

Annotated Bibliography of Librarian Resources on Adult Literacy Materials

Bayley, L. (1980). Opening doors for adult new readers: How librarians can select materials and establish collections. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press.

Provides basic information about literacy needs in the U.S. and the reasons to serve adult new readers as well as the major categories of materials libraries would want to provide. The author is not a librarian but she offers practical advice to librarians new to this field of collections development. This book prioritizes learning materials and informational materials but does make passing reference to the need for leisure materials too. She too discusses format issues: size of type, manageable length, generous use of white space, illustrations, content, reading level,. She expands her list of formats, though, to include magazines, audiovisual resources, comics, government documents and agency pamphlets—as long as they are high-interest, low-level.

Bloem, P., Padak, N.C. & Sapin, C. (2001, August - last update). Recommended trade books for adult literacy programs. Kent, OH: Ohio Literacy Resource Center, [Online], <http://archon.educ.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/index.html>

As described on the website... In 1994, we assembled the OLRC Reading Group, a group of adult literacy professionals interested in promoting the use of authentic literature in adult literacy classrooms. One of our major goals has been to develop a list of trade (library) books that we believe can and should be used in adult literacy programs. This collection represents our work to date. In addition to a searchable database of recommended titles, we have included information about criteria for book selection, ideas for searching the database, and suggestions for using the books in adult literacy programs.

This list appears to be primarily (though not exclusively) made up of children's and young adult titles.

Buckingham, M. (1996, June 1). Books that speak to new readers. Library Journal, 121 (10), 73-76.

Offers a quick guide for how to do collations development including: reflect the communities served by the library; know what is being used by local programs and how they make their selections; understand the local political climate especially in terms of availability of state and local funding; avoid turf wars. Includes brief descriptions of newer titles including workbooks, leisure reading, informational materials, and librarian resources.

Collins, V.L. (revised and annotated by) (1990). Reader development bibliography: Books recommended for adult new readers, Fourth edition. Philadelphia: The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Bibliography of titles (many out-of-print) specifically designed for adult new readers. Provides brief annotations, subject classification, and reading level of the titles—all of which are considered below an 8th grade level. Additional bibliographies and references for finding additional resources and address of the publishers included. Contains detailed guidelines for how to select literacy materials. Contains some suggestions on how to find materials for Deaf adults.

Fitzgibbons, S.A. (2000). Libraries and literacy: A preliminary survey of the literature. Jerusalem, Israel: International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) 66th Council and General Conference, [On-line], <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/122-139e.htm>
Provides a comprehensive discussion about the roles of libraries and librarians in the literacy field internationally. Topics discussed include: studies of literacy, national and international reading campaigns, book access and funded projects (generally for children), history of libraries and literacy. Includes extensive (though preliminary) bibliography on wide range of topics pertaining to libraries and literacy.

Johnson, D.W. & with Soule, J.A. (1987). Libraries and literacy: A planning manual. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
Includes brief sections on collection development and materials selection. Rather than listing specific titles, they reference some other useful already prepared bibliographies to help with materials selection (p.32). Perhaps the one key piece of advice they offer corresponds to the concerns of women learners, namely, "keep it simple and make it visible" (p. 33).

Pursell, F.J. (Revised and annotated by) (1991). Books for adult new readers: A bibliography developed by Project: LEARN, 5th revised edition. Cleveland, OH: Project: LEARN.
Bibliography of titles (many out-of-print) specifically designed for adult new readers. Provides brief annotations, subject classification, and reading level of the titles—all of which are considered below an 8th grade level. Additional bibliographies and references for finding additional resources and address of the publishers included. Contains detailed guidelines for how to select literacy materials. Very similar title bibliography when compared to Collins (1990). Recommends "unstereotyped characters and a positive, unbiased point of view" (1990, p. 9). Also includes an added appendix of materials specifically for librarians interested in literacy work.

Quezada, S. (1996). Developing literacy programs in small and medium-sized libraries: Small Libraries Publications, No. 22. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
Explains broad distinctions in literacy (e.g. ABE, ESL) and the types of programs that serve literacy needs. Includes practical information about building a program, including a section on collection development. Lists national organizations providing assistance, internet resources, reading list and addresses for community literacy newsletters.

Soule, J.A. (1990). The adult new reader learns the library: Curriculum ideas for librarians and adults. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
Through a series of curriculum packets complete with goals, objectives and outlined activities, this resource provides ways to help new readers become comfortable in the library, to learn all it has to offer, to familiarize them with how to do simple book searches, acquaint them with using the periodical section, and generally how to access all the services libraries provide. Rather than tell librarians how to make the library more user-friendly or immediately accessible to learners, this resource will help teachers and tutors to help learners navigate what is already established.

Spanenberg, G. (1996). Even anchors need lifelines: Public libraries in adult literacy. New York: The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

This research study and report places public libraries adult literacy services within the context of the national adult literacy system. Though it does not discuss collection development directly, it does make some observations about the use of whole language materials (p. 83-84). It also recognizes the difficult position of public library programs within the current changes in policies related to literacy funding.

Weibel, M.C. (1996). Choosing and using books with adult new readers. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.

Offers specific selection criteria to help librarians know what look for in various levels of adult reading materials. She offers some specific procedures for ways in which literacy workers can introduce and use literature with learners. To illustrate her point, she includes a short story by Julia Alvarez accompanied by specific questions. Throughout the book, she includes specific selections of literature along with annotated reflections for their use accompanied by general reference books for finding and using literature for adult literacy students. Though she does not directly address the particular needs of women learners, she does offer similar suggestions recommended by teachers, including Sandra Cisneros's House on Mango Street (p. 87) and Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (p. 89).

Weibel, M. C. (1992). The library as literacy classroom: A program for teaching. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Shows literacy workers and librarians how to use the whole library—general stacks as well as an adult education section—to engage learners' interest in a variety of topics and genres. She talks about the responsibilities of libraries, outlines methods of teaching adults, and explores the many ways in which adults can be assisted through a library-based reading program. She offers specific suggestions for how librarians and literacy workers can work together. Rather than offer specific lists of books for new readers, Weibel provides some practical suggestions about how to select books for adults. Some of her suggestions resonate with suggestions made by learners in the conversation circles. Among these are: print size, illustrations, overall appearance, and subject matter.

Additional items of interest

DeCandido, G.A. (2001). Literacy and libraries: Learning from case studies. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Lampman, S. & Leitzke, N. (1991). Library resources for literacy: A compilation. Washington, DC: Department of Education, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364 228).

Ossolinski, L. (1989). Reading can you dig it: Resources for adult new readers. Carson City, NV: Nevada Literacy Coalition, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 337 129).

Ryan, J.L. (1989). Literacy collection development in libraries: A bibliography. Syracuse, NY: Laubach Literacy International, (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 311 296).

Venturella, K.M., (Ed.) (1998). Poor people and library services. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.