Imagine All the People Living a Literate Life

PROVIDING A PLACE FOR ADULTS TO LEARN & THRIVE

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VIRGINIA LITERACY FOUNDATION

Objectives

* Participants will learn about barriers faced by adults with low literacy.
* Participants will hear about successful partnerships between literacy organizations and libraries.
* Participants will understand why opt-in/opt-out models benefit this population.
* Participants will identify opportunities to impact community well-being with targeted programming.

Adult Learners: Who are They?

* Adult learners are individuals over the age of 16 "who did not complete their K-12 education, or who possess a high school diploma or equivalent but nevertheless have gaps in basic skills such as reading, math, or spoken English. Most are employed and are parents or primary caregivers of school-age children.

* Adult learners come to the library with a wealth of life experiences and knowledge. They are goal-oriented, focused on meaningful lessons and achievable goals, and motivated to learn.

— Literacy for All: Adult Literacy Through Libraries: Downloaded 9-29-2019: http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/Literacy%20for%20All_Toolkit_Online.pdf

Barriers Faced by Adult Learners

* **Situational:** lack of time due to family or work, transportation, cost of education
* **Dispositional:** low motivation; low self-esteem, embarrassment, and fear of failure.
* **Institutional:** scheduling, admissions requirements, and financial aid.
* **Educational:** school systems, LD or learning difficulties, intergenerational illiteracy, non-native speaker

Literacy Programs Embedded in Libraries

Two library/literacy programs are discussed in this section. One is rural and the other is a city library. While both share similarities, there are some differences.

Library/Literacy Programs - 1

Commonalities

Program	Literacy Volunteers of Campbell County Public Library	Jones Creativity Center, Bristol Library
Years	Since 1988	Since the 1980s
Literacy staff	Part Time Program Director	Part Time Program Director
Library oversight	Part time Literacy Director/Board of Directors oversees all branches	Full time Executive Director/Board of Directors oversees all branches
Other boards	Advisory board: hands-on with events, tutoring, & fundraising	No other boards, but an advisory board is being considered

Library/Literacy Programs - 2

Resources Both Libraries Provide:

* Meeting spaces, additional staff in the form of librarians who direct prospective tutors & students
* Adult literacy collections & learning programs for GED test prep
* Internet access, public computers
* Websites overseen by a professional webmaster
* A financial director who pays for staff & expenses, collects donations
* Advertisements, outreach, referrals

Library/Literacy Programs - 3

Resources Both Literacy Programs Provide:

* Tutoring & specialized services customized to fit an adult learner's need in 1:1 or small group situations

* Missions aligned to the libraries' mission to serve underserved populations according to community and census figures

* Tutor training, community events, and additional classes for students and tutors

Library/Literacy Programs - 4

Primary Benefits to the Library:

* A demonstrated increase in the number of multi-cultural citizens who use library services
* Students, who learn to use the libraries for a variety of reasons – GED attainment, job applications, ESL instruction – acquire the habit of reading and using libraries for all their services

Library/Literacy Programs - 5

Primary Benefits to the Literacy Program:

* Libraries provide physical space, support staff, in-kind support in the form of referrals, printing, & publicity via their website & printed materials
* Branch locations increase the program's capacity to serve the region
* Security and the flexibility to try new programs
* Free parking and lit parking lots at night

Library/Literacy Program - 6

Discussed Differences

Literacy Volunteers of Campbell County Public Library

* Other funding: We receive separate donations, we do our own fundraising to generate 1/3 of our income.
* Other partnerships: Literacy coalition of SW Virginia (Pittsylvania & Danville) & the Coalition of Central VA (Lynchburg, Charlotte, Nottoway) in which we shared tutor training and in-services
* Community impact: we have childcare resources to better teach the parents. When you meet family needs, retention improves.

Library/Literacy Program - 7

Discussed Differences

Jones Creativity Center, Bristol Public Library

* Since our founding we have helped thousands of people (4,000+) come through different programs to attain their GED or find and retain jobs to help them get off public assistance.

* The Mt. Rogers regional public adult education & literacy program uses the library for 6 sessions of GED instruction at 18 hours per week. They bring certified teachers and pay for the test if students meet the requirements.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The library-literacy program collaboration discussed next is typical of most adult literacy/library associations, which is loosely based and made with a handshake. The library offers temporary space for literacy instruction. Literacy programs bring instructors and literacy resources, recruit students, and train tutors.

A Literacy Program Partners With Libraries

The READ Center, Richmond

* Works with three libraries in the region to hold classes and house literacy materials.

* Librarians serve as referral partners; they also know the students and can lead them to inhouse resources.

* Barbara Ferrerra from Chesterfield Library serves as a tutor and hosts meetings with branch managers to discuss how library branches could be more involved with adult literacy tutoring.

* Both organizations have a shared mission.

* READ feels that the community is impacted through adults transitioning to higher education along a career pathway or lifelong learning. These transitions also support school divisions.

VLF Award Winners!

Ms. Hazel, student, with Karen LaForge, E.D.,The READ Center, 2018 VLF Award for Outstanding Director

Campbell County Library: Lynne Wheeler, Adult Literacy Coordinator, Lisa Harris, Program Director, both with Literacy Volunteers, and Jordan Welborn, Library Director. 2019 VLF Award to Lynne Wheeler for Outstanding Director

Libraries & Learning Circles

Libraries that are not ready for a full and committed partnership with adult literacy programs might want to consider providing space and advertisements for adult learning circles.

Definition of a Learning Circle

ProLiteracy:

A learning circle is a group led by a teacher, tutor, staff member, or volunteer facilitator whose members all share an interest in the same subject or learning objective. It is a non-formal, organized study circle that includes an online course or other online learning resources.

- Downloaded 10-22/19 from
https://proliteracy.org/Blogs/Article/426/App-to-Speed-Learning-Circles-for-ABE-Learners

Characteristics of Learning Circles

…for the low level adult learner

* They provide blended/hybrid learning models with computer access
* They are short courses of about 4-12 weeks
* The offer open enrollment and provide an opt in/opt out model to accommodate adult schedules
* They support peer-to-peer learning and encourage conversations outside of class via a facilitator

What Learning Circles Are Not

They are not a replacement for the traditional adult education & literacy classroom

or 1:1 tutoring sessions

Why Libraries Are Best Suited to Host Learning Circles - 1

Learning Circles are

* Welcoming
* Inclusive and for everyone
* Flexible
* Mostly conducted in public spaces
* Open to learners at all levels

…as libraries are

Why Libraries Are Best Suited to Host Learning Circles - 2

Learning Circles offer access to

* Technology via computers and the internet
* Traditional and online resources
* Meeting spaces
* Parking facilities

Who Participates in Learning Circles?

Everyone

What topics are best suited for Learning Circles?

Anything

Learning Circle Topics for Adult Ed Students are More Specific

* ESL
* GED
* Computer skills
* Job skills
* Numeracy
* Financial literacy
* Other (Group discussion)

General Outcomes

Adult Ed Learning Circles address some learner barriers

* Result in reduced waiting lists for adult learners
* Provide a way for prospective students and the literacy program to judge how well they will fit together
* Lead to technology and online learning skills, which often lead to better learner success and persistence in classes

- Adapted from Learning Circles for Adult Education, including basic skills, ESL/ESOL, Citizenship Preparation, ASE, and Transition t College, David J. Rosen, MCAE Network, April 6, 2018. https://adultedresource.coabe.org/resources/learning-circles-for-adult-education-including-basic-skills-esl-esol-citizenship-preparation-ase-and-transition-to-college/

A Library Committed to Learning Circles

* Providence Public Library offers a variety of classes and instruction to adults, families, and students.

* The site's sidebar is indicative of the many programs the library makes available.

* This 24-minute YouTube video demonstrates aU.S. citizenship learning circle for ESL students. https://youtu.be/7BsrUBZ0Wyc

Providence Public Library

For Parents & Educators
Family Literacy Bags

LARK : Learning & Reading Kits

Passport To Summer Learning

○ **PVD Young Makers**

○ **Teen Squad**

Teen Squad IMLS Grant

○ **Adults**

Learning Circles

Learning Lounge

Mobile Learning

RI Family Literacy Initiative

Small Business Workshop Series

Technology Classes

Learning Circles

Learning circles bring people with common interests together to learn online, in person.

Learning circles are a model of blended learning designed to support participants in completing high-quality online resources. A unique feature of learning circles is the peer-to-peer support that participants experience in working together and sharing ideas. With the help of a facilitator, the group engages in discussion of learning goals, course content, and application of knowledge and skills. Members of a learning circle meet weekly for two hours for six to eight weeks to work on their course online, in person. Computers are provided if you don't have one.

Free Adult Learning Opportunities at PPL — YOUR input is needed to determine future Learning Circle topics!

PPL seeks your suggestions for upcoming Learning Circle topics. Let us know what topic interest you and the time of day you can meet. If there is enough interest in a particular topic, we may run it as a Learning Circle.

https://www.provlib.org/education/adults/

Take Survey >

Discussion: Impacting Our Communities

* Think back on our discussion on literacy programs, embedded in libraries, collaborations with community-based adult literacy organizations, and learning circles.

* Partner with one or two people and **for a few minutes discuss** what kind of activities or programs you could implement that would impact your community or your library's mission in a meaningful way.

* **Make a list or come up with one detailed idea.**

Questions?

Thank you for coming.

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Online Resources

…in addition to those embedded in this slide presentation

Successful and Replicable Library Literacy Programs

Literacy for All: Adult Literacy @ your library, American Library Association (ALA), Downloaded 10/22/19 http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/literacy-all-adult-literacy-your-library-successful-and-replicable-library-literacy-programs

Learning Circles Facilitator Handbook

Learning Circles Facilitator Handbook, *Starting*, P2PU, downloaded 10/22/19
https://www.p2pu.org/en/handbook/starting/

Learning Circle YouTube Channel

P2PU (Peer 2 Peer University) FeaturingVideos from:

* Boston Public Library
* Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Virginia
* Chicago Public Library
* Detroit Public Library
* Free Library of Philadelphia
* More

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJH3nTAgEAGIjjTB5B8PjFw