

NALA NEWS

JOPLIN NALA READ 123 S. MAIN STREET JOPLIN, MO

What is adult literacy?

This may seem like a simple question to answer -- adults being able to read and write, right? - but in fact educators have been puzzling and arguing over it for at least a hundred years. It encompasses reading and writing, of course, but at what level? A hundred years ago, people were considered literate if they could write their names, a qualification that would certainly be woefully inadequate today. And what about math? To be literate, do you have to be able to at least add, subtract, multiply, and divide, so you can balance your checkbook and figure your gas mileage? Do you need a certain amount of general knowledge in order to be literate? A lot of educators who use the term "cultural literacy" think so. How about people who can't speak or read or write English: are they literate, if they

can read and write in their own language? And do you have an obligation to help learners understand how to use their literacy?

Components of adult literacy

As you can see, adult literacy can be looked at in a number of different ways. In planning an adult literacy program, you have to consider all of them, and decide what your community needs and what you have the resources to do. The areas that are generally referred to when adult literacy is discussed are:

Reading: "Functional literacy" is often defined as the ability to read at a particular grade level.



Writing: Written literacy might best be considered to be an individual's capacity to write what she needs to in clear and reasonably accurate language.



Math: "Numeracy" or "mathematical literacy" usually refers to the ability to perform the basic mathematical operations - addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and whatever else - normally needed in everyday life.



English as a Second Language

(ESL): The teaching of English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills to those for whose native language is not English.

Cultural literacy: Familiarity with the background knowledge that is everywhere in American culture. This can include everything from the great classics of western literature to knowing the names of Elvis Presley hits from the '50's.



References

Community Tool Box: <http://ctb.ku.edu/>

Inside this issue:

A Day in the Life	2
We Can Help	2
The Uses of Literacy	3
Tutor Workshop	3

A Day in the Life of a New Reader

It's 7:00 a.m. I shoot out of bed and stumble down the hall to let the coffee brew while I dress. With the delicious smell of coffee drawing me in, I make it back to the kitchen to pick up a steaming cup for that first great sip. Ahh. I can face the day.

Now, what's happening today? Oh, yes, there's a note from Jack's teacher asking for . . . what is she asking for? I can't read all those words. A skyentifik expi-ration filed trip for Jack to . . . what in the world? "Jack, come here. What does your teacher mean?"

"I think she's talking about a scientific exploration field trip we're going on next week. She needs you to sign this permission slip for me to go," says Jack. "Oh," I answer. "Okay."

Kids are off to school, permission slip signed. What's next? Oh, yes, I've got to go to my doctor appointment. I hope they don't have a bunch of forms for me. I'll just stick my glasses in my purse—I'll tell that nice lady I don't have my glasses and ask her to fill out the forms. I can't read half those words, anyway. But I sure need some help with that place on my arm—it's all red and swollen and really hurts. One more swig of coffee and I'll be off.

Okay. Doctor says I'll live. He gave me an Rx so I think I'll shop at the grocery store while they fill it. I sure like the stuff that has pictures on it so I can easily see what I'm buying. Have to be careful, though. I brought a can of beets home once that I thought

was plums. I have diabetes, so I have to look at the labels for carbs and sugar. Labels don't really say carbs, but there's another long word that starts like it so I look for carb . . . something.

Life isn't simple for a new reader. Or for anyone who reads below an 8th grade level. There are too many words they don't know. They have to pretend they understand or depend on someone else to read for them. We offer a solution, however, that equips the adult to read and understand. At Joplin NALA Read, we will welcome and assess the new reader and place each one with a trained tutor. We offer classes for those learning English as a 2nd or 3rd language.

WE CAN HELP—Reading, Math, English

FREE

Joplin NALA Read

123 S. Main Street—next to Dollar General

TEL: 417-782-2646

The Uses of Literacy

So what do adults want to use literacy skills for? Sondra Stein, of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), conducted a nationwide survey and reported the results in "Equipped for the Future." Adult learners in literacy programs, asked why they were pursuing literacy skills, gave three equally important reasons:

1. *They wanted to improve their employment situations.* Whether that meant gaining more responsibility on their jobs, becoming more competent at what they did, being promoted, finding a better job or career, or just being able to work at all, most learners felt that improving their skills could lead to improving their work life and finances.

2. *They wanted to be better parents, spouses, and family members.* Reading to children or helping them with homework, keeping better contact with faraway relatives, even writing love letters to husbands or wives were all cited as reasons for learning to read and write better.

3. *They wanted to be better citizens, and to participate in the political life of their communities.* Learners wanted to be able to read about and understand the issues in political campaigns or local controversies, so they could make their own reasoned decisions, and wanted to be able to work in their communities to influence or change the things they cared about.

Teachers in an adult literacy program consider what learners want and need. Their motivation comes not from what we think they should have, but from what they see as necessary in their lives. Often, as learners gain competence and confidence, learning itself may become one of their goals, and that is certainly to be encouraged. But don't lose sight of the fact that their lives dictate the uses of their newly acquired skills.

References

Community Tool Box: <http://ctb.ku.edu/>

Tutor Workshop

Topics include:

- Characteristics of the adult learner
- Roles & responsibilities of the tutor
- Effective tutoring techniques
- Reading Strategies

Joplin NALA Read

123 S. Main Street (former Social Security Bldg.)

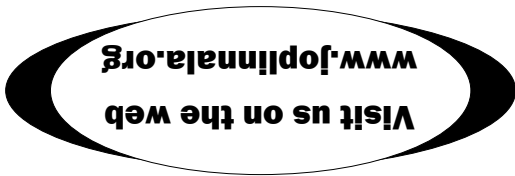
Give a hand-up. Help Someone Learn to Read.

If you need a rewarding place to volunteer, you have found it here. Our tutor workshop will prepare you to become a successful teacher of adult literacy students. As a tutor you will give support to build a solid, successful learning environment. You will establish a base for improved self-confidence by helping an adult learner define and reach his or her literacy goals. By helping another human being, you will provide an invaluable gift. Your time and talents will shape another's destiny! We hope you will attend and become a volunteer tutor—changing lives one word at a time.

**Saturday, September
28th, 9 to 4**

Reserve your space by phone
or email. Tel: 417.782.2646
email: joplinnala@123mail.org





Board of Directors
Michelle Conty-deGroat, President
Pat Wilson, Vice President
Dorothy Fulks, Treasurer
Henry Morgan, Secretary
Linda Dishman
Bill Duke
Janus Lazarus
Katherine Mays
Alexandra Nicolas
Kathy Redpath
Jamie Rodriguez
Judy Stiles
Gary Stubblefield
Cynthia Tanner
Mary Boudreaux, Executive Director
Joan Doner, Program Coordinator



Non-profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Joplin, MO
Permit # 116



GIVE THE GIFT THAT CHANGES LIVES

- ☐ \$25 allows a new student to complete orientation
- ☐ \$50 provides books for an adult literacy student to progress a level in reading
- ☐ \$100 will provide children's books for a family literacy program
- ☐ \$150 provides the resources to train ten volunteer tutors
- ☐ \$200 furnishes the ESL classroom with books and supplies
- ☐ Other \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

Please include check, cash or money order. Checks are made payable to Joplin NALA Read, P.O. Box 447, Joplin, MO 64802. Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible