This bibliography provides a list of 65 selected works on the topic of adult literacy in developing countries. It is a contemporary list, including only works published in the last 15 years. The works are organized into subject categories. Works are listed only once; in cases where a work could be listed under more than one category, it is listed according to its most salient theme. Each entry consists of these components: author, date, title, source and pagination or place and date of publication, and annotation. The 65 works are organized into these 12 subject categories: general, cultural and psychological issues, instructional issues, gender, language and literacy, literacy and health, workplace literacy, planning and implementation of adult literacy programs, assessment and evaluation, post-literacy, policy issues in literacy development, and national literacy campaigns and programs. (YLB)
Adult Literacy in Developing Countries: A Contemporary Annotated Bibliography

ILI Technical Report TR98-02
TECHNICAL REPORT

Adult Literacy in Developing Countries: A Contemporary Annotated Bibliography

ILI Technical Report TR98-02
(January 1998)

Laurel D. Puchner
University of Pennsylvania
International Literacy Institute

The International Literacy Institute (ILI), officially co-sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, was formally established in 1994 in Philadelphia. The ILI builds on more than a dozen years of university-based literacy research, the federally funded National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL), and close collaboration with governmental, non-governmental, and multilateral agencies worldwide. The ILI and NCAL share the same building with the Penn Technology in Education Learning Laboratory (PennTELL) on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania.

The ILI mission is to provide scientific leadership in training and development in literacy, with a special emphasis on developing countries. The ILI defines literacy as primarily the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics among children, youth, and adults. The term also includes lifelong and work-related skills.

The ILI has had extensive experience in evaluation and applied research on basic education and literacy in developing countries around the world. The ILI's development activities include partnerships to foster regional and national centers of excellence; training to enhance the capacity of national and regional institutions and agencies; innovations derived from research, development, and evaluation; information dissemination that provides a forum for the exchange of ideas; advanced technologies to increase communication and learning achievement; and training and development activities in both formal school settings and non-formal education programs.
Adult Literacy in Developing Countries:  
A Contemporary Annotated Bibliography

Laurel D. Puchner  
University of Pennsylvania
Author Biography

Laurel D. Puchner, who specializes in cross-cultural human development, has completed her doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation is on women's literacy in rural Mali.

Abstract

This bibliography is intended to provide a list of selected works on the topic of adult literacy in developing countries. The list spans the perspectives of theory, research, practice, and policy, and covers selections from diverse regions of the developing world. As the title of the bibliography indicates, the works listed are limited to adult literacy, although adult linkages to schooling issues are included in certain cases. This bibliography is a contemporary list, including only works published in the last 15 years.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Psychological Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literacy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and Health</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Literacy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Implementation of Adult Literacy Programs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Literacy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Issues in Literacy Development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Literacy Campaigns and Programs</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This bibliography is intended to provide a list of selected works on the topic of adult literacy in developing countries. The list spans the perspectives of theory, research, practice, and policy, and covers selections from diverse regions of the developing world. For reasons of space, it is impossible to be comprehensive. Furthermore, as the title of the bibliography indicates, the works listed are limited to adult literacy, although adult linkages to schooling issues are included in certain cases. This bibliography is a contemporary list, including only works published in the last 15 years.

For edited volumes containing relevant articles, in most cases the articles themselves are listed and annotated, and the volume as a whole is not (to avoid redundancy). The exception to this rule are volumes containing papers from conferences, workshops, or seminars, when the volumes are organized explicitly as results of the event; in this case they are annotated as a single work only.

For ease of reference, the works are organized into subject categories. Works are listed only once; in cases where a work could be listed under more than one category, it is listed according to its most salient theme.

GENERAL


This article provides an assessment of major trends in literacy and projections for the future based on statistical data from the research work of UNESCO's office of statistics. Its review of general literacy trends from 1970 to 1985 includes sex disparities, age distribution, and urban versus rural areas. It assesses prospects for the year 2000, ending with a call for better information systems.


Divided into eight chapters on different issues concerning literacy in developing countries, this book reviews literature on literacy from a variety of regions of the world. Each of the chapters presents the state of knowledge on the subject, as well as a bibliography. Chapter topics include orality and literacy, literacy learning, schooling and alternatives, and challenges and promises.


In this book, the author describes the historical evolution of adult literacy programs, discussing the contributions and failures of each movement. Emphasizing the need to integrate literacy with other programs designed to meet people's needs, he uses a case study from Bangladesh to illustrate an interactive model for adult literacy and development programs.


The purpose of this document is to describe the problem of illiteracy in the world and various solutions that have been sought, with an emphasis on the role that UNESCO has played in these efforts. The paper includes discussions of definitions of literates and illiterates, quantitative data on literacy rates, qualitative issues, the Experimental World Literacy Program, and preconditions and methods for literacy work.


This book describes and analyzes existing experiences and research on adult literacy. The authors carry the perspective that literacy is a political rather than a technical issue, and that it is a human right. Chapters in the book describe and discuss research and evaluation, definitions and history of literacy, the role of
non-governmental organizations and the state, post-literacy, women's literacy, and motivation for literacy. Most attention is given to description and analysis of past and present approaches to literacy.


In this chapter, the author analyzes the notion of functional literacy, with a focus on differences in interpretation between industrialized and developing countries. Arguing that the functionality of literacy can be seen as moving along a continuum of literacy/illiteracy, the author concludes that literacy and illiteracy are constantly gaining new meaning in both developing and industrialized countries, and hence are always relative.


This bibliography contains detailed summaries of many works on the topic of literacy in industrialized and developing countries. It begins with an introduction by the author on new trends in literacy studies. The bibliography itself is divided into 13 sections on topics ranging from statistical studies, to comparative studies, to literacy methods and materials.


This book uses a cultural and psychological perspective to analyze the concept of literacy and to suggest ways of improving literacy work in the future. Discussed in the book are contexts and definitions of literacy, literacy statistics, literacy learning in children and adults, literacy assessment, and literacy and development. The author emphasizes intersectoral approaches to literacy, as well as linkages between literacy in developing and industrialized countries.


In this article, the "standard picture" of literacy is described as one based on the notion that literacy is a straightforward skill that leads to personal, social, and economic development. The article reviews critiques of this "standard picture," and puts forth a revised standard picture that questions the simplistic assumptions of the traditional view.

**CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES**


This article describes a study of the linguistic coding of affect in letters written by the Nukulaelae Islanders of Tuvalu in the South Pacific. Writing letters is the most common use of literacy among the islanders, and affect is much more salient in letters than in other communicative contexts. The author argues that the letters are cathartic contexts for the islanders and challenges research that claims that oral communication is typically less emotional than written communication.


In this chapter, the author argues that literacy can be an effective means of development only if it is integrated into the cultural and social patterns of the learners. The chapter outlines a socio-cultural model of literacy education, including issues of communication and cultural networks, social and individual meanings of literacy, need and motivation for literacy, and language. The author illustrates his argument with a case study from Colombia, and makes a special call for development of national research capacities.

This article discusses differences between oral and literate cultures, with an emphasis on different meanings attached to literacy in different social and historical contexts. The authors compare three non-Western pre-industrial societies that had some form of written culture. They then compare these same societies in the contemporary world with societies whose literacy has come from a Western influence or from colonialism.


Based on data from a small rural village in Papua New Guinea, this chapter places emphasis on how people in newly literate societies actively and creatively apply literacy for their own purposes. The author describes how literacy is used primarily for reading of religious documents and writing personal letters, and argues that both of these uses stem from traditional cultural concerns that pre-date the introduction of literacy into the community.


This book describes a classic study in the field of literacy that was carried out among the Vai people of Sierra Leone to examine the issue of the psychological consequences of literacy. The Vai have a writing system of their own that is not taught in school, and this enabled the researchers to separate literacy from schooling. In comparing the performance of individuals with various forms of literacy skills on a variety of experimental tasks, the researchers found that while effects of schooling were consistent, effects of nonschooled literacy were not. They conclude that literacy has specialized cognitive consequences related to the specific practice of a specific literacy; there are no deep psychological consequences of literacy, and literacy is not a necessary and sufficient condition for any of these skills.


The author challenges conceptions of literacy which assume that literacy is a neutral technology that can be detached from specific social contexts (the "autonomous" model), and proposes an "ideological" model that recognizes that literacy cannot be separated from the social and cultural context in which it is used. He examines literacy programs from around the world in terms of the two models, describing in detail a case study from Iran.


Taking the perspective that literacy should be defined as much by social issues as by the absence or presence of particular skills, this book describes a study that used both ethnographic and experimental research approaches to shed light on literacy in cultural context in Morocco. The book includes a description of the culture of literacy in Morocco, a description of the experiments used in the study, and discussion of various dimensions of literacy brought out by the study, including language acquisition, literacy retention, and linkages between research and policy.

INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES


This report details proceedings of a conference held to discuss an innovative instructional method for teaching adult literacy. This method, called the Reflect method, is a learner-centered, participatory approach in which learners produce their own literacy materials based on their own
immediate circumstances. The report includes a
description of the Reflect method, as well as
results of conference session discussions on a
variety of implementation issues, such as man-
agement and cost-effectiveness, teacher training,
gender issues, empowerment, monitoring, evalu-
ation, and sustainability.

basic education, school quality and functional lit-
Press.

The research project described in this
book examined the impact of schooling in
Kenya on cognition associated with text com-
prehension and with knowledge useful in
everyday life. It also collected qualitative infor-
mation on religious and secular education as
well as domains for uses of literacy in different
languages. Project results indicated that rela-
tionships between processes and outcomes of
education are complex and may be mediated
by language and by type of instruction.

Reading the word and the world. South Hadley,
MA: Bergin & Harvey.

In this analysis of literacy theory and prac-
tice, the authors carry the perspective that lit-
eracy is inseparable from issues of power. The
book begins with a description of the authors' the-
ory of literacy, which stresses the notion
that reading is more than a simple act of
decoding, as it also involves understanding the
world. Next it discusses literacy efforts in Sao
Tomé and Príncipe, with an emphasis on the
development of materials. It also has chapters
on literacy in Guinea-Bissau and in the United
States. Finally the book presents and discusses
different approaches to reading, as it calls for an "emancipatory" literacy that treats literacy
as a way to empower the oppressed and thus
transform society.

GENDER


This book is a practical guide to women's
literacy, with an emphasis on how to create
successful women's literacy programs. It dis-
cusses statistics, obstacles to female literacy,
major UN initiatives in women's literacy, and
the role of nongovernmental organizations.
Focusing on the importance of meeting both
practical and strategic gender needs and
emphasizing intersectoral approaches to litera-
cy, the book also provides examples of literacy
programs for women from around the world.

Claesson, J., & van Wesemael-Smit, L.
(Eds.). (1992). Reading the word and the world:
Literacy and education from a gender perspective.
Oegstgeest: Vrouwenberaad
Ontwikkelingsamenwerking.

This volume contains the results of an
international seminar on literacy and education
from a gender perspective. The volume takes
the perspective that women's literacy is one
step towards a transformation of society and
the empowerment of women. The volume
includes chapters on empowerment, literacy
and gender in general, and post-literacy, as well
as case studies from Peru and India.

Malmquist, E. (Ed.). (1992). Women and
literacy development in the Third World.
Linkoping, Sweden: Linkoping University in
Cooperation with UNESCO and SIDA.

This volume contains papers from an
international seminar titled "Women and
Literacy Development: Constraints and
Prospects," which was held in Linkoping,
Sweden, in August 1991. The papers, written
by national women's literacy experts, describe
the literacy situation for women in 12 develop-
ing countries or regions as follows: India,
Pakistan, Thailand, the South Pacific, Egypt,
Botswana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe,
Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. Additional
chapters provide an overview of women's litera-
cy in the Third World, summarize the confer-
ence discussions, and provide concluding
remarks.

in Morocco. In D. A. Wagner & L. D.
Puchner (Eds.), World literacy in the year 2000,
Vol. 520, Annals of the American Academy of
Political and Social Science (pp. 121-132).
This article examines the gender gap in literacy and education in Morocco, and includes discussion of literacy and education participation rates, existing literacy programs, and relationships between gender, education, labor market activity, fertility, and family health. The article concludes with some recommendations for action to reduce the gender gap in literacy, including improved literacy statistics, more and better research, and improved literacy training for Moroccan women.


Arguing that low literacy levels among women worldwide are a reflection of unequal gender power relations, this article discusses relationships between literacy, the subordination of women, and poverty. The discussion includes constraints women face in becoming literate, content of literacy programs, and suggestions for improving the situation of women's literacy.


This article on women's literacy discusses the reasons behind gender disparities existing in illiteracy rates throughout the world, and outlines the benefits of literacy for women. It also describes problems with existing literacy programs in terms of their potential to improve gender inequalities. The author argues that literacy programs need to include emancipatory content in order to empower women.


In this chapter, the author proposes a continua-based framework to demonstrate interrelationships between bilingualism and literacy, and then uses this framework to discuss the acquisition of Quechua literacy in Peru. The author argues that contrary to the opinion of many, promotion of Quechua literacy increases the potential for literacy development and for fuller social participation of marginalized sectors of Peru.

In this article, the author describes the introduction of mother-tongue literacy to the Somali people of East Africa. Taking issue with common assumptions concerning relationships between literacy and nationalistic identity, he shows how literacy may lead to ethnic strife within nations, and that the power of orality should not be underestimated even in modern times.


This article describes the evolution of literacy in the South Pacific in general, as well as providing a sketch of language and education in multilingual and multiethnic Fiji. The author argues that literacy practices in the South Pacific develop along different domains for different languages, with biliteracy becoming more and more common in all South Pacific countries. A discussion of the Book Flood Project of Fiji and its implications is included.


In this article, the authors argue that mother tongue is the best medium for literacy instruction. They provide psychological and educational evidence for this belief, as well as a history of language policy and literacy efforts in Nigeria. They conclude with a call for clarification concerning national language and literacy issues, and the allocation of funds for orthographic and instructional materials development.


This article reports on a longitudinal study of literacy acquisition among 166 grade one children from a rural town in Morocco. The research supports the proposition that children in certain social and linguistic contexts need not be taught in their first language in order to achieve literacy norms of the majority language group. The article discusses the findings in terms of the context of language use and language prestige in the Moroccan setting, and in terms of their potential generalizability to other linguistic and cultural contexts.

This article reviews small- and large-scale studies of the relationship between literacy and health, concluding that there exists a consistent and strong independent effect of literacy on mortality in developing countries. The authors discuss directions of causality of the association, as well as mechanisms through which literacy may affect health, such as through enhanced knowledge and resources, better utilization of health services, adoption of better health practices and habits, changes in fertility behavior, and changes in family structure. They conclude that the relationship between literacy and health is likely a circular one, with literacy affecting health, health affecting literacy, and both affected by the social and economic characteristics of the society.


This article reports research findings that examine the question of how formal education of women affects their reproductive and health behavior. The study, undertaken in one rural and one urban area in Mexico, concludes that improved health practices and lower fertility in mothers came about through psychosocial changes, such as new patterns of social interaction deriving from their schooling experience.


This article describes an ethnographic study undertaken in a factory literacy program in Maputo, Mozambique. The study explored meanings attached to literacy and illiteracy that led to rejection of the program by many workers, and the relationship between literacy and power. Discussion of the study findings focus on individual expectations and experiences related to gender, race, and class, as well as on the broader political context of socialist construction in Mozambique.


This chapter outlines changes in the concept of literacy from the 1960s to the 1980s from traditional "school-like" approaches to more functional approaches, culminating in interest in linking adult education programs to work programs. The chapter also describes in detail the basic characteristics of literacy for work, with special emphasis placed on Latin America and on community involvement.

**Planning and Implementation of Adult Literacy Programs**


This volume contains papers that were prepared for a workshop on planning and implementing literacy and post-literacy programs. Topics covered include mobilization and participation, planning and management structures, women's literacy, language issues, post-literacy, technical resources, monitoring and evaluation, and linkages with formal schools and other social services. Countries represented include China, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Iraq, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Tanzania, Nepal, and Brazil.


This book serves as a handbook of literacy work, and includes a discussion of the situa-
tion of literacy in the world as well as a guide to planning and implementing literacy programs. Included are discussions of pre-literacy, post-literacy, program objectives, recruitment of teachers, and teaching strategy. Extensive annexes provide actual examples illustrating issues discussed in the volume.


This chapter analyzes incentives for participating in adult literacy programs in developing countries. The author argues that to increase participation, effort must be put toward creating a context favorable to adult learning, rather than focusing on individual program features. Issues discussed in the chapter include features of the adult learning context, the case of women, and comparisons between developing and industrialized countries.

**ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**


Aimed at literacy workers particularly in the Third World, this book is a guide to evaluation of literacy projects. The book includes discussion of evaluation paradigms and models, planning, management and implementation of evaluation, management information systems, naturalistic versus rationalistic evaluation, reporting, and politics of evaluation.


This book describes an assessment of the functioning of the Tanzanian literacy program as well as the effects of the program on the learners, with a particular emphasis on the situation of women. In addition to describing who the learners were and how the program functioned, the study measured the literacy skills of program participants and evaluated the extent to which learners used these skills in everyday life.


This book describes the methodology and findings of a study concerning the functioning and outcomes of the Kenya literacy program. By exploring teachers, classrooms, and materials, the study examined how the program was implemented. It also measured the literacy, numeracy, and functional literacy of the learners.


The book is a report of the results of an evaluation of the literacy campaign in Ethiopia that was launched in 1962. The purpose of the evaluation study was to describe and analyze campaign activities, including student achievement, the teaching process, and benefits for participants. The study also attempted to situate the campaign in a wider socio-economic and political context.


This article proposes a methodology for assessment of literacy in the Third World that takes into account issues of both reliability and cost. The article also discusses key issues in literacy assessment, including language, cross-national comparability, classification of individuals, household surveys, and literacy policy.
POST-LITERACY

UIE Studies on Post-Literacy and Continuing Education Volumes 1-7:


This series documents studies that were undertaken in various countries as part of an international project on continuing education. The volumes in the series provide concrete experiences on learning strategies and techniques in post-literacy. The first volume provides a general overview of the project and its context, and analyzes the concept of post-literacy. Volumes 2-6 provide results of case studies carried out in 21 countries. Volume 7 is a handbook dealing with issues of lifelong education.

POLICY ISSUES IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT


This article is an analysis of the politics of international literacy work in general, with a focus on UNESCO's literacy program. It discusses education policy in the international community, highlighting conflicts between valuation of universal primary education versus adult literacy. The evolution of the work of UNESCO is analyzed in terms of the political parameters that guide and constrain it.


This chapter argues that strategies for improving literacy and basic learning programs in developing countries should be participatory in nature and should consider the linkages between social sectors. The article gives an overview of existing human resource problems facing developing nations, defines the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index, and discusses an operational framework for more integrated human resources development.

NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS


The 1980 literacy campaign in Nicaragua, according to the author, was launched as part of an effort to integrate the country and to mobilize the population around the agenda of
the new Sandinista leadership. This description of the campaign includes the scope, structure, process, and materials of the campaign. The author also describes the outcomes of the effort, including both the positive aspects as well as its limitations.


This book presents eight case studies of national literacy campaigns as illustrations of the literacy campaign approach. Advocating the literacy campaign as the most promising means of eliminating illiteracy in the world, the author devotes most of the book to descriptions of the campaigns of the Soviet Union, Vietnam, China, Cuba, Burma, Brazil, Tanzania, and Somalia. He ends with a discussion of the lessons to be learned from these experiences in creating a model for planning and implementing literacy campaigns.


This chapter describes and discusses the successes and difficulties in functional literacy efforts in the region of South-East Asia. Issues included in the discussion are the seeming paradox between the early tradition of literacy and current illiteracy in some parts of the region, literacy statistics for the region, literacy programs, and linguistic and cultural issues.


The Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP), which took place from 1967 to 1974, was a multilateral literacy effort involving eleven countries and organized by UNESCO. This chapter describes the EWLP and analyzes it in an attempt to draw some lessons from it that may still be valid. In particular, the author considers reasons why the effort was deemed a failure by many, even though it led to the creation of many new literates and provided valuable lessons for future literacy efforts.


In this chapter, the author reviews China's experience with the promotion of literacy in the 20th century, including language reform, reform of the school system, and adult education. In his description, the author includes the different agendas of the common people, intellectuals, and political reformers. He concludes that while expansion of the school system has made good progress, the literacy campaigns were of more limited use.


The National Literacy Campaign of 1961 succeeded in dramatically raising literacy rates in Cuba. This chapter describes the process employed during the campaign and the stages of the campaign, as well as the strategies behind it and the follow up. The author feels that this campaign was the key to a profound improvement in the educational situation of Cuba that occurred between the 1959 revolution and the mid-1980s.


This book is an analysis of the Mozambican literacy campaign policies with an emphasis on identifying factors behind the rise and fall of the campaigns from 1978 to 1982. The discussion covers the historical and social context of the effort, as well as objectives, efficiency, participation, organization, pedagogy, and results of the campaign. In analyzing the campaigns, the authors stress that the political mobilization
necessary for the success of national literacy campaigns is often difficult to sustain after an initial period.


This book is a comprehensive examination and description of the Nicaraguan literacy campaign of 1979-1980. Chapters in the book provide detailed information on the background and history behind the crusade, as well as its organization, the materials and methods, training, and implementation. The final chapter constitutes an appraisal of the campaign, with an emphasis on curriculum, methodology, and training.


This article describes the evolution in the nature of Chinese and Tanzanian literacy efforts that has occurred in recent years. Specifically, it argues that while literacy movements in these countries were originally promoted for reasons of social equity, they are now linked to a desire for economic growth. The authors conclude that social equity in the two nations has been compromised by the transition from a political to an economic agenda.


In describing and discussing Tanzania's literacy campaign, the author takes the perspective that in order to assess the impact of such an effort it is necessary to understand the power and production relations which exist in the Third World and between the First and Third Worlds. He describes the literacy campaign within this context, and concludes that while the campaign had a significant impact in legitimizing Tanzania on an international level, it has not had a significant impact on a local level.
For more information, please contact:
Editor
Literacy Research Center
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
tel: (215) 898-2100
fax: (215) 898-9804
e-mail: editor@literacy.upenn.edu
Internet: http://www.literacyonline.org
NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").