIS) scholarship as it applies to information literacy (IL). But do the old forms of literacy in fact hold LIS back? Do the critiques of conceptions of literacy fully represent that foundational scholarship? Are the “new” literacies really all that different from traditional notions of literacy? A review both of concepts of literacy and IL that have been critiqued and of core ideas of foundational scholarship on the shift from orality to literacy that stand at the center of the scholarly debate over literacy in general, together with an identifying of conceptual foundations of critical reflexivity that underwrite “new” literacies, is undertaken here to inform the scholarly assumptions and claims of LIS and IL.”

Annotation:
This article surveys a variety of definitions of literacy as it has transformed over time. Importantly, it asserts that “new” literacies incorporate social and cultural context where they had been lacking before. However, it also asserts that these different concepts of literacy are not completely separated, as they all seem to suggest that orality and literacy are mutually exclusive, when over history they can be seen as complementary or having a “critical reflexivity.” This article brings in a perspective that is often left out of the discussion.

Authority: At the time of publication, John Buschman was the Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Resources and Services at the Lauinger Library at Georgetown University.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies Library Quarterly as a refereed journal. Additionally, upon exploration the journal’s website demonstrates a process of peer review for all submissions.

Search Strategy: I conducted a citation search after finding the McCook and Barber article from 2002. I used the Web of Science citation search tool to find resources that cited the McCook and Barber article which I had found very useful, and this article was the only result. Despite this lack of citation, each article is credible and useful to the topic.

Database: Social Sciences Citation Index on the Web of Science

Search Method: Citation Searching

Search String:
McCook K* -in Cited Author
Ref User Serv Q –in Cited Work
2002 –in Year

Abstract:
“In this study, we measure the impact of the services of a large Southern state’s literacy resource center on the state’s adult literacy programs. Too often, literacy resource centers are the forgotten player in the field of adult literacy, being omitted from policy discussions. The findings from this study indicate that the services of a state’s literacy providers to do their jobs and that state literacy resource centers have the ability to perform as valuable, integral players in the field of adult literacy.”

Annotation:
This article addresses the efficacy of state literacy resource centers. It presents the results of survey conducted among literacy program teachers and administrators, which indicate that the resource center is very important and integrally involved in local literacy programs. The research does not reach out to literacy learners on a personal level at all, however, which is a definite shortcoming. Despite its focus on literacy facilitators rather than learners, this is a valuable addition because it demonstrates the importance state literacy institutions can play in adult literacy education, something that is lacking in much of the other research.

Authority: At the time of publication, Dominique Chlup was an assistant professor of Adult Education at Texas A&M as well as the former director of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. Lesley Tomaszewski was an assistant research scientist at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb lists the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal* as fully reviewed and refereed. Upon further exploration, the journal’s website indicates that the research submissions are fully refereed.

Search Strategy: After an initial search in Dialog that returned very few useful articles, I created a more complicated search that helped to locate more relevant results. I searched within the ERIC database because the subject of adult literacy does not belong exclusively to the library and information sciences field, but rather is closely tied to education. ERIC appeared to be the most likely source of relevant information.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Controlled Vocabulary Search

**Abstract:**

“Literacy, as it applies to linguistic minorities, is examined as a discourse of power in this theoretical article. Literacy needs to be redefined in order for librarians to be able to provide people whose languages are not the dominant or official ones in society with appropriate literacy services. This redefinition recognizes the politics of language and literacy, challenges the mainstream (dominant culture) concept of literacy, and includes (1) expanding the definition of literacy that takes into account the language and cultural knowledge of linguistic minorities, (2) examining the nature of literacy and literacy practices of linguistic minorities from a social perspective, and (3) understanding how the literacy of linguistic minorities is measured. By understanding these critical issues of adult literacy in linguistic minority communities, librarians can implement the proposed strategic directions for delivering appropriate literacy services to linguistic minorities.”

**Annotation:**

This article addresses literacy as an issue that reaches beyond inability to read or low reading ability. Rather, it addresses literacy as a construction that invests powers in those individuals with the ability to read and speak linguistic, informational, and cultural languages. It challenges the language of literacy that operates in a dichotomy rather than on a more accurate continuum. Additionally, the author demands that conceptions of literacy include language skills and cultural knowledge of linguistic minorities. It highlights the importance of literacy, in this broad sense, as a tool for social and economic survival and advancement, and looks to explain the causes and consequences of illiteracy. This article is a good addition becomes it broadens the scope of the meaning of literacy and considers its causes and consequences rather than just tactics for overcoming it.

**Authority:** At the time of publication, Dr. C. Chu was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.
Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies Library Quarterly as a refereed journal. Additionally, upon exploration the journal’s website demonstrates a process of peer review for all submissions.

Search Strategy: I conducted a Dialog search using ERIC because this was one of my initial searches and I am fairly comfortable with the Database. I can navigate the ERIC thesaurus well enough to use controlled vocabulary, which I thought would be an appropriate way to begin the search and find suitable articles.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Controlled vocabulary-terms from ERIC thesaurus

Search String:
? s adult()literacy/de
? s library()services/de
? s s1 and s2


Abstract:
“This study reports the results of a needs analysis of literacy programs for a library system serving three rural and suburban counties. It examines the computing skills and needs of literacy tutors as well as native-speaking and English language learner (ELL) literacy tutees enrolled in the programs. Paper surveys were mailed to tutors, who were asked to complete a survey themselves and assist their tutees to complete one. Results of the study offer insights into the incorporation of digital literacy into traditional adult literacy programs focusing on the needs, wants, and support systems of user groups.”

Annotation:
This is a useful article because it considers the needs of adult literacy learners in urban and suburban areas with specific attention to information literacy and knowledge of technology. In particular, the article points to a need for better teacher training in computer usage because the study conducted found that adults with low literacy abilities would be more likely to attend programs that use computers. Where other research addresses the importance of information and computer literacy on a personal level, this article exposes the reasons why it is critical for literacy programs to incorporate computer skills.
Authority: At the time of publication, Theresa Cullen was an Assistant Professor in the Instructional Psychology and Technology Program at the University of Oklahoma. Inger Cobb was a doctoral student in Instructional Psychology and Technology at the University of Oklahoma.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies Library Quarterly as a fully refereed and peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, upon exploration the journal’s website demonstrates a process of peer review for all submissions.

Search Strategy: I used Dialog to perform a basic search in ERIC. I expanded upon the initial search to include “illiteracy” in addition to “literacy” to make sure that more relevant records were returned. I used ERIC because it what useful in my initial search and I wanted to expand upon that.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Controlled Vocabulary Search

Search String:
? s adult()literacy/de OR illiteracy/de
? s s1 AND library()services/de


Abstract:
“Public policies affecting the funding for adult lifelong learning and adult literacy through public libraries have created a framework for service that may be dissonant with the ideals of the transformational value of reading. This article reviews the current context for librarianship and adult lifelong learning and literacy programs in light of federal legislation. Ethical dilemmas of the work first ideology are presented. The librarian's capacity to foster an attitude of creation and recreation is presented. The role of education for librarianship in preparing graduates to understand the philosophical context of work with adult lifelong learners is addressed.”

Annotation:
This article approaches adult literacy from an interesting perspective. It analyzes the ways in which public policies shape and affect adult literacy and adult learning program structure and implementation. It also examines the historical ties between public libraries and adult literacy educational programs, bringing up concerns that often librarians are not trained in adult
and literacy education. This article is a useful addition because it includes a historical perspective on literacy programs as well as insight into the ways in which the political and social economies can affect adult literacy programs through public policies.

Authority: At the time of publication, Dr. K McCook was listed as a Distinguished University Professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Florida. Additionally, P. Barber was Partner in Library Communication Strategies as well as a former Associate Executive Director for Communications at the American Library Association.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb lists Reference and User Services Quarterly as fully reviewed and refereed. Upon further exploration, the journal’s website indicates that all submissions are fully refereed.

Search Strategy: I used Web of Science to find this article. Knowing that records are indexed according to keywords used by the authors, I thought that this would be a good place to try out a few keyword searches to find very general articles and perhaps lead to more specific search terms or phrases. I limited used Boolean operators, proximity searching, and truncations in order to find the desired results. I excluded the term <health> as a topic because in an earlier search many of the results were focused on “health literacy.” I also limited the results to articles to insure that only appropriate records were returned in the results.

Database: Web of Science-Social Sciences Citation Index

Search Method: Keyword Search

Search String:
(TS=(adult SAME literacy) AND TS=(librar* SAME program*) NOT TS=health) AND Document Types=(Article) Timespan=All Years. Databases=SSCI. Lemmatization=On


Abstract: “Reported here are the results of a research project that examined the role of UK public libraries in addressing adult literacy including approaches and issues. Eight public libraries were selected as case studies and adult literacy provision was investigated using staff interviews. The interviews provided support for the role of public libraries in promoting the pleasure of reading to adults with poor literacy. The re-branding of adult literacy collections was recognized as the
ideal starting point for the rejuvenation of adult literacy work. Approaches used to address poor adult literacy included the use of reading groups, talking books, themed activities and events, and student book buying. A role for public libraries in identifying adults with poor literacy was acknowledged as part of multi-agency work. The main issues facing public libraries in the delivery of adult literacy services concerned establishing dedicated staff time and identifying funding opportunities. Recommendations are provided for public libraries involved in establishing or reviewing adult literacy services.”

Annotation:
This article addresses the ways in which public libraries and involved in adult literacy improvement programs in the United Kingdom. It includes a historical perspective on the relationship between public libraries in the United Kingdom and adult literacy training. It also offers insight into the importance of library staff training and advertising to ensure adequate preparation for effective instruction as well as ample turnout. Additionally, it recommends that libraries develop a broad collection to meet a variety of reader interests. It is included because these are useful concepts in understanding how to plan and implement effective adult literacy programs in public libraries. However, it does fail to adequately consider how libraries and library staff can engage with multiple literacies and information literacy training.

Authority: At the time of publication, C. McLoughlin was a library assistant at the University of East Anglia who had completed a MA in Information and Library Studies through the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University. Additionally, Dr. A. Morris was a Reader in Information Science as well as the Director of Teaching in the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies the Journal of Librarianship and Information Science as a fully refereed and reviewed publication. Additionally, the journal’s website explains that all submissions are peer-reviewed prior to publication.

Search Strategy: I used Dialog to perform a basic search in ERIC. I thought that this would be a good starting point because ERIC has a number of great resources and I was hoping to find an article or more precise search term or phrase to use in the future. As this was an early search, I combine controlled vocabulary from the ERIC thesaurus with natural language.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Combination of controlled vocabulary and natural language

Search String:
?s adult()literacy/de
?s sl and librar?

**Abstract:**
“This paper sets out to show that the concept of literacy is evolving and its conventional definition, “reading and writing,” is no longer adequate. Literacy is now subjected to constant redefinition to reflect criteria for social, political, religious, and economic relevance and expectations. The definition must be reframed to capture the complexity of the modern world and to remain linked to individual empowerment in a democratic and dynamic society where minorities such as African Americans, disproportionately represented among the functionally illiterate, are handicapped and cannot fully engage in meaningful political and economic exchanges that speak to their self-interests.”

**Annotation:**
This article addresses the ways in which the definition of literacy has evolved over time, acknowledging that a definition can be limiting and is difficult to develop due to its relationship to a variety of cultural and social contexts. Included is an overview of approaches to literacy in the United States beginning in the antebellum period. The article is included because it demands recognition that literacy is historically constructed and constantly changing and points to the way literacy works as an indicator of structural problems of society as a whole.

**Authority:** At the time of publication, Daphne Ntiri was an Associate Professor of Africana Studies as Wayne State University. She had previously served as a consultant to UNESCO on Adult Education and Adult Literacy.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** *Ulrichsweb* lists the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal* as fully reviewed and refereed. Upon further exploration, the journal’s website indicates that the research submissions are fully refereed.

**Search Strategy:** After locating the 2008 article by Chlup and Tomaszewski, I was interested to explore what other kinds of articles were published by the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*. I searched for this journal through Hagerty Library and found that it is accessible through the Education Research Complete database. I browsed through the issues published in the past few years multiple relevant articles.

**Database:** Education Research Complete

**Search Method:** Browsing
Search String:
Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal—on the Hagerty Library database search


Abstract:
“Family literacy programmes have become increasingly popular with policy-makers as a means of addressing low levels of adult literacy. It is believed that such initiatives will help to address social exclusion and aid greater economic participation by those in deprived communities or from disadvantaged sectors of society. The growing interest in such initiatives comes at a time of international concern over general levels of literacy, as highlighted by the United Nations literacy decade 2003-2012 and in Europe by the Lisbon Agenda. In this article, which draws on the findings from a cross-European study of family literacy programmes in England, Ireland and Malta, we argue that disparate agendas characterize policy and practice. We conclude by considering the implications for the future of family literacy programmes in promoting social inclusion.”

Annotation:
This article includes comparative case studies of semi-rural communities in England, Ireland, and Malta. It suggests that people with low literacy skills often face social isolation, which can develop into a cycle of illiteracy across generations. Included is an exploration of the different rationales for literacy programs and attendance with particular attention paid to the benefits gained by children of adult literacy learners. Its focus on family literacy programs adds an interesting component to the adult literacy discussion, asserting that in these programs parents are likely to enroll to benefit their children rather than themselves.

Authority: At the time of publication, Anthea Rose was a doctoral student finishing her studies at the School of Education in Nottingham, where she was conducting a comparative case study of literacy programs in Europe. Chris Atkin was working with the UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research through the School of Education at the University of Nottingham.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies the Compare as a fully refereed publication. Additionally, the journal’s website explains that all submissions are peer-reviewed prior to publication.
Search Strategy: After multiple basic searches in Dialog that returned very few useful articles, I tried to create a more precise and accurate search to help to locate more relevant results. I searched within the ERIC database because the subject of adult literacy easily fits within its scope, and it appeared to be the most likely source of relevant information.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Controlled Vocabulary Search

Search String:
? s adult()literacy/de OR functional()literacy/de
? s literacy()education/de OR library()services/de
? s s1 and s2
? s3 and dt=journal articles
? s s4 and literacy/ti


Abstract:
“This study investigates how poverty and residential mobility affect adult persistence and participation in family literacy (FL) programs. Combining data from interviews with directors and participants from a sample of FL sites in Pennsylvania, this study examines (a) the perceptions of practitioners and adult learners regarding the role of residential instability in shaping FL program persistence for low-income adults, and (b) how determinants of persistence may vary across urban and rural contexts. We argue that poverty mobility coupled with particular structural features of community is often more salient to program persistence than are features of individual programs and/or participant ‘motivation.’”

Annotation:
This article addresses high residential mobility rates of many adult literacy learners, something that is not visible in much of the literature on adult literacy. It examines the ways in which the same economic and social factors that are closely related to low literacy levels can also lead to instability in residence. There is explanation in the article of the numerous ways in which residential mobility can impact and even halt participation in adult literacy programs. In addition, the article pays special attention to the gendered differences in residential mobility as well as the ways in which the effects of residential mobility vary across urban, suburban, and rural communities.
Authority: At the time of publication, Ralf St. Clair was teaching and researching in the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow Scotland, in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb lists the Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal as fully reviewed and refereed. Upon further exploration, the journal’s website indicates that the research submissions are fully refereed.

Search Strategy: After locating the 2008 article by Chlup and Tomaszewski, I was interested to explore what other kinds of articles were published by the Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal. I searched for this journal through Hagerty Library and found that it is accessible through the Education Research Complete database. I browsed through the issues published in the past few years multiple relevant articles.

Database: Education Research Complete

Search Method: Browsing

Search String:
Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal—on the Hagerty Library database search


Abstract:
“The aim of this article is to make initial suggestions as to how certain aspects of adult literacy and numeracy education would benefit from research resources. The author identifies several issues affecting literacy research, such as limited research detail: models of literacy, the benefits of literacy education, instructional practices, and the effects of diverse settings for practice. In all of these areas, he argues, it is important that attention is paid to the distinction between research about and research in literacy and numeracy education, as these two types of research serve different purposes using different strategies. The article closes with a call for more reliable research-based information in order to inform and enrich the professional judgment of educators.”

Annotation:
This article examines the ways in which a greater allocation of resources toward adult literacy research could benefit the field. It suggests these resources lack because policy is needed to enable greater funding. It addresses the difficulties in creating such policy due to the necessity
to quantify positive outcomes of literacy education, which is difficult because literacy acquisition is so intertwined with other social and economic contexts that it cannot be pinpointed as the sole cause of success. This article addresses problems with past and present research and makes suggestions for more successful future projects given the availability of more resources.

**Authority:** At the time of publication, Kai Schafft was an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University, as well as the serving as the director for the Penn State Center on Rural Education and Communities. Esther Prins was an Assistant Professor in the Adult Education Program at Pennsylvania State University, as well as serving as the codirector of the Goodling Institute for Research and Family Literacy and the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Pennsylvania State University.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** *Ulrichsweb* identifies the *International Review of Education* as a fully refereed and reviewed publication. Additionally, the journal’s website explains that all submissions are peer-reviewed prior to publication.

**Search Strategy:** After multiple basic searches in Dialog that returned very few useful articles, I tried to create a more precise and accurate search to help to locate more relevant results. I searched within the ERIC database because the subject of adult literacy easily fits within its scope, and it appeared to be the most likely source of relevant information.

**Database:** ERIC

**Search Method:** Controlled Vocabulary Search

**Search String:**
- ? s adult()literacy/de OR functional()literacy/de
- ? s literacy()education/de OR library()services/de
- ? s s1 and s2
- ? s3 and dt=journal articles
- ? s s4 and literacy/ti


**Abstract:**

“With the advent of the UN Literacy Decade launched in 2003, there is increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of adult literacy around the globe. The present paper presents an overview of the main approaches that have been taken to measure adult literacy
within and across countries. A particular focus of the present review is to compare and contrast three models of literacy assessment: (1) the “traditional” model based largely on census enumeration, which has been used over recent decades to collect national and regional rates of illiteracy; (2) the large-scale survey techniques employed with the International Adult Literacy Survey and similar models; and (3) an intermediate type of assessment that borrows from the previous two models and attempts to “tailor” the size and complexity of the survey methodology to the policy questions needing answers (called the SQC model). The present paper suggests that there is no single model or set of methods that are universally appropriate to monitoring and measuring in adult literacy around the world, but that blending both programmatic and comparative models through the SQC approach may bring greater involvement in, and insight into, adult literacy evaluations.”

Annotation:

This provides excellent information on literacy monitoring on an international level. It surveys and critiques several methods of literacy monitoring and evaluation while making suggestions for more accurate and meaningful data collection. An important suggestion is made that asserts research and evaluation should be more concerned with what is actually being learned than on correlational information such as grade level completed. The international scope and comparative nature of the research covered in this article is an important inclusion in literature on adult literacy.

Authority: At the time of publication, Daniel Wagner was a Professor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, he was the Director of the International Literacy Institute and the Director of the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: Ulrichsweb identifies the International Review of Education as a fully refereed and reviewed publication. Additionally, the journal’s website explains that all submissions are peer-reviewed prior to publication.

Search Strategy: After multiple basic searches in Dialog that returned very few useful articles, I tried to create a more precise and accurate search to help to locate more relevant results. I searched within the ERIC database because the subject of adult literacy easily fits within its scope, and it appeared to be the most likely source of relevant information.

Database: ERIC

Search Method: Controlled Vocabulary Search

Search String:
Conclusion and Personal Statement

Working on this annotated bibliography has been an incredible learning experience. It has taught me a lot about what actually goes into creating a bibliography. After searching and reading through many articles, I realize that the challenge is not just in compiling a list of resources relevant to the topic. Rather, it includes evaluation of all of the resources to make sure that only the most appropriate and authoritative sources are included. I also gained a greater understanding of what goes into the writing process. Having no experience writing annotations and no previous instruction in doing so, I was not fully confident in my understanding of what makes up an annotated bibliography before I began this project. Between the guidelines, samples, and various attempts I am much more confident in my understanding of and ability to create appropriate and useful annotations.

This project has also given me experience in a variety of search strategies. Previously, I had relied almost entirely on keyword searching with a bit of citation searching occasionally used. Now that I have begun to develop skills to conduct more advanced searches it was exciting to put them to the test and further cultivate them as I found out what would and would not work in the context of my research. I was somewhat nervous about using Dialog, Web of Science, and FirstSearch to conduct my own research, thinking that perhaps the skills learned through homework assignments would need to be honed a bit more to be truly effective. It was exciting
to find that conducting these searches was not impossibly difficult, and that with patience it was easy to work my way toward an appropriate and productive search string.

Creating an annotated bibliography has improved my research skills exponentially. It has also given me an appreciation annotated bibliographies. I am impressed by the time and effort that goes into creating a real bibliography that is not limited to between twelve and twenty sources and I now understand just how useful an annotated bibliography could be to a researcher. Beyond this experience and appreciation, this project has instilled in me greater confidence in my researching skills and in my abilities to use various databases and vendors.

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature    Abigail Cox
Date          03/21/12