

J. Marion Sims Foundation

ADULT LITERACY & BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVE

PROMOTING

citizenship literacy

LANCASTER COUNTY | FORT LAWN | GREAT FALLS

South Carolina

A **What Works** REPORT OF THE INSTITUTE ON FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

AND THE J. MARION SIMS FOUNDATION, INC.

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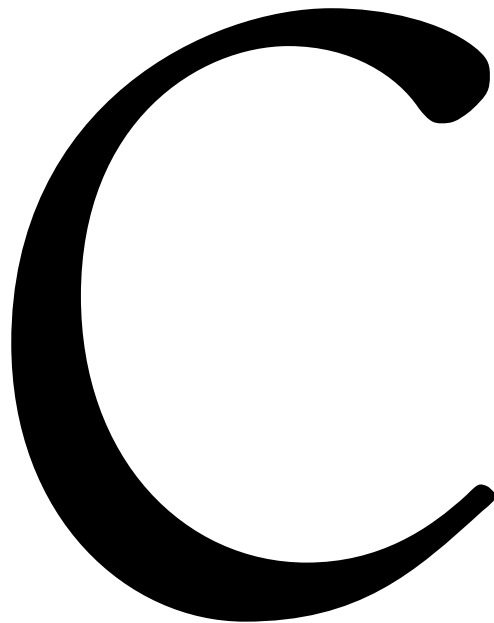
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INTRODUCTION

“Americans of all ages, all stations in life and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute... Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America.”

Said in 1831 by Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, page 513

“...most Americans no longer spend much time in community organizations—we’ve stopped doing committee work, stopped serving as officers and stopped going to meetings. All this despite rapid increases in education that have given more of us than ever before the skills, the resources and the interest that once fostered civic engagement. In short, Americans have been dropping out in droves, not merely from political life, but from organized community life more generally.”

As observed in 1999 by Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone in America*, page 64

When the National Institute for Literacy asked more than two thousand adults what they needed to be literate, compete in the global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the answers were not altogether expected. What was expected of them at work had changed dramatically, calling for new skills and lifelong enrichment. They said the challenges in raising their kids had increased and were so different from previous times. Health decision making had become enormously complex. Polls indicated Americans felt vaguely and uncomfortably disconnected. Adults were joining civic organizations less and less. They wished America could be more civil, more trustworthy and a more collectively caring community. There was a growing awareness that no person was an island and that he or she needed effective support from others in order to survive and thrive. When they were not involved in neighboring they felt isolated and often their neighborhood life got worse. From these discussions, four fundamental needs were identified that made them want to improve themselves and learn more. These needs are now referred to as the four purposes for literacy learning: access, voice, effective action and learning to bridge to the future.

Adults responding to the survey indicated that the primary purpose for their learning was to *access* information and resources so they could orient themselves to a fast-changing world. They learned in order to *give voice* to their ideas and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and taken into account. They learned so that they could improve their ability to *solve problems and make decisions* on their own, acting independently, as parents, citizens and workers, for the good of their families, their communities and their nation. They were motivated to learn in order to *bridge to the future in their thoughts and actions* so that they could keep up with a fast-changing world.

The skills adults need as parents/family members, workers, and citizens go beyond the basic academic skills that have traditionally been targeted by adult education programs. Equipped For the Future (EFF) is the National Institute for Literacy's standards-based system reform initiative aimed at improving the literacy system's capacity to equip adults with the skills needed to fulfill these roles.

Literacy is the ability to read, write and speak English proficiently, to compute and solve problems, and to use technology in order to become a lifelong learner and to be effective in the family, in the workplace and in the community.¹ It involves gaining proficiency in four primary skill areas. **TABLE 1** identifies these four areas. As is evident, being a literate individual involves more than being able to read and write.

TABLE 1 | Basic Literacy Skills Needed by All People

Communication Skills

- | Read with understanding
- | Convey ideas in writing
- | Speak so others can understand
- | Listen actively
- | Observe critically

Interpersonal Skills

- | Cooperate with others
- | Guide others
- | Advocate and influence
- | Resolve conflict and negotiate

Decision-Making Skills

- | Solve problems and make decisions
- | Plan
- | Use math to solve problems and communicate

Lifelong Learning Skills

- | Take responsibility for learning
- | Learn through research
- | Reflect and evaluate
- | Use information and communications technology

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Citizenship literacy involves the development of general literacy skills applied to the everyday tasks of being a citizen and active community member. Within the national adult literacy movement, the primary reason for developing citizenship literacy competence is that “citizens and community members are able to take informed action and to make a positive difference in their lives, communities and world.” At the heart of citizenship literacy development is citizens becoming involved in community improvement efforts and creating just, healthy environments. By uplifting the skills of large numbers of citizens and encouraging civic participation, the quality of life in communities improves.

Because adults tend to learn things that are important to them and learn when they need to, the EFF initiative organized literacy education around the basic roles adults perform. Four roles are primary to most adults: parent/family member, worker, health consumer/provider and citizen/community member. EFF, in their report on content standards for literacy education, recommends that the four literacy skill areas noted above should be taught within the context of the key roles adults perform and the pervasive literacy-related tasks they perform in these roles. **TABLE 2** describes the role as citizens/community members and tasks associated with this role. The EFF web site provides information on the standards and skills associated with this role, as well as that of worker and parent/family member. (See <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html>.)²

TABLE 2 | **Equipped For the Future Citizen/Community Member Role Map**

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The Equipped For the Future Role Maps describe what adults do when they are effective in their roles as parents/family members, workers and citizens/community members. EFF partners developed the role maps by asking adults from many different walks of life to describe what they needed to be able to do to fulfill these roles. Each role map includes the following parts: the key purpose or central aim of the role, broad areas of responsibility that are the critical functions adults perform, and key activities through which the role is performed. We can use the role maps to identify what is important for us to teach and learn.

Key purpose of the role:

Effective citizens and community members take informed action to make a positive difference in their lives, communities, and world.

Broad Area of Responsibility

Become and Stay Informed: Citizens and community members find and use information to identify and solve problems and contribute to the community

KEY ACTIVITIES

- | Identify, monitor and anticipate problems, community needs, strengths and resources for yourself and others
- | Recognize and understand human, legal, and civic rights and responsibilities for yourself and others
- | Figure out how the system that affects an issue works
- | Identify how to have an impact and recognize that individuals can make a difference
- | Find, interpret, analyze and use diverse sources of information, including personal experience

Broad Area of Responsibility

Form and Express Opinions and Ideas: Citizens and community members develop a personal voice and use it individually and as a group

KEY ACTIVITIES

- | Strengthen and express a sense of self that reflects personal history, values, beliefs and roles in the larger community
- | Learn from others' experiences and ideas
- | Communicate so that others understand
- | Reflect on and re-evaluate your own opinions and ideas

TABLE 2 | CONTINUED

Broad Area of Responsibility

Work Together: Citizens and community members interact with other people to get things done toward a common purpose

KEY ACTIVITIES

- | Get involved in the community and get others involved help yourself and others
- | Respect others and work to eliminate discrimination and prejudice
- | Define common values, visions and goals
- | Manage and resolve conflict

Broad Area of Responsibility

Take Action to Strengthen Communities: Citizens and community members exercise their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups to improve the world around them

KEY ACTIVITIES

- | Help yourself and others
- | Educate others
- | Influence decision makers and hold them accountable
- | Provide leadership within the community

The National Institute for Literacy is charged by the U.S. Congress to develop standards for leaders to use to equip adults with needed literacy skills. For each role, key everyday literacy-related tasks were identified. These tasks endure through time and across the various roles. They are the building blocks of being a literate adult. The 13 everyday tasks related to the use of citizenship literacy skills are found in **TABLE 3**. They are primary competencies used to be a responsible citizen and relate effectively to neighbors and other community members. Educators are encouraged to use them as the basis for developing learning opportunities for adults who need to increase their literacy proficiency. You will see that these tasks are a further amplification of the role maps described above.

TABLE 3 | 13 Everyday Literacy-related Tasks Done By All Citizens and Community Members

Gather, analyze and use health information

Find and analyze information from diverse sources. Use it to form opinions, make decisions and take action.

- | Monitor and gather information from a variety of sources
- | Establish criteria for the quality and appropriateness of the information
- | Assess the value of the information
- | Use the information to make informed decisions

Manage resources

Find, manage, share and allocate time, money and material resources in a way that supports your own neighboring and citizen needs, goals and priorities, and those of your family, neighbors, fellow workers.

- | Identify those resources you have and those you need
- | Determine where they are and how they can be obtained
- | Use the resources in an efficient and effective manner
- | Balance resources effectively for family, work, community and self

Work within the big picture of community, state and nation

Look beyond the immediate situation. Take into account the structures, culture, practices and formal and informal rules and expectations of the goods and services systems that influence and shape your neighboring and community relations actions.

- | Gather information about a system and how it works
- | Determine your relationship to the system and the roles you and others have within it
- | Monitor the system and predict changes
- | Base your efforts to influence the system on your knowledge of how it works

Work together

Cooperate with others to learn, accomplish tasks and pursue common neighborhood and community development goals.

- | Identify what needs to be done and plan how to do it
- | Pay attention to the relationships within the group as well as to completing the task
- | Identify and draw upon everyone's strengths in carrying out the work of the group
- | Recognize and deal with conflict in a productive manner

Provide leadership

Inspire and direct others in shaping and achieving common neighborhood and community improvement goals

- | Institute and manage plans for action and change based on an understanding of the big picture
- | Organize and motivate others to act
- | Guide sound problem solving and decision making
- | Assure consistent monitoring and evaluation of performance

Guide and support others

Help others succeed by setting an example of civic engagement, providing opportunities for learning or giving other types of assistance.

- | Acknowledge and reward others' strengths and accomplishments
- | Contribute to creating supportive learning environments and experiences
- | Empower others through mentoring, coaching and being a role model

Seek guidance and support from others

Help yourself succeed by asking for information, advice and assistance.

- | Recognize when you need help and know where to go for it
- | Seek out relationships with people whose judgment is trusted
- | Create and make use of networks of personal and professional contacts
- | Be responsive to new ideas and accept and use constructive criticism and feedback

Develop and express sense of self

Create your own personal voice in neighborhood and community living. Use your understanding of self to guide your neighborhood and community interactions.

- | Examine and clarify your own values and beliefs, recognizing the role your cultural heritage and personal history play in shaping these and in determining the possibilities of expression
- | Maintain standards of integrity
- | Consider the constraints of the situation as well as your own strengths and weaknesses when choosing a course of action
- | Pursue outlets for interests and talents to build and maintain a sense of belonging to community

TABLE 3 | 13 Everyday Literacy-related Health Care Consumer and Provider Activities CONTINUED

Respect others and value diversity

Respect and appreciate the values, beliefs, cultures and history of others. Use this understanding to counteract prejudice and stereotypes.

- | Create an environment where others feel welcome, are included and thrive
- | Encourage and carefully consider a wide range of opinion and beliefs
- | Educate yourself about other cultures
- | Challenge the beliefs that a person's inherent capacity is limited by background or group membership

Exercise rights and responsibilities

Act and advocate on behalf of yourself and others, taking into account laws, social standards and cultural traditions.

- | Recognize and assume your share of family, civic and work responsibilities
- | Monitor and keep up-to-date on federal, state and local laws and regulations
- | Make sure your own behavior is just and responsible
- | Take personal responsibility to bring about change or resolve problems to achieve a common good

Create and pursue vision and goals

Dare to dream what your neighborhood and community could be. Be clear about where you want to go to sustain and enhance a sense of community and how to get there.

- | Articulate a vision that embodies your values and goals or those of your family, community or work group
- | Establish attainable goals that are compatible with that vision
- | Develop a realistic plan to move toward the vision and goals
- | Create alternative means of meeting your goals that anticipate the effects of change

Use technology and other tools to accomplish goals

Be familiar with a variety of tools and technologies that can make it easier to achieve your neighboring and community interaction goals.

- | Keep up-to-date on developments in tools and technologies that may be useful for communicating, managing information, solving problems and carrying out daily tasks
- | Determine which tools are most useful for the purpose and context at hand
- | Use complex tools, machines and equipment to solve problems

Keep pace with change

Anticipate, manage and adapt to change in neighborhood and community conditions and support systems that affect your life.

- | Adjust your goals and plans over time to take into account actual or prospective changes in the neighborhood and community
- | Keep abreast of and evaluate trends in goods and services industries that support neighborhood and community well-being, as well as the nation and world
- | Determine what skills and knowledge are needed to meet emerging neighbor and community interaction needs or new situations
- | Create opportunities to expand your own skills and knowledge, as well as those of your family, neighborhood, community and work group

According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, 20% of the U.S. adult population scored at the lowest of five levels of literacy. This means that many adults are missing the opportunity to be good neighbors and community members. It means there is less volunteering of all types than could be the case. It means that fewer people are involved in making community improvement decisions.

Even those adults who score in the next lowest level of literacy are ill-equipped with some of the basic skills and information necessary to function successfully as employees, parents, neighbors and friends. An estimated 56% of South Carolina's citizens function at the lowest two levels of literacy. The estimates are higher for Lancaster (60%) and Chester (68%) counties. This means that a large share of the population does not have the basic skills they need for family life, employment or healthy citizenship. The Appendix provides a description of literacy levels and what is tested.⁴

We must and can do better to meet the needs of our citizens who are not adequately prepared for their roles as parents, workers and citizens. However, we face significant challenges in creating an effective system for raising citizenship literacy levels for adults. These challenges, described in the next section, direct our attention to problem areas that need to be addressed.⁵

Challenges for Adult Citizenship Literacy System Development

The condition of civic engagement in the U.S. has eroded sharply over the past 30 years.

There are a number of troubling trends in our civic life. During the past 30 years, and in particular during the past decade, the level of trust in government, large institutions and in fellow citizens has fallen sharply. Basic civility has eroded, along with many types of civic participation. Recent studies show citizens are joining fewer membership associations, church attendance has been declining and voter turn-out is lessening. Associations of all kinds are losing membership in record numbers. The content of our popular culture deeply troubles many. The influence of religion and spiritual values in our society is lower than it once was and what many think it ought to be.⁶ The publication of Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone in America* helped focus fears that America's distinctive source of social strength—its network of voluntary associations—is weakening. Yet others have shown that perhaps the way we volunteer and become involved in community is changing. The way we associate is changing.⁷ While some of the more traditional forms of association have declined, other forms of community association and networking have greatly increased. Volunteering as a family has now stimulated more people, particularly men and those affiliated with faith-based groups, to volunteer in record numbers. (See summary TABLE 4 for a few enlightening trends in volunteering.) The challenge for citizenship literacy educators is to find a context for education that is meaningful to modern-day adults who have been influenced by all the conditions that have changed the way they want to engage in community life and the conditions under which they will engage. Citizenship literacy skills are learned within the context of civic engagement.

As a result of higher standards in K–12 education and the phasing out of remedial courses at institutions of higher education, the number of youth seeking – and being pointed toward – adult education services will increase.

This is likely to put more pressure on an already strained system. In the case of citizenship literacy, national studies show that children and youth are not being prepared well enough by schools to function effectively as citizens. Therefore, for at least the next three decades at a minimum, the burden for citizenship literacy development rests on adult and non-formal education efforts. We have to play catch-up to educate young adults who have not had adequate instruction in the formative years as well as educate most adults in South Carolina to become effective community members.⁸

The changing demographic makeup of the United States is increasing the number of people who need adult education and literacy services.

Access to services is a critical issue, in terms of both the growing need and the varying concerns of different populations. There are only a few efforts underway in South Carolina for adults to learn citizenship literacy. There are not enough English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. There are not enough bilingual health services. One of the recognized effective citizenship literacy efforts has just been terminated due to state budget cuts.⁹ The population profile has changed dramatically in South Carolina, as well as the U.S., in the past decade. There is a growing need for citizenship literacy among new immigrant populations as well as adults who grew up in America.

Adults need more opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet changing job demands and to succeed in the workforce.

A recent national survey indicates that U.S. schools do not teach students to think about how economic structures and processes affect daily life and civic engagement. The impacts of a changing economy are not connected well enough to the consequences of the quality of life locally.¹⁰ Adult and non-formal education environments must be created to help adults, children and youth learn these things. Citizens, as wage earners, need to know what just work environments are and how to sustain or enhance them. A primary way in which adults become community volunteers is through finding out about and joining civic engagement efforts that they are introduced to through work associates.

Learning disabilities (LD) are increasingly recognized as a major factor in the low literacy of adults, but too little is known – even among practitioners – about the nature and scope of the problem, the ways it affects adult learning and how it should be addressed.

Dealing with LD in all forms of literacy instruction is still not well-defined or handled in most places. Moreover, too few adults with LD are being identified and receiving appropriate instruction and accommodations. Dealing with LD in citizenship literacy initiatives is virtually uncharted territory.

New technology is profoundly changing the way we live, work and learn.

This technology both requires and facilitates lifelong learning. Adults, as well as youth, are voting less, not attending public meetings and reducing involvement in membership organizations.¹¹ But they appear to be becoming involved in record numbers in more hands-on civic engagement efforts aimed at helping neighbors, improving neighborhoods or sections of communities.¹² These hands-on civic engagement efforts often use the media, phones, internet communications, statistical analysis, video productions, study circles with CD self-learning systems, web-based conferences, etc. Those adults with low literacy rates will have to be assisted in learning to use these devices for lessons in civic engagement. Citizenship literacy educators must learn to use these devices as well.

Public support for improving education for our nation's youth is increasing, but we lack that same support for improving adult education and literacy programs.

There is a need for a better understanding of the importance of adult education and literacy to the nation's (and South Carolina's) well-being. Public and private sectors alike must increase their recognition of the importance of lifelong learning (and thus adult education broadly defined). The expenditure for adult education in South Carolina needs to be given the same attention by state and county officials as does early childhood education. Otherwise all the dollars and attention spent on children will not be reinforced by most of the adults in a child's primary settings.

Providing high-quality, consistent literacy education services to adult learners is limited by a variety of critical programmatic factors.

Among the most pressing are: a lack of consensus on goals; serious limitations of staff time and professional development opportunities; lack of research and information on what works; mismatches between program structure and learners' needs; and the lack of active attention to adult learners as whole people. Both the content and process of citizenship literacy education is not yet commonly understood or applied. Currently no higher education institution in South Carolina has a major concentration of professional preparation available on adult literacy development.¹³

TABLE 4 | Highlights of the Independent Sector's Giving and Volunteering in the United States 1999 Survey¹⁴

Basic Facts about Volunteering in America

- | A growing percentage of volunteers is volunteering in some type of activity with members of their family
- | The larger the family household (four or more) the higher the amount of family volunteering
- | 28% of Americans who volunteer do so with family members (22% in 1991; 22% in 1993; 23% in 1995)
- | 27.5% of all Americans volunteer without family members' participation
- | 44.5% of Americans do not volunteer
- | When there are three or more persons in a household, family volunteering is the highest percentage of volunteering done
- | 51% of volunteers serve with family members in the same activity (this trend has been steadily increasing since 1991)
- | 72% of those that volunteer with family members indicate they started volunteering activities as a child
- | Men volunteer more in family volunteer situations

Where Do Families Volunteer?

- | 22% health activities
- | 30.4% human services
- | 34.8% education
- | 40.9% youth development
- | 50.2% religious activities
- | 50.4% informal helping efforts apart from organizations

Top Five Reasons Why Families Volunteer

- | 90.6% feeling of compassion for others in need
- | 80% having an interest in the activity
- | 80% using the volunteer activity as an opportunity to gain a new perspective on things
- | 72% activity is important to people the volunteer respects
- | 70% a relative or family member would benefit from the activity or was directly involved in the activity

TABLE 4 | CONTINUED

Who Asked Them to Volunteer?

- | 53% someone from a known organization, group or from a place of employment
- | 82% someone from a religious organization they attend or that a family member attends
- | 45% someone the volunteer knows (52% by friends; 38% by someone from religious congregation; 30% by family members or relative)

How Do Family Volunteers Compare to Other Types of Volunteers?

- | 53% someone from a known organization, group or from a place of employment
- | 82% someone from a religious organization they attend or that a family member attends
- | 45% someone the volunteer knows (52% by friends; 38% by someone from religious congregation; 30% by family members or relative)

How Do Family Volunteers Compare to Other Types of Volunteers?

	Family Volunteers	Non-Family Volunteers	All Volunteers
Volunteering			
Average hours volunteered	4.3 hours	2.8 hours	3.5 hours
Average household income	\$54,804	\$46,927	\$50,862
Giving			
Average household contribution	\$1,401	\$898	\$1,144
Average % of household income given	2.6%	1.9%	2.2%
Selected Demographics			
Male	48.3%	41.2%	44.6%
Female	51.7%	58.8%	55.4%
Married	71.7%	47%	59.6%
Own home	75.6%	68.3%	71.8%
Households with children under 18	52.6%	35.7%	44%
Attend religious services	88.5%	78.3%	83.5%

An Ecological View of Citizenship Literacy Development

A useful way to think about adult citizenship literacy development is from the context of human growth and development. An ecological perspective is fruitful in understanding who influences citizenship literacy values development and who the “teachers” are of citizenship literacy education. Briefly, all human growth and development, including citizenship literacy development with youth and adults, is a function of the interaction between people and the human systems in which they are involved, and of the interaction of these systems with one another.¹⁵

The most influential human interactions on growth and development are those within each adult’s network of personal settings. The most immediate teachers of citizenship literacy skills are those adults that one has contact with on a daily basis. They are family members, peers and people they associate with in informal learning environments such as religious study groups, clubs, study groups and sports. Associations occur within the more formal organizations with which they have contact on a routine basis. These associations include contact with church members, pastors, school peers and teachers, workplace associates and supervisors. It is the public discourse about the goals and values of citizenship literacy in these settings that are most influential in citizenship literacy growth and development of each individual.

Neighborhoods (i.e., neighbors and the neighborhood environment) are often found to be mediating structures that can help people cope with the larger institutions and organizations. For example, the larger institutions, such as government, may not be civic engagement-minded in style. However, if neighbors engage neighbors in conversations and actions about neighborhood and community well-being, then a person may develop higher citizenship literacy skills and, over time, feel a greater sense of efficacy in being able to affect civic change.

An Ecological View of Citizenship Literacy Development CONTINUED

People representing the larger institutions that affect our daily life are important but often impact differently than those in an adult's primary settings. Sometimes people in primary settings can buffer the impact of what is done to or with them in secondary settings. A person might not have direct or daily contact with representatives from these institutions but what they do affects quality of life. So therefore the "teaching" of citizenship is more indirect. People's citizenship literacy messages are often either reinforced by trusted people in their primary settings, or rebuffed or refuted by them. Each individual must decide what to do to reconcile differences in the messages received from these two settings (primary and secondary). Often he or she will trust the messages, actions and value systems of the people found in his or her primary settings. Teachers in these secondary settings include people from the media, business and economic development, legal and political institutional representatives such as lawyers, politicians and public servants. It also includes people from social groups we belong to and that often are organized by gender, ethnicity, race, religion or language differences. There are numerous and vastly different religious messages that communicate what it means to live in a just society, to act morally and ethically, to treat people with respect and dignity, and to engage in building healthy communities.

There are also heroes, symbols and narratives in national and local communities that teach citizenship literacy. For example, a flag has once again become a symbol of freedom, democracy and justice (and to others hate, retaliation, injustice, slavery). The same symbols often have powerfully different meanings to different groups. Symbols are powerful visual reminders of community values.

Through the give-and-take of interaction with the human settings near and distant to them, an adult's perceptions about how much they can really make a difference in civic change is either enhanced or inhibited.

Thinking of the development of citizenship literacy skills within the primary and secondary settings of an adult's life will help leaders develop meaningful citizenship literacy learning contexts.

Communities committed to improving citizenship literacy rates can arrive at the solutions necessary to meet these challenges through a system of adult literacy that effectively involves and prepares adult learners for their roles as parents, workers, health consumers and citizens. One strategy communities can employ is to design and operate citizenship literacy initiatives. Other reports in this series discuss how to begin family, health, and workplace literacy initiatives.

What Are Citizenship Literacy Initiatives?

The concept behind citizenship literacy initiatives is that strengthening adult literacy and civic engagement competencies provides a pathway to improve adults' functioning in their role as citizens and to ensure that democracy flourishes. However, as a recent national survey suggests, we lack consensus on the aims and context for citizenship literacy education.¹⁶

This section will therefore highlight some of the common features found in such efforts. It refers to many different organizations. All organizations referenced in this section are described in the Resource section of this report along with their web address so that interested readers can easily access resources, models, curricula, publications, networks, visuals, surveys, measurement tools and more.

The famous *Nation at Risk* report of the 1980s did much to focus attention on enhancing our educational system, including our attention to citizenship literacy education. It highlighted our lack of attention to building necessary citizenship literacy skills in children and youth. In the 1990s Presidents Bush and Clinton required development of high-quality national standards for core curriculum that should be taught in schools throughout the U.S.¹⁷ One of the areas for which standards were developed is civic education. The EFF report clarified these standards as related to adult citizenship literacy education.

The decade of the '90s closed with a direct focus on enhancing civic education requirements in schools. The National Commission of Civic Renewal's 1998 report sets the stage for what will be done during the first decade of the 21st century.¹⁸ A report by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements, expected out in late 2002, will describe where we are in the U.S. on civic education. It is expected to affect what schools are asked to do to increase citizenship literacy education. But, as pointed out earlier in this report, for the next three decades the burden of educating all Americans, young and old, rests on what we do in the adult education arena. The bonds of community life have, to a large degree, been unraveled – in particular during the past 30 years. The fabric of community life must be re-woven through concerted adult citizenship literacy education nationwide.

A few initiatives found in the schools that are aimed primarily at youth but also involve parents and community members are reviewed. Sometimes the best way to engage adults in citizenship literacy education is by getting their children involved.

Preparing Tomorrow's Adults with Increased Citizenship Literacy Skills

As mentioned previously, most of the resources are applied to better equipping children and youth with citizenship literacy competencies. The lion's share of the resources available is being applied to equipping schools (as one of many possible and important primary-setting learning environments). Therefore, many of the resources available can be found through organizations that primarily focus on school curriculum development and teacher training. These resources will need to be revised for use with adults but are good resources on which to draw. One of the major centers that has developed model programs is the Center on Civic Education.¹⁹

Using the resources developed by the Center on Civic Education, some schools have familiarized youth with political processes and how to influence legislation so that voice and perspective are gained. Mock Trials, Kids Voting, Lobby Day, Close Up and other such programs focus on introducing youth to the legislative and judicial processes. Reportedly as of 1999, more than 26 million students at all levels nationwide have gone through the Center on Civic Education's "We the People...the Citizen and the Constitution" program. This program engages students in, among other things, mock legislative hearings on constitutional issues. Project Citizen, another center program, teaches middle school students how to identify, articulate and solve community problems.

The center's resources and programs will be particularly valuable to community leaders who aim to involve immigrant populations and very low literate adults in citizenship learning experiences. They also have application to other primary settings such as church study groups, club conversations, and fraternity and sorority meetings.

Service-learning initiatives are now widely spread throughout the state and nation.²⁰ These involve youth with adults in community projects of different sorts. Only some of them truly focus on trying to enhance literacy skills while also engaging in using citizenship literacy skills. But popular projects include: reading to younger children; being a tutor; assisting seniors with health care decision making; starting homework centers (particularly in low-resourced areas); and assisting low literate adults in being able to vote and participate in neighborhood improvement meetings.

Only one source for school-oriented resources is given in this report. If the reader uses the center's web site they will find their way to most of what is available to this audience. They will also discover many other exemplary initiatives to draw from.

Involving Youth in Citizenship Literacy Learning as a Way to Get to Adults

Internationally, community developers have found that many times the way to activate adults in citizenship literacy efforts is to start with involving children and youth in such efforts. These tend not to be done through school sponsorship but through nonprofits and public agency-sponsored initiatives. The World Health Organization, many of the international aid agencies and most international nonprofit relief organizations have engaged youth and children in exercises known in urban and regional planning circles as “community build outs.”²¹ In such exercises children and youth are asked to literally construct their neighborhoods or communities. Once constructed, young people discuss various topics that might include what they feel about places that they consider safe, what they like and do not like about their community, and how they would change their community, if they could. The goals and values of community participation, justice, and valuing human life and well-being are often discussed naturally during these conversations. Citizenship literacy discussion is put within the context of everyday life and what really matters to people to survive and thrive. Rather than just talking about a vision for improvement, they literally change physically the construction of the community to show people what things would look like when improved. They talk about how people would interact differently. This model is then used as a vehicle for public conversation in which children and youth share with adults (i.e., community leaders, parents and interested adults) what they have done.

Very often these conversations inspire adults to understand their community through the eyes of their children. It motivates them to make necessary improvements. It often motivates adult groups to go through similar exercises. Citizenship beliefs are expressed by children, youth and adults throughout the process.

Other types of community visioning exercises have been done with children and youth in a variety of community settings. Many of these have been reviewed in a recent publication available through the American Planning Association Press.²² Many are available on the web. Arts commissions throughout the U.S. have become major facilitators of community visioning exercises. The South Carolina Arts Commission is well-recognized for their excellent facilitation.²³

Citizenship Literacy Development Using Healthy Communities' Principles, Processes and Resources

It is possible to combine health literacy and citizenship literacy development in communities. The best initiative to learn from that combines these two aspects of literacy is the Healthy Communities movement. This is a worldwide movement. Its purpose is to create conditions in cities and towns (rural and urban) that support health and improve equity in access to healthy environments. The ultimate aim is to empower people to improve their individual and collective health, and to empower communities to alter the physical and social conditions that directly affect their health. In order to do this, citizenship literacy skills must be taught and used.

This worldwide effort is unique. Through training, networking and discourse among healthy communities, community groups, individuals, families and their resources are mobilized in new ways to promote the health of the entire population.

In the United States, the Healthy Communities movement began under the leadership of the National Civic League.²⁴ In 1988, it was elected by U.S. Public Health Services to develop and implement the U.S. Healthy Communities Initiative. The National Civic League advocates a new civic agenda to create communities that work for everyone. It strengthens citizen democracy by strengthening democratic institutions. Founded in 1894, the organization also promotes collaborative problem solving and consensus-based decision making in local community building. It accomplishes this mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research and an awards program. It is the central source to go to get connected with the resources. Their newly formed Alliance for National Renewal should be consulted. The Alliance's publications include handbooks on starting a healthy community project in your community.

The Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities grew out of the work of the National Civic League.²⁵ It is a partnership of more than 100 organizations working together to focus attention and resources to improve the health and quality of life in communities. Many of its resources are aimed at increasing citizenship literacy understandings and skills. It is a major source of success stories to inspire local efforts as well as very practical community guides for leaders. Model programs will not be reviewed in this report because they are so readily available online through the Coalition's and National Civic League's sites.

Citizenship Literacy Development Using Healthy Communities' Principles, Processes and Resources CONTINUED

All 50 states have Healthy Communities initiatives going on. They are based in a variety of organizational environments (public and private). They have a variety of emphases and orientations, based on local conditions and contexts. But even with this variety there are some common processes used by them all that help create and sustain healthy community initiatives and promote citizenship literacy development.

The common processes involved in increasing citizenship literacy while engaging in healthy community efforts are reviewed in the “How Do We Start” section of this report.

Several South Carolina communities have done exemplary healthy community projects. Perhaps among those most referenced are Seneca's Healthy Youth, Healthy Communities initiative, Hampton County's Healthy Communities forums and subsequent projects, Beaufort's Healthy Communities Partners work in Sheldon, Aiken's Healthy Communities efforts, and Anderson's Healthy Communities Partners Neighborhood Chats and Healthwise projects. Aiken and Anderson won All-American City awards. Their story can be found on the National Civic League's web site.

From 1994–2001, the home base for the SC Healthy Communities initiative was the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). With recent budget cutbacks, this program has been terminated. The South Carolina leadership in DHEC and its former partnership circles are re-grouping. Most leaders familiar with its work believe that somehow it needs to be kept going. Many point to the Healthy Communities initiative as contributing to the success of the First Steps program because the healthy communities initiative helped build the community capacity to do what First Steps requires. During the 1990s, South Carolina's Healthy Communities initiative was considered by national leaders to be one of the best in the nation.

Over the years, many communities have been through DHEC's Healthy Communities training programs. It was the primary vehicle in South Carolina for teaching citizenship literacy skills to adults. DHEC leadership did such things as increase community involvement in addressing local health problems and provide consultation and technical assistance related to Healthy Communities concepts, principles and strategies. It fostered the development of community partnerships. It maintained and circulated resource materials. It produced a quarterly newsletter. It sponsored Healthy Communities training/mentoring programs. It sponsored an Investing in Healthy Communities initiative that provided small grants for community groups to get going on Healthy Community efforts.

If you are starting such an initiative there are still many active South Carolina Healthy Communities groups to call on. A listing of South Carolina Healthy Communities groups can be found on the Clemson University, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership web site.²⁶

Asset-based Approaches to Community Development that Promote Citizenship Literacy Development

While not all asset-based community building efforts intentionally focus on the development of citizenship literacy education, some do. Two major movements top the list when people talk about asset-based community development efforts: the work of the Search Institute and the Asset-Based Center for Community Development (ABCD).

The Search Institute's research and development work on essential asset building blocks that promote individual, family and community well-being is very thorough and credible. At the heart of its work is the development of a framework of 40 developmental assets, which are positive experiences, relationships, opportunities and personal qualities that all people throughout their life span need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible.²⁷ Citizenship literacy skills are thus embedded in a larger human and community growth and development framework. It is compatible with the ecological developmental framework explained.

The Search Institute has created a very useful survey process that helps communities assess how they rate on having the 40 essential assets available. They have many useful resources to consult. Nationally, examples are available of community groups that have used a combination of the Search Institute's, the Study Circle Resource Center's (reviewed below) and the National Civic League's Healthy Communities' orientations. (See the Alliance for National Renewal, The National Civic League, and the Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities web sites for descriptions.)

Asset-based Approaches to Community Development that Promote Citizenship Literacy Development CONTINUED

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The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Center has promoted a complementary conceptual and practical framework (to the Search Institute's) which is now used by thousands of community groups across the U.S. Perhaps they are best known for their "asset mapping" techniques. Associations that neighbors affiliate with are inventoried. The strengths and talents of neighbors are inventoried. Video training materials and useful citizen guides are available. These techniques are used in a variety of different ways during civic engagement processes. Citizenship literacy development is combined with other community building processes aimed at better using local resources and strengths to meet needs. Members of ABCD John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann have made several presentations to various community groups in South Carolina during the 1990s (e.g. Healthy Communities training groups, First Steps Conferences, Neighborhood Association Summit). Greenwood is currently one of 13 national sites (Neighborhood Circles) involved in using ABCD orientations and processes with neighborhood associations.²⁸ Neighborhood associations are one primary setting that could be an effective citizenship literacy education context.

To summarize, not all ABCD or Search Institute initiatives are citizenship literacy initiatives but the ideas, tools and processes promoted by these two groups can be used in a citizenship literacy initiative. If the facilitators are overtly focusing on the development of literacy skills in general and citizenship literacy skills in particular, they then become powerful resources to consult.

Another major thing to learn from both these initiatives is that citizenship literacy does not have to dwell on problems, issues or concerns of people. Citizenship literacy can be done within a strengths-and-assets framework, and stress enhancing the goodness that already exists. Issues are not ignored but just are not used as the organizing center for civic engagement.

Citizenship Literacy Development through Enriching Community Conversations about Matters Affecting Everyday Life

From international development experience we understand that an individual's ability to think, talk and act are positively affected if adults are given opportunities to talk with one another. Guided discussions that help adults talk about their present situation and how it might improve are necessary to improve citizenship literacy thinking and change behaviors that might not be working for them in healthy ways. Adults need opportunities to talk about their neighborhood and community. Individual and social cognition and behavior are affected when they are given such opportunities. With time, citizens improve the way they talk about situations and improve their ability to address these situations in ever-increasingly complex ways. A variety of different public forum processes have developed to promote citizenship literacy. Behind the use of these forums is an understanding of the human growth and development principles outlined in this paragraph.

Citizenship Literacy Development through Enriching Community Conversations about Matters Affecting Everyday Life CONTINUED

The Kettering Foundation created the National Issues Forum to promote citizenship literacy development. The National Issues Forum (NIF) has now become an entity independent from Kettering.²⁹ Through the NIF, critical issues affecting many communities in America have been identified, issue guides written, public policy institutes held to equip local facilitators to hold issue forums and forums held. The issue reports used as a basis for forum discussion are found on the NIF web site.

The Kettering Foundation has furthered its work through its People and Public Choice program. They also have developed useful study guides, workbooks and training programs.³⁰ They are advancing the notion of deliberative democracy and seeking practical answers to the question of “What increases the chances that the choices people make about public issues are wise choices?”

One of the strengths of both the Kettering Foundation and NIF’s work is that it helps citizens understand that any given issue has multiple perspectives. It helps citizens develop skills in how to hear, understand and deal with the diverse perspectives that do exist and how to find common ground on which to unite. Facilitation of such conversations is not easy. Facilitators of Issues Forums must go through extensive training.

In South Carolina, the National Issues Forums are currently managed through Clemson University’s Cooperative Extension (CES) program.³¹ The Center for Neighborhood Development and CES plan to hold Issue Forums on adult literacy in selected counties in 2002.³²

Another major resource and model is the community group study circle system developed by the Study Circles Resource Center. The word “study” implies schooling to many and because schooling is negative to many literacy level 1 and 2 adults; some community groups use different words to describe their initiative (e.g., Anderson chose “Neighborhood Chats”). The idea is to structure conversations about civic life as it affects their everyday life. The community action processes are much the same as described elsewhere in this report. (For example, see the section describing the Healthy Communities’ processes that community groups typically follow.) The Study Circles Resource Center has many resources that will help facilitators structure the process. They also have many stories of community groups to use to design your efforts and to help you describe to others what promoting study circles in your neighborhood, church and/or community is all about.

A word of caution is in order. Many adult literacy issues are overlooked when engaging in Issue Forums, Study Circles or issue conversations in general. Using such techniques only become citizenship literacy education efforts when there is carefully designed and facilitated education for facilitators and community participants so that they can go through such discussions using increased literacy skills as described in TABLES 2 and 3.

Citizenship Literacy Development with Special Populations

Probably the most understood need for adult citizenship literacy education is with immigrants. Citizenship literacy is often combined with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. ESOL classes are often taught through adult education offerings through the department of education or through neighborhood-based centers or religious organizations. The resources available through the Center for Civic Education, Teachers of English as a Second Language Association and World Education are places to start for model efforts and curricula.

Citizenship literacy development with groups working on affordable housing or tenant association development is also quite popular. A primary resource for this type of citizenship literacy effort is ACORN (The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now). It is the oldest and most well-known resource. Consulting their web site will provide the gateway to model program descriptions and resources. The Building Better Communities Network is also another resource to consult for those starting this type of citizenship literacy initiative.

Citizenship literacy for individuals who want to start their own businesses is also being done around the world. Two groups that are the focus of such efforts are women and teens. Known as “Women in Development” projects internationally, the same principles learned in other nations have been brought back home and applied in the United States.³³ In order for low-resourced individuals to start businesses, there must be mechanisms in the economy that provide start-up money and technical assistance to low-resourced individuals. Regular banks do not usually want the risk. Community banks, evolving loan funds and Individual Development Accounts are mechanisms that some communities develop to support citizenship literacy and business skill development needs.

One of the most well-known community banks that truly pays attention to both the literacy and business skill development needs of people is the South Shore Bank. The South Shore Bank is based on the famous Grameen Bank located in Bangladesh. South Shore Bank is the oldest and largest of its kind in the U.S. Many states have patterned their community banks after these two models.

Citizenship literacy development is combined with business skill development. Microenterprise development is predicated on the assumption that adults will need improved literacy skills in order to begin successful businesses. The National Foundation of Teaching Entrepreneurship is also a primary resource to consult for help on doing citizenship literacy and microbusiness development with youth. All these organizations provide practical help to individuals, nonprofits (including faith-based groups) and businesses interested in contributing to workforce development in their area. They have citizenship literacy education components built in to their overall training schemes and their community development initiatives.

Citizenship Literacy Development Promoted while Examining Neighborhood and Community Quality of Life

It is a well-known fact that businesses come into communities that have a high quality of life. Community leaders across the country have developed report cards on key indicators of well-being. But each community's report card will take on a different nature given the directions of conversations by the community's leaders. They are often produced as a result of citizens learning to analyze what their community is like and how it needs to change. The report is the result of extensive community discussions and problem-solving sessions. It involves learning to gather information and make sense of it. In order to produce such a report, all four general literacy skill areas are enhanced (i.e., decision-making skills, communication, interpersonal and lifelong learning skills).

These reports become a social memory aid to galvanize action and a common set of civil society beliefs and values. Some of the quality-of-life reports that particularly focus on civic engagement, literacy and measuring the pulse of a community's citizenship literacy are reviewed under the resource section of this report.

Developing quality-of-life reports requires citizenship literacy education if citizens are to be engaged in the process of their development, in reflecting on what the information means and what they are going to do about it. When consultants are used to develop the report, little citizenship literacy education happens and fewer community forums are used in preparing the reports. Therefore there is less opportunity for citizens to find and express a personal voice, and to form common understandings and civic values.

How Do We Start?

A Design for Citizenship Literacy Initiatives

Citizenship literacy encompasses a unique educational approach that is experientially based and integrates community engagement components. Literacy skills in general are combined with citizenship literacy skills, values and beliefs in teaching and practice. Table 5 describes these citizenship literacy program components.

These components provide the framework for citizenship literacy for programs to function effectively. When the components are well-integrated they provide the experiences adults need to be effective citizens and community members. Within this framework, a great deal of diversity is found from one program to another as has been illustrated elsewhere in this report. Citizenship literacy programs vary from one community to another as each program works to meet the needs and use the assets of the participants and the community.

TABLE 5 | Five Components of Citizenship Literacy Programs

1 | Experiential Citizenship Literacy Adult Education

Adults learn literacy skills as they carry out community improvement efforts. (See TABLES 2 and 3.) They learn to develop literacy skills by reflecting on their present situation and thinking in ever-improved ways about a better future. The education is not schooling-oriented in approach but, rather, experiential. People learn about how to do something, then do it, then reflect on how well they did it and then do it again. The learning has immediate results. Either life is improved or it isn't. Just as much time is spent on preparation of the literacy educational component as on the community improvement process itself.

2 | Goals and values of democracy, social justice, human dignity, the importance and significance of civic engagement are articulated

People are helped to articulate current values and beliefs. There is careful definition of these terms as defined by well-respected great teachers, heroes, leaders and scholars. There is reflection on and discussion of what the concept means in everyday life. There is assistance in learning to shape goals, articulate values, and accommodate value and belief differences.

3 | A community development or community building process occurs

There is a well-articulated approach to civic engagement (some of these have been reviewed elsewhere in this report.) This approach involves citizens in doing community improvement on their own rather than professionals doing it on their behalf. There is intentional effort to empower low literate adults to think and act in improved ways for the betterment of their neighborhoods and community (and thus society) through citizenship literacy education.

TABLE 5 | CONTINUED

4 | Outcomes and impacts of efforts are evaluated

There is a well-designed process of reflection. Action without reflection does not produce literacy learning.

5 | Gains in Citizenship Literacy skills are evaluated

Not only are the results of efforts examined (i.e., the community improvement made) but also what citizenship literacy competencies have increased. Citizenship literacy knowledge, skills and behaviors are examined before, during and after interventions occur.

The nature and scale of citizenship literacy efforts are as varied as communities. But the components reviewed in Table 5 tend to be consistent.

Citizenship literacy efforts can be sponsored by faith-based groups and focus on practicing citizenship literacy development while engaged in community social action or outreach efforts. They can be the basis of work for neighborhood associations throughout the year. A Healthy Communities group can sponsor them. They can be done by Success by Six groups or First Steps councils. They can be done by nonprofits in partnership with community residents in the area served. They can be conducted by adult educators through the public school system or by literacy councils and associations. They can be led by interfaith councils.

Successful efforts tend to involve adult learners in the design of citizenship literacy learning processes that make sense to them and meet their needs. Instruction is modified appropriately to respond to the variety of cultures involved. Successful efforts adapt practice and program design to the special needs of participants. Effective citizenship literacy programs make use of community services and other resources in implementing each of the five components, serving as a catalyst in adapting these services to better meet the needs of the community and its families.

In order to plan for the components of a typical citizenship literacy program as defined in TABLE 5, usually a planning committee is formed. What a planning committee typically does is reviewed below.

The Work of the Overall Planning Committee

Initiating a citizenship literacy program is extremely challenging. Usually such efforts start with a core group of committed community partners willing to develop all aspects of a citizenship literacy initiative. Two of the major components for which a plan of action must be developed are citizenship literacy education and community building. As many community leaders as possible and practical (given the scope of the effort envisioned) are involved to discuss the initiative and gauge interest and commitment. Potential participants, community leaders and directors of relevant organizations are brought to the table. This initial group begins and others are brought in as plans evolve. The more inclusive the planning group is, the more community support is enjoyed. Generally speaking, the earlier the individuals are involved, the more commitment they feel to such initiatives.

Typically those involved in the beginning stages are literacy council directors, selected nonprofit staff who have various literacy efforts going on, Healthy Communities representatives, interfaith council representatives, adult educators, university faculty, community leaders skilled at community dialog and development efforts, and neighborhood association leaders.

Use this report and the resources listed as a basis to begin conversations and planning. The resources listed will inevitably lead to others. **TABLE 6** provides an overview of the planning phases.³⁴ Follow the guidance on effective community development practice presented in the next section of this report. Refer to the adult roles, skills and performance standards described in *Equipped For the Future* and found at the EFF web site – <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/>.

Once the planning group is formed, tasks are usually assigned to various members of the group, depending on expertise and interest. Others are identified that can effectively plan certain phases of the work proposed. This group is often referred to as a steering committee for the initiative. This group oversees and often approves the work of those willing to assume responsibility for various tasks.

Good information is critical to good planning. One of the responsibilities of individuals on the steering committee is to be informed about the why, what and how of citizenship literacy development and to inform others. Each person brings their own strengths in different aspects of citizenship literacy development.

Citizenship literacy is a complex educational endeavor. The initial planning group must be very specific and realistic in setting goals. It is better to start small in goal setting. Brainstorming possibilities and listing all the goals that various leaders might want to set for the initiative are typical group process techniques commonly used to stimulate creativity.

TABLE 6 | Planning Steps for Starting Citizenship Literacy Programs

- 1 | Bring together a diverse, collaborative planning group.
- 2 | Provide comprehensive information on effective citizenship literacy programs to the planning group.
- 3 | Identify the community citizenship literacy needs you will be addressing.
- 4 | Identify the citizenship literacy assets your community has to assist you in meeting these needs.
- 5 | Establish a common vision for your efforts and identify realistic initiative goals. (This is different from a vision for the community that is done with the community participants.)
- 6 | Set realistic outcomes and measurements.
- 7 | Identify the partners you will need to accomplish your goals and achieve your outcomes.
- 8 | Develop an initiative design that uses community resources.
- 9 | Identify a site or sites for your program.
- 10 | Establish a staffing plan (volunteer and/or paid) that is sufficient to address your goals.
- 11 | Identify ways to address support services required by participants.
- 12 | Identify the equipment and materials you will need.
- 13 | Develop a realistic funding plan that allows you sufficient funds to accomplish your goals and achieve your outcomes.
- 14 | Develop an evaluation plan that measures progress for participants and the program.
- 15 | Develop a recruitment and retention plan for staff and participants.
- 16 | Identify the citizenship literacy educational materials and community building process guides most useful to your goals.
- 17 | Establish participant recognition strategies.
- 18 | Prepare a staff development plan.

The Work of the Overall Planning Committee CONTINUED

The scale of citizenship literacy effort matters. The more citizens involved, the more planning is required to effectively facilitate the “learning about” and “taking action” phases of citizenship literacy development. As mentioned previously, at the heart of citizenship literacy development is community development. As one is learning citizenship literacy skills, adults engage in conversations about what it means to be a citizen and an active community member. This usually is done in the context of discussions about everyday life and how well-equipped their community is to meet their needs, keep them safe, healthy, employed, entertained and happy. It usually involves conversations about how to become empowered to change the things and actions of others that negatively impact affect their lives. It involves discussions of social justice, equitable access to resources, opportunities, places and spaces. It involves coming to grips with the differences that exist among people. It involves learning to deal with conflict and differences of opinion. A few pointers are given below in ways to mobilize citizens.

Because so much information is available about community-building processes, this booklet provides only a brief description of what has been done by citizenship literacy educators to sustain civic engagement. Community leaders interested in knowing more should review the works listed in the endnotes accompanying this publication.

Typical Community Development Perspectives and Processes Employed

In many communities a growing sense of collective accountability and responsibility is present. Civic culture is changing in many places. The most dynamic examples demonstrate that when residents focus their conversation on what they can do collectively for their children as well as themselves, people get involved and things happen. When neighbors talk about improving their neighborhoods, things happen. From the hundreds of communities in America that have participated in citizenship literacy initiatives, common community-building orientations are found. These are briefly reviewed.

Typical Community Development Perspectives and Processes Employed CONTINUED

Use ecological definitions of citizenship literacy, civic engagement, community, human growth and development. Discuss what factors contribute to overall quality of life and normal growth and development of children, youth and adults.³⁵

Create a shared vision from the community's values. Visions that reflect the core values of its residents are both powerful and inspiring, and compel people to action.³⁶

Address quality of life for everyone. Even if small groups of citizens are involved, strive to make the causal connections between improvement of their lives and how their actions will affect others.³⁷

Build diverse citizen participation and community ownership in the process. When visions and plans are developed and understood by community members, they are more apt to be sustained financially. More people will be available to make things happen and community members feel empowered to influence both what is done and how it is done. For example, involve whoever is the target of improvement in developing the nature of the improvement.

Focus on systems change. Changing a system requires thinking and acting systemically. Examine the nature and amount of organized human activity happening on a formal and informal level. Look at what information is shared and how. Examine the public and private services and how they operate. Look at how business is conducted and who is denied access to necessary goods and services. Current community connections among people and organizations should be examined and enhanced. New connections that support people and environments are created. Existing resources are made to flow to the people who need them. Resources are leveraged. Information flows are enhanced and created. Talk about the connections people have and need in order to improve their everyday life.

Build capacity using local assets and resources. Look at what the community has going for it relative to the improvements citizens begin to envision and the conditions necessary for improvement to occur. Build endeavors by enhancing what already exists.³⁸

Benchmark and measure progress and outcomes. Develop performance measures and community indicators for the improvements sought and inform residents on the results. Be accountable by engaging in evaluation and the continual reporting of results. Timely, accurate information is very important to sustain action, leverage resources and recognize when to head in another direction.³⁹

These principles of practice are promoted by the Healthy Communities movement and by the family support movement. Each guideline can be turned into questions that participants in the citizenship literacy development process can ask themselves. Are we asset-oriented? Are we accountable? Are we directed toward outcomes and results? Are we visionary? Are we action-oriented? Are we practicing diversity in thought regarding who we include, and do we allow for various types of improvements along the way? Are we thinking and acting systemically? Are we thinking ecologically in terms of citizenship literacy development? Are we promoting participation, democracy, social justice and respecting people's dignity?

Learn to Continuously Lead, Learn and Communicate

When striving to promote civic engagement while building citizenship literacy skills, successful leaders are found to engage in three key leadership activities.⁴⁰ They must happen repeatedly and continuously. These three functions are: 1) *leadership is sustained throughout the effort*; 2) *a lifelong learning orientation is built*; and 3) *effective, ongoing communication processes are necessary*.

Successful community building involves developing effective partnerships in setting directions for the community. It is critical to gather a diverse and critical mass of people to create long-term change. Healthy Community groups and First Steps initiatives in South Carolina are good examples of effective partnership building. When effective community leaders lead, they are committed to building relationships of trust and caring, and aligning shared resources with community values. They share a commitment to targeted goals. Some groups do well as leaders at the beginning but, as time goes by, their leadership becomes less active and less intentional. Effective initiatives are ones where *leadership is sustained and continuous*. Effective groups rotate leadership as time goes by so that leadership can be sustained, particularly if it is a voluntary effort. Partnerships help keep the leadership functions covered. When one is tired, another can lead.

Secondly, community leaders and members learn how to learn together. Leaders are intentional in citizenship literacy education while engaging citizens in community action. Citizenship literacy “teachers” will become “students” along the way because, irrespective of literacy levels, some participants will have knowledge about the improvement sought more than others. Community members learn to reflect continuously on their actions to ensure the community improvement happens effectively. Measurement and evaluation is a part of individual and group actions. They are tools for learning. Becoming a learning community entails a commitment to mutual accountability so that everyone benefits. Learning together becomes the springboard to lasting change and renewal. Learning together enhances citizenship literacy and general literacy skills.

The third sustained leadership action necessary is communicating meaningfully and routinely with community residents. The continual practice of meaningful community dialogue means developing authentic conversations that frame and ground issues, discover assets, promote critical thinking, allow and incorporate diversity of thought – giving expression of what being a community that cares about people really means. Visions and action plans are only meaningful to those involved in creating them, because it is through conversation that social understanding is created. Those left out of the initial development must be brought in through conversation until the groups’ meaning becomes their meaning. Visions and actions must be promoted continuously to secure sustained community improvements. Community cohesion cannot happen without community conversation. It involves communicating often, boldly and with compassion.

Typical Adult Education and Communication Principles Employed

Successful citizenship literacy programs provide for five components: experiential adult education; articulation of citizenship literacy; implementation of community building processes planned by participants; reflection on outcomes of the process; and citizenship learning outcomes. These have been reviewed in previous sections with the exception of the adult education principles employed. Citizenship literacy educators guide their education and communication practices using what we know are effective ways in which adults learn. These principles of practice are reviewed in TABLE 7.

TABLE 7 | **Adult Education Principles Guiding Citizenship Literacy Education and Communication Practices**

- 1 | Effective educators link new citizenship literacy learning to an adult's prior civic engagement experiences.
- 2 | They help adults meet specific citizenship literacy learning goals related to their own needs while engaged in role tasks related to being a community member or citizen.
- 3 | They help adults meet specific citizenship literacy learning goals related to their role as educator of other community members' citizenship literacy needs.
- 4 | Their citizenship literacy instruction is experientially based.
- 5 | They are able to assess various learning styles of adults and communicate new citizenship literacy information and skills to them in ways they understand.
- 6 | Their citizenship literacy learning experiences are contextual.
- 7 | They communicate effectively with adults who have differing ways in which they think about and take action on community improvement or citizen involvement situations.
- 8 | They are able to work in a variety of community improvement settings with a variety of different types of community leaders.
- 9 | They effectively involve adults in planning their own citizenship literacy learning.
- 10 | They market their citizenship literacy learning offerings in effective ways.
- 11 | They understand that retention of adults in citizenship literacy programs is a problem and act accordingly.
- 12 | They reward adults who have successfully completed community improvement efforts and accomplished correctly, on the short term, citizenship literacy tasks.

Applying these principles is hard work. It takes thinking and acting outside the traditional instructional box. By creating positive experiences of shared learning, one has to think as a community builder who builds community. Recruitment and retention rates often directly relate to how successful one is in applying these principles of education and communication. Reaching learning outcomes such as those mentioned previously are conditioned on using these principles effectively.

10 Areas to Pay Attention to in Sustaining Effective Citizenship Literacy Initiatives

Previously we reviewed the work of the planning committee at the beginning of an initiative. What follows is a review of the ongoing work required of both the planning committee and the leaders tasked with managing the entire initiative. The more attention given to these areas of program development, the more sustained citizenship literacy will become.

- 1 | **planning:** Planning a citizenship literacy initiative usually starts with a few leaders representing a variety of community sectors such as business, education, human services, transportation and health. Someone has to lead. While leadership may change once the effort is started, establishing a leadership team and clearly assigning roles and responsibilities are important steps. Develop a plan for what you want to do, how and why. Identify the community building processes and outcomes sought. Identify the citizenship literacy development process and outcomes related to each phase of the community building process. Clearly articulate outcomes desired. The community building processes chosen need to logically achieve outcomes sought.
- 2 | **recruitment:** It is an active and ongoing process. It incorporates a range of activities from one-on-one conversations with neighbors to public awareness campaigns.
- 3 | **support services:** Leaders work with community members to identify and overcome physical and emotional barriers to access and participation. Examples of physical barriers include transportation and childcare. Examples of emotional barriers include fear of expressing oneself in public, low self-esteem, fear of retaliation by community authorities, and becoming anxious because you do not know how to make the improvements you want to make.
- 4 | **staffing:** Those leading the effort must be knowledgeable and have skills in community engagement and citizenship literacy development. Personal characteristics are considered as important as professional credentials. Desired characteristics include: works collaboratively, is flexible and can respond appropriately to differences in cultures and groups, clearly demonstrates respect for participants and program partners. At least some of the leaders have to be able to appreciate and deal effectively with complexity to avoid narrowing discussion too soon and limiting options for action. Some leaders must be able to think and act from multiple perspectives and know how to help others do the same. This sometimes is referred to as being cross-culturally competent or being able to deal with diversity.
- 5 | **collaboration:** Citizenship literacy efforts necessitate collaborations. Participants may need to learn what collaborative group processes are and be led effectively through their formation. The expertise of community members becomes an integral part of program resources. Leaders collaborate with surrounding agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and meet the comprehensive needs of participants and communities. They serve as catalysts in adapting community services to better meet the needs of citizens and community members.
- 6 | **retention:** Particularly with civic engagement, retention can be a problem if community members do not feel that they have a voice or know how to do what has been proposed. Developing small learning/support groups helps people learn from each other and teach each other. Intentionally pausing to see where participants are in their level of comfort in citizenship literacy development is important. When adults understand how their learned skills apply to their daily lives, they tend to stay involved. They also tend to stay involved when they are aware of concrete examples of progress and regularly experience success. When participants are recognized and have opportunities to celebrate their achievements, they then stay involved. Combining family and health literacy with citizenship literacy efforts attracts more adults and also keeps longer participation.

10 Areas to Pay Attention to in Sustaining Effective Citizenship Literacy Initiatives

CONTINUED

- 7 | **training:** Leaders and participants will need training as they go forward with their plans. Leaders may need their citizenship literacy skills increased first and then proceed to train community members. It is useful to have experienced coaches available. It is also effective to invite trusted community members to participate who demonstrate good citizenship literacy skills. Citizenship literacy skills have to be seen as something that participants can obtain. Asking community participants what they want to learn is as important as providing what is needed, based on standards of citizenship literacy education (as defined in the EFF guidelines).
- 8 | **community building processes combined with citizenship literacy development:** There are several sources to use to guide the process of citizenship literacy education. The basic processes were reviewed in a prior section of this report. The processes chosen must be meaningful and useful in the daily lives of adults. Leaders must understand them. Educational and civic engagement processes are best when collaboratively designed, theoretically sound and clearly modified for individual, cultural and program differences and objectives. Materials need to be developmentally and age appropriate. Instructional approaches for adults should respond to the variety of cultures present. EFF standards developed through the National Institute for Literacy are used as a basis for citizenship literacy education.
- 9 | **funding:** When citizenship literacy initiatives are planned as an ongoing part of a community's adult literacy initiative rather than a time-limited project, then funding must be found to sustain efforts. Even some short-term efforts will need to be funded. For longer-term efforts, a diversified funding base is needed. Most secure some public dollars (through such programs as community development block grant funds), some private dollars (through donations from private businesses or private foundations), and contracts and grants (from public and private sources). In some instances, fees for services provided is an option. Contributions from faith-based organizations and in-kind cost-sharing arrangements are also done. The leadership team must develop a realistic funding plan that provides stability, opportunities for growth and enhancements, and multiple funding sources. Create a doable funding strategy by involving community members familiar with financing community programs
- 10 | **evaluation:** An evaluation plan provides regular assessments that inform participants, leaders, the community and funders. Evaluations of civic engagement efforts and citizenship literacy learning outcomes are done. Participants, leaders and community members use evaluation results to regularly celebrate successes and to improve future results.⁴¹

Words of Advice from the Field on What to Avoid

Not every citizenship literacy program is able to demonstrate success. Researchers studying citizenship literacy programs have identified particular areas of practice that tend to sidetrack initiatives. They are much the same as those found in health and family literacy initiatives.

When planning and operating citizenship literacy programs:

- | Collaborate with other citizenship literacy projects and personnel within the community. Invest time in collaborative relationships, communicate frequently, seek resources and expertise from community partners, and seek mentors among established programs.
- | Be realistic about program goals. Decide the number of community members that can realistically be served. Realize that delays and unanticipated problems are inevitable and that program start up takes a great deal of time and energy; do not get discouraged.⁴²

Avoid these weaknesses:

- | Lack of theoretical support for the development of citizenship literacy program components. Many programs have no coherent framework or design. There is a tendency to create a citizenship literacy framework by taking bits and pieces from various commercial materials and packaged curricula which may lead to a hodgepodge of materials and activities. Typical failure is due to not clearly defining the citizenship literacy skills to be developed and not linking skill development with clearly articulated processes of civic engagement.
- | Unbalanced efforts that stress either the community building processes or the citizenship literacy development processes to the exclusion of the other.
- | Assessments done by outsiders that do not evaluate the pedagogy used or are insensitive to individual progress and the specific civic engagement efforts done.
- | Outdated, irrelevant training or learning materials. (e.g., pre-packaged community discussion guides that do not easily lend themselves to modification or civic engagement processes designed without theoretical backing).
- | Rigid adherence to procedures in a set model or plan.
- | Narrow perspectives on citizenship literacy development, often evident in a single focus on adult education. Some forget to teach citizenship literacy skills at all.
- | Inadequate leadership training and high turnover of paid and volunteer leaders with little communication between community leaders about what has been done previously.
- | Insecure funding, which can lead to an unstable, stressed, disengaged leadership.
- | Targeting a transient population that must focus on survival before considering the value of literacy.⁴³ With community partners, citizenship literacy programs must address individual and family issues in order to improve neighborhood and community stability.
- | Little or no evaluation done – often the weakest aspect of literacy programs of all kinds.

By following guidance presented in this publication, communities will be armed with a good foundation of information for designing an effective and successful program.

How Do We Measure Success?

Measuring success is important to at least four population groups: participants; program staff and board/advisory group; community leaders; and funders. Therefore, citizenship literacy planners should identify criteria and measurements that provide information needed by all four groups.

It is beyond the scope of this report to go at length into what is involved in the development of effective evaluations that support citizenship literacy initiatives. This report stresses one key point. If leaders do not define the outcomes they want as a result of citizenship literacy efforts, then it is impossible to properly evaluate the citizenship literacy effort. Definitions of desired outcomes must accommodate the desires and definitions of the funders, the participants, the staff and their partners/advisory board/board. If left unarticulated, too many people will want too many different things to happen. If leaders do not define outcomes, someone else will and hold leaders accountable to criteria not of their choosing. External evaluator criteria are usually different from the leaders of such efforts. To avoid some criticisms, it is expedient for leaders to establish a sound evaluation program and to continuously discuss outcomes.

See the National Adult Literacy Survey, the Search Institute, the National Civic League, the Center for Civic Education, the US Department of Education/Vocational and Adult Education, the Civic Practices Network and Sage Publications for resources to guide the development of evaluation efforts.

Francine Jacob's Five-Tier Approach to evaluation is used by many as a basis for the framework around which to design an evaluation program.⁴⁴ Her framework addresses differences in information needed for the four groups (participants, staff, community leaders, funders) and provides practical suggestions on how to obtain it.

A place to begin development of citizenship literacy outcomes for adult learners is to use TABLES 2 and 3 of this report. Both tables provide learning outcome statements. These outcomes can become the basis for developing measures of learning gains.

What Resources Are Available?

Citizenship Literacy Resources from A to Z

Many organizations were mentioned throughout this report. A brief description of each is found below along with their web address. By consulting these resources, leaders will have what they need to get started and to sustain all aspects of a citizenship literacy initiative as described in this report.

A

ACORN

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. Currently focused on predatory lending issues, affordable housing, creating better schools, utilities, and community reinvestment programs. Good place to connect with people and get information.
<http://www.acorn.org/>

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/InfoBoard/legis.html>

Alliance for National Renewal

A National Civic League program for “Unleashing the Power of Communities.”
<http://www.ncl.org/ant/>

American Civic Forum

A discussion forum created by the Center of Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in Minnesota that is created to advance notions of a new citizenship and to help people exchange experiences and enhance civic work across many environments. Their call for a new citizenship document is interesting and could be used in neighborhood chat sessions or faith-based group study sessions.
<http://www.publicwork.org>

American Friends Service Committee

Great A–Z listing of issues. If your community is forming issue statements, check out this site for insight on how to frame them.
<http://www.afsc.org/about.htm>

Argus Clearinghouse

Research library on selected topics including places and people, government, health, recreation and social issues. Go to their “social issues topics” and click on “communities and urban planning.”
<http://www.clearinghouse.net/>

Asset-Based Community Development Institute

Several useful resources for doing asset inventories on neighborhood resources and determining all the different types of networks people belong to on which to build improvements.
<http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>

Association for Conflict Resolution

This is a merged organization of the three best-known entities providing training on conflict resolution. The Academy of Family Mediators, the Conflict Resolution Education Network and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution have merged into this new Association. It is the primary organization in America to train people in dispute resolution in business, family, friendship and community organizational contexts.
<http://acresolution.org/>

B

Best Practices

Searchable database of solutions to the common social, economic and environmental problems of urbanization. Oriented toward resources neighborhood groups can use.
<http://www.bestpractices.org/>

Building Better Communities Network

An information clearinghouse and forum dedicated to building inclusive communities and to successfully affordable housing and community services.
<http://www.bettercommunities.org/>

C

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities

A research institute that conducts studies on a range of policies and programs that affect low-income people and communities. Good resource if citizens begin discussing issues related to poverty conditions.
<http://www.cbpp.org/>

Center for Civic Education

A nationally recognized leader in the development of networks, programs, curriculum and training efforts for schools. They cover K–12. They have many items available online. Some of their resources can be modified for use with adults in community settings.
<http://www.civiced.org/>

The Center for Civic Networking

An organization applying “information systems” to the needs of civic groups. See their civic dialog and participation projects in particular.
<http://www.civic.net:2401/ccn.html>

Center for Community Change

Very good resources on housing, community development, many community building tools to use, also sensitive to policy analysis, has sample nonprofit bylaws, fundraising helps, how to write proposal guidelines, how to work with your board of directors helps and managing meetings guidelines.
<http://www.communitychange.org/default.asp>

Center for Law and Social Policy

Seeks to provide help to improve the economic conditions of low-income families and to open access of the civic justice system to the poor. Wealth of policy-related resources. Sensitive to children, family, youth policy and social justice issues.
<http://www.clasp.org/>

Center for Living Democracy

The American News Service is available through Center for Living Democracy. This is a community organizing resource. The newsletter covers many topics. 10 new community organization stories a week can be found here. Offers a searchable story bank of over 1100 solutions stories. Also has focus on interracial democracy.
<http://www.livingdemocracy.com>

Center for Neighborhood Technology

Tools and resources for creating livable communities.
<http://www.cnt.org/>

Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy

Good research topic series. Good section on neighborhood innovations and civic engagement.
<http://www.brook.edu/es/urban/urban.htm>

C

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Change Communications

One of the must-see sites. Has case studies, best practices, sustainable development, housing, and community development, communicating change information. Good links section.
<http://www.change.org/links.htm>

Children's Defense Fund

Resources related to helping communities give children a head start, safe start, moral start, healthy start, fair start in life. Good for community groups that focus on children's issues as a gateway to civic engagement.
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/>

Civic Network Television

Broadcasts useful live, interactive TV programs on citizenship literacy themes. Community groups are able to connect to these sessions.
<http://www.benton.org/Library/Inventing/civic.html>

Civic Practices Network

A collaborative project bringing together organizations and perspectives on civic participation. Good tools and resources section. See their civic map section if interested in asset mapping. Rich resources of ideas and materials to use. Their "tool" section has many very useful guides.
<http://www.cpn.org/>

CivNet

An online resource and service for citizenship education practitioners. Contains useful lesson plans and readings. Useful materials defining basic concepts of civic virtue, civic participation, civic knowledge. Has online the National Standards for Civics and Government that guides states in development of curriculum for K-12.
<http://www.civnet.org/>

Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities

The primary site for learning how to start a healthy community project and to gain access to success stories and useful resources and networks.
<http://www.healthycommunities.org/>

Coalition on Human Needs

Great archive resource by topic on human needs. Very good for access to thoughtful essays. Site addresses the needs of low-income and vulnerable populations. Good site for those working to alleviate poverty conditions.
<http://www.chn.org/>

Coalition for Low-Income Community Development

Great site on mapping your community, citizen participation and planning, citizen involvement in the use of HUD's Community Development Block Grants.
<http://www.clcd.org/about/index.htm>

Communitarian Network

A coalition of individuals and organizations that have come together to shore up the moral, social and political environment. They are nonsectarian, nonpartisan and an international association. Their publications will make you think!
<http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps/>

Communities and Economic Development Corporations Sites

20 sites rated the best for information on community economic development. Great place to check out success stories as well as the rich library of tools available from these sites.
<http://www.ppnd.org/ustop20.htm>

C

Community Economic Development

A must-see link site of major organizations and resources for voluntary associations, nonprofits and community coalitions who begin work on community economic development themes. Many examples combine citizenship literacy and general literacy skill development with community economic development initiatives.

<http://www.mts.net/~imoore/ced1.htm>

Community Networking Movement

Lots of resources on what community networking is all about and how to form networks. Good online guides available to community groups.

<http://www.scn.org/ip/commnet/home.html>

Community Policing Consortium

A major source for resources, discussions, helps on community policing programs. A must if your group is into safety issues in community and neighborhood settings.

<http://www.communitypolicing.org/>

Community Tool Box

As the name implies, this site is fast becoming one of the most frequently consulted web sites. A wealth of idea, resources and tools are available through this site. There are chat rooms to get help from others. Citizenship literacy initiatives are featured, among many other types of community efforts.

<http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/>

Community Wealth Ventures, Inc.

Helping community groups build successful wealth-generating enterprises. Good case study section. Practical ideas on small-scale enterprise development by nonprofits and voluntary associations. Good resources for groups that combine citizenship literacy and wealth generation projects.

<http://www.communitywealth.org/>

Consensus Organizing Institute

Provides practical helps on leading citizens through consensus group discussion processes.

<http://consensusorganizing.com/>

Context Institute

For groups wanting to build humane sustainable cultures.

<http://www.context.org/>

Cooperatives

A resource site for cooperatives working on environmental, housing, micro-enterprise, economic development, and growth projects.

<http://csf.colorado.edu/co-op/>

Corporation for Enterprise Development

Check out their Development Report Card for the States: Economic Benchmarks for State and Corporate Decision-Makers. One of the best sources of user-friendly, detailed business and economic data in the country. More than 70 indicators measuring everything from human resources to digital infrastructure. Great online resources. Good healthy community resources.

<http://www.cfed.org/>

Corporation for National Service

Information and resources on programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. If you work with volunteers, this is a good site to check out.

<http://www.cns.gov/>

E

Electronic Policy Network

42 A digest of some of the best features of the week from a variety of resources related to community development policy issues.
<http://www.epn.org/>

Enterprise Foundation

One of the leading organizations in the US to provide resources to nonprofits involved in community development and also to neighborhood associations. Has several databases on effective practices. Good library of success stories. Has a technical assistance service for fee. Particularly useful to leaders focusing on affordable housing, community development corporations and building citizenship literacy competencies.
<http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/>

F

Families USA Foundation

This is an advocacy organization for health care consumers. Sensitive to children and senior health care issues and affordable health care. Good if this is the slant of conversation that is meaningful to the adults involved in citizenship literacy education.
<http://www.familiesusa.org/>

Family Support America

Family Support America, formerly Family Resource Coalition of America, promotes family support as the nationally recognized movement to strengthen and support families and places the principles of family support practice at the heart of every setting in which children and families are present. Family Support America works to bring about a completely new societal response to children, youth and their families: one that strengthens and empowers families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth and adult family members – one that solves problems by preventing them. This is the organization that developed the principles of family support practice that are excellent guidelines for effective family literacy programs. Family Support is an approach to services that fits perfectly with family literacy programs. This web site will offer resources needed by family literacy programs to provide the support services families need in order to realize their goals. Through the development of family support, citizenship literacy education is stressed and supported. It is the primary site to consult for those leaders who combine the design of family and citizenship literacy development.
<http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/home.htm>

Federal Money Retriever

Good site to search for possible sources of money from federal government sources.
<http://www.fedmone.com/>

FedWorld

A search engine done by the U.S. Department of Commerce on databases available through the federal government. Very useful if you need to compile information on your area.
<http://www.fedworld.gov/>

The Foundation Center

The primary site in the U.S. for finding grants and contracts, good e-learning opportunities, provides readers with an online Philanthropy Digest.
<http://fdncenter.org/>

G

Gaia Ecovillage Network

Global Ecovillage Network has worked for years on sustainable community efforts. Good site to check out if your group is working on healthy community and sustainable environment initiatives combined with citizenship literacy development.
<http://www.gaia.org/>

Grassroots Economic Organizing

Dedicated to making a better world by helping groups form worker cooperatives, sustainable community enterprises and grassroots economic organizing. Good newsletter for those interested in these topics.
<http://www.geonewsletter.org/>

H

HandsNet

A primary site for human service nonprofits. Good resources, alerts to policy shifts, alerts to funding opportunities and thoughtful essays on current social issues. Success stories featured routinely. Useful particularly if adults focus civic engagement on creating or revising social services in their community.

<http://www.handsnet.org/>

Highlander Center

Since 1932 this center has been on the cutting edge of Appalachian and Southern struggles for justice. Their work is known and used internationally and across the U.S. It is the primary site to consult if you are working on social justice, economic justice, and environmental justice issues. The links section of their web site will open the world of kindred spirits and resources to you.

<http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

Home Sight

Comprehensive guide to housing resources. Will be very valuable to groups that engage in housing rehab projects while improving citizenship literacy skills (and literacy skills in general).

<http://www.homesight.org/>

Housing Assistance Council

Helping local groups build affordable homes. See links section to get into the resources available on the web for affordable housing projects and affordable housing loans. Their Rural Voices newsletter is very interesting.

<http://www.ruralhome.org/>

Humanistic Banking

A major resource in pointing readers to alternative banking schemes to aid people in poverty to begin acquiring assets and building small businesses. These schemes appeal to those who are frozen out of the ability to gain access to credit. This web site will introduce the reader to microcredit programs and community banks. The Shore Bank, Grameen Bank, Bank of North Dakota, Self-Help of North Carolina, the Barefoot Bank, and the Microcredit Summit homepages can all be accessed through this site. (These are the most often referenced models.)

<http://www.sfworlds.com/linkworld/banking.html>

I

Information Exchange

While this site is from Australia, it has very useful information on a variety of topics related to neighborhood and community development done by voluntary associations as well as nonprofits and public agencies. The overarching theme is community development for social justice.

<http://www.infoxchange.net.au/>

Institute for the Study of Civic Values

Interesting discussions and resources available on civic participation and neighborhood revitalization.

<http://www.iscv.org/>

K

Kettering Foundation

The Foundation has treated politics as a dimension of everyday life rather than as only what officeholders and governments do. They craft tools for citizens to use to help the public act responsibly and effectively on its problems. It has a number of resources that are useful to citizenship literacy educators.

<http://www.kettering.org>

L

Labor Net

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Global online information and communication about independent labor movements. Will be particularly useful to groups discussing issues related to healthy and affirmative work environments.

<http://www.labornet.org/>

Laboratory for Community and Economic Development

Good resources, helpful guides, a swap story corner.

<http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~lced/main.html>

Latino Health Institute

The Latino Health Institute researches, assesses and documents the health conditions of the Latino community. They develop, deliver, evaluate and disseminate culturally competent health promotion and protection programs. They encourage and enable pertinent components of the health care and social service systems to coalesce and coordinate efforts and effectively advocate on behalf of Latino residents of Massachusetts on public health issues, in close contact and collaboration with other health and human service organizations.

<http://www.Lhi.org/>

Laubach Literacy

A nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to helping adults learn reading, writing, math and problem-solving skills. Laubach's U.S. Program Division has 1,100 member programs throughout the United States. Their International Programs Division has partner programs teaching people in 1,008 communities in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Their international division is particularly sensitive to citizenship literacy development within the context of general literacy development. The publishing division, New Readers Press, publishes and distributes 500 titles of books and other educational materials to 30,000 literacy programs, libraries, schools, prisons and religious organizations nationwide. Citizenship literacy is one aspect of their offerings.

<http://www.laubach.org/>

LINCS

The Literacy Information and Communication System of the National Institute for Literacy. It links all the major organizations providing various types of literacy training and resources. It is an electronic network. A nationally recognized one-stop site for literacy information retrieval and communication among literacy leaders.

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

Literacy Volunteers of America

One of the major agencies in the U.S. to train volunteers to assist in literacy education. They have useful collections on family literacy and ESOL literacy development as well. This web site has an array of information highlighting their funded programs and "promising practices." Some options are for affiliates only and this includes a cost.

<Http://www.literacyvolunteers.org>

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Helping neighbors building communities. Good source of ideas, links and resources.

<http://www.liscnet.org/>

M

Mediation Works

A company in South Carolina specializing in conflict mediation training for a variety of audiences.

<http://www.divorcenet.com/sc/bryantn.html>

N

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

The National Adult Literacy Database Inc. (NALD) is a federally incorporated, nonprofit service organization that fills the crucial need for a single-source, comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible database of adult literacy programs, resources, services and activities across Canada. It also links with other services and databases in North America and overseas. This page provides information on citizenship literacy materials — handbooks, guides, stories, magazines and other things about developing literacy in adults. Publications are listed alphabetically. Look for the statements and standards for best practice publication for detailed help in planning and self-evaluation.
<http://www.nald.ca>

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center

Academy for Educational Development

This is a program of the National Institute for Literacy. See their web site to review the resources available through this center. Very useful for adults to discuss the need to improve services for children, youth and adults with learning disabilities.
<http://www.nifl.gov/>

National Association of Community Action Agencies

Resources related to community action agencies. You can find out about those in SC through this site. Community action agencies can be ideal sponsors of family and citizenship literacy projects. Many of the Community action agencies are the home of Head Start programs and family or neighborhood centers.
<http://www.nacaa.org/caausa.htm>

National Association of Community Development

Good association for communities working with other communities on regional economic development efforts.
<http://www.nado.org/>

National Association of Neighborhood Schools

United efforts to restore the neighborhood schools concept. Nice lessons learned from neighborhood schools projects across the U.S.
<http://www.nans.org/>

The National Association of State Arts Agencies

Useful site for community groups interested in broadening people's horizons through expanded culture and arts activities. Cultural and arts projects are effective vehicles for expressing and clarifying civic values and social injustice.
<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/>

National Center on Rural Justice and Crime Prevention

Useful resources and essays for groups working to strengthen the connections between your community groups and organizations and local justice systems to prevent and reduce crime and violence.
<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/ncrj/>

National Civic League

The National Civic League, the United States' oldest organization advocating for the issues of community democracy. Envisions a country where citizens are actively engaged in the process of self-governance and work in partnership with the public, private and nonprofit sectors of society, and where citizens are creating active civic culture reflective of the diversity of community voices. Great resources. It is the primary site to consult if you are interested in Healthy Communities' projects. They were chosen to lead the development of the U.S. Healthy Communities Initiative. Check out their Civic Index.
<http://ncl.org/index.htm>

National Coalition for the Homeless

Very good source of directories of services and resources for serving the homeless.
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

N

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National Community Building Network: Community Building Resource Directory

Very good site for community building resources.
<http://www.ncbn.org>

National Community Capital Association

Resources to build capital for social, economic and political justice.
<http://www.communitycapital.org/>

National Congress on Community Economic Development

They have resources related to human capital development, FBO community development initiatives and neighborhood restoration efforts.
<http://www.ncced.org/>

National Data Analysis System, Child Welfare League of America

Good source of information related to topics of concern to social workers, including child abuse and neglect, welfare reform.
<http://ndas.cwla.org/>

National Center for Adult Literacy

Housed at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, this resource covers a variety of literacy areas including citizenship literacy.
<http://ncal.literacy.upenn.edu/>

National Center for ESL Literacy Education

This is the national center for English literacy resources. Books, resource compilations, major publications, list servers and many more resources are available through this site. Citizenship literacy is one emphasis.
<http://www.cal.org/ncle/>

The National Center for Family Literacy

Acknowledged as a leader in family literacy program development, research and training. Rich resource. The Kenan Model provided the framework for the federally funded family literacy program, Even Start. From NCFL's home page, look under publications for videos that you can purchase to raise awareness and inform your partners, the community and potential funders. Good resource for groups that combine family and citizenship literacy efforts.
<http://www.famlit.org>

National Center for Learning Disabilities

This center provides national leadership in support of children and adults with learning disabilities by offering information, resources and referral services. They also develop and support innovative educational programs, including health literacy programs. They promote public awareness and advocate for more effective policies and legislation to help individuals with learning disabilities.
<http://www.nclld.org>

National Clearinghouse for ESOL Literacy Education (NCLE)

Center for Applied Linguistics
As the name implies, NCLE has most of the major resources related to English literacy education organized for easy access. ESOL citizenship literacy-related resources are also a part of the collection.
<http://www.cal.org/ncle>

National Commission on Civic Renewal

The purpose of the Commission is to assess the condition of civic engagement in the U.S. and to propose specific actions. A major forum to consult if you are the leader of citizenship literacy efforts. Useful in shaping the direction of initiatives.
<http://www.puaf.umd.edu/affiliates/CivicRenewal>

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions

People in low-income areas establish community development credit unions as a way to pool their savings and make loans to each other. Economic self-help and community reinvestment is the heart of the CDCU mission: to help low-income families and communities control their own financial destinies.
<http://www.natfed.org/>

N

National Foundation For Teaching Entrepreneurship

While aimed at teaching youth to build businesses, it is recognized as a primary source for resources needed to teach adults business skills. They embed citizenship literacy development within the context of enhancing skills needed to function well in the workplace. Their resources are aimed at low-income individuals.

<http://www.nfte.com/>

National Housing Institute's Shelterforce Online

This magazine addresses a broad range of topics. A community builder's resource.

<http://www.nhi.org/online/>

National Institute for Literacy

This is an independent federal organization whose mission states its intent to "ensure the highest quality of literacy services" by promoting communication, collaboration and innovation, intending to facilitate a comprehensive and unified system for literacy in the United States. Among its offerings is LINCS, the connection to a wealth of literacy research with program descriptions and practical tools grouped into regional hubs. This site includes several different kinds of special collections. The Eastern LINC is the most well developed LINC for Civic Literacy (i.e. the New England Literacy Resource Center, World Education).

<http://novel.nifl.gov/>

National Issues Forum

A major resource for leaders wishing to engage community members in a variety of discussion on themes of community concern. Has prepared issue reports to use as discussion guides. Has a public policy training institute to prepare leaders. See the "What Do Civic Literacy Initiatives Look Like?" section of this report.

<http://www.nifi.org/>

National Neighborhood Coalition

A particularly good site for neighborhoods in fast-growing areas that need to think about managing growth. Also their issues updates pages are informative. See their Neighborhood Smart Growth Project.

<http://www.neighborhoodcoalition.org/board.htm>

National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership

A project of the Urban Institute, the partnership compiles a number of resources for groups wanting to begin neighborhood indicator projects.

<http://www.urban.org/nnip/publications.html>

National Network of Grantsmakers

Useful for leaders to see how the funder world is organized, what they talk about, who they are. Check out what they say about South Carolina grantsmakers.

<http://www.nng.org/>

National People's Action

Good resource for neighborhood association leaders. Great place for inspiration and ideas. Good success stories from which to learn.

<http://www.npa-us.org/>

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

NPCR builds partnerships between community-based organizations and local colleges and universities around community building activities.

<http://www.npcr.org/index.html>

N

Neighborhood Revitalization

48

Helpful resources and ideas on neighborhood revitalization.
<http://www.neolink.com/neighbor.htm>

Neighborhoods Online

Great resources. A must-see site. Covers all the topics neighborhood groups tend to get into. Also useful on how to organize and sustain effective neighborhood associations.
<http://www.neighborhoodsonline.net/index.html>

Neighborhoods USA

A major site for what neighborhoods are doing across America; quarterly newsletter; annual conference; good neighborhood resource section. Many of their projects deal directly with citizenship literacy development.
<http://www.nusa.org/>

Neighbor Works.Net

Revitalizing communities and helping low- and moderate-income families rent, purchase and maintain safe, affordable homes. Citizenship literacy skills are developed while in pursuit of home ownership.
<http://www.nw.org/NWIS/HomeMAC.asp>

Nonprofit Cyber-Accountability

A must-see site for those groups that wonder if particular nonprofit or government services are really accountable. All the questions you would ever ask about financial accountability are answered here.
<http://www.bway.net/~hbograd/cyb-acc.html>

P

Pax Christi USA/International

Explores issues of peace, racism and justice. Good site for those groups interested in peace education, human rights and spiritual dialogue on social justice.
<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Conducts the Annual Survey on Religion and Public Life. Interesting reading of latest policies on FBO involvement in community development and on charitable giving policies.
www.pewforum.org

Pew Partnership for Civic Change

A rich array of resources related to citizenship literacy. See their Just Call It Effective report on 14 communities involved in civic change. See their Thriving Neighborhoods page. They are a research organization that documents and disseminates community information.
<http://www.pew-partnership.org/>

Poverty Related Resources

Lists major resources to assist in alleviating poverty conditions around the world and here at home. A must-see site if adults start talking about the poverty conditions they are in and how it is affecting their lives.
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/links/povlinks.htm>

R

Right To Know

Community group involvement in environmental, housing and sustainable development projects.
<http://www.rtk.net/>

Rural Community Empowerment Program

This is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. See their Toolbox section in particular for practical help. Check out the funding opportunities.
<http://www.ezec.gov/>

R

Rural Development USA

U.S. Department of Agriculture's involvement in rural community development explained. Success stories are interesting; good listing of resources and links related to a variety of rural community improvements.
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Rural LISC

Building partnerships for building rural communities. Good resources, ideas and links.
<http://www.ruralisc.org/index.html>

S

SafeKids Now Net

Resources for community groups working on toxic environmental issues. Aimed at creating healthy environments for children at home and around the world. Stories of neighborhood association efforts are great. Good ideas on doable projects.
<http://environet.policy.net/about/>

Sage Publication

A primary resource for books on program evaluation.
<http://www.sagepub.com/>

Search Institute

Many resources are available from this institute to help survey attitudes about how healthy children, youth and adults think about their community. Included in the survey are various aspects of civic engagement. Those interested in taking an asset-based approach to discussions with citizens are encouraged to consult this organization's resources.
<http://www.search-institute.org/>

Smart Growth Network

Great resources. Good success stories. Basic concepts of smart growth communities explained. Good site for adults who focus civic engagement on cleaning up the environment around their neighborhood, their children's schools, etc.
<http://www.smartgrowth.org/>

South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership

Related to this report, the center developed the entire adult literacy effective practice report series for the J. Marion Sims Foundation, of which this citizenship literacy report is one. It has determined that one challenge that all voluntary associations and nonprofit leaders have in common is how to effectively engage and work with low literate adults. This center therefore is committed to helping South Carolina build its adult literacy education system so that nonprofit and voluntary association leaders are better supported and the literacy levels increase in all adults in South Carolina. Few professional enrichment opportunities are available to nonprofits and voluntary associations in South Carolina on adult literacy education. Many resources are available related to literacy education on this web site.
<http://sclc.clemson.edu>

South Carolina Council on Conflict Resolution

The primary membership organization in South Carolina to consult to receive training and technical assistance related to conflict resolution.
<http://www.scmmediate.org/>

South Carolina Literacy Resource Center

This is South Carolina's center for LINCS (referenced above). The center is operated by the State Department of Education and offers resources and consultation on adult literacy. There are many valuable resources on this site: South Carolina's State Plan for adult literacy and family literacy that provides examples of performance measurement instruments for adults and children; connections with state professional associations; access to "coach" – onsite technical assistance and a training calendar.
<http://www.sclrc.org/>

S

Shore Bank

49 Also referred to as the South Shore Bank in the literature. The country's oldest and largest community development bank. Patterned after the famous Bangladesh Grameen Bank, it provides a rich resource for low resourced communities and community groups. Be sure to consult their publication on a strategy for revitalization of neighborhoods. Also see Humanistic Banking reference. Excellent resource for adults who talk about not being able to access the credit they need and who want to start small businesses but cannot get the banks in their area to consider lending them money.
<http://www.sbk.com/>

State and Local Government on the Net

As the name implies, this is a good site for finding resources from state and local governments.
<http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm>

Strengthening the Urban/Rural Connection

A multi-year project that aligns rural and urban community builders for an exchange of opinions and expertise, and promotes transfer of learning based on experiences in community development. Good place to chat with those involved in similar projects as yours.
<http://www.ruralurban.org/>

Study Circles Resource Center

Great resources for neighborhood groups that want to engage in effective discussions on neighborhood improvement. Good online resources, how-to booklets. Success stories to learn from.
<http://www.studycircles.org/index.html>

Sustainable Building Sourcebook

Information on sustainable building techniques and use of sustainable building materials. Good for adult groups talking about affordable housing issues.
<http://www.greenbuilder.com/sourcebook/>

Sustainable Communities Information Services

Lots of resources including books, slides, CDs, useful concept papers, stories of community efforts. Loaded with tools and resources for community leaders thinking about creating sustainable communities where the environment, health and economic development are balanced in development.
<http://www.ecoiq.com/sustainability/>

T

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

TESOL's mission is "to develop the expertise of its members and others involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages to help them foster effective communication in diverse settings while respecting individuals' language rights. To this end TESOL articulates and advances standards for professional preparation and employment, continuing education and student programs. TESOL links groups worldwide to enhance communication among language specialists. TESOL produces high-quality programs, services and products. TESOL promotes advocacy to further the profession."
<http://www.tesol.edu/>

Tenant Online Resources

Online resource for residential tenant groups and associations. While it deals with NYC issues, you will find several resources worth looking at if adults you work with are in public housing and low-income situations.
<http://tenant.net/>

20/20 Vision

This is an advocacy organization but it has a democracy site with a mission to strengthen citizen involvement. Good site for groups interested in peace, environmental sustainability and democracy discussions.
<http://www.2020vision.org/democracy/democracy.htm>

U

The Urban Institute: A Nonpartisan Economic and Social Research Organization

One of the leading research institutes that looks at various aspects of nonprofit leadership. Has a number of useful resources on civic engagement and social justice issues.
<http://www.urban.org/>

U.S. Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities

The U.S. Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities grew out of the work of the National Civic League. It is a partnership of more than 100 organizations working together to focus attention and resources to improve the health and quality of life in communities. It is a major source of success stories to inspire local efforts as well as a very practical community guide for leaders.
<http://www.healthycommunities.org>

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education has the mission to help all people achieve the knowledge and skills to be lifelong learners, to be successful in their chosen careers and to be effective citizens. The web page offers several sites that provide information on adult education and all aspects of literacy.
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/aboutus.html>

V

Virtual Library

Look at their Community Networks section and their citizenship literacy section.
<http://vlib.org/>

Votenet

National political news and links to various statewide officials.
<http://www.votenet.com/>

W

WebActive

A democracy discussion newsletter. Useful as discussion starters or as resources for study circles.
<http://www.webactive.com/pacifica/demnow.html>

Welfare Information Network

A clearinghouse of information, policy analysis and technical assistance on welfare reform. Useful for working with adults connected with welfare programs.
<http://www.welfareinfo.org/>

The Well

A global discussion forum on community participation and community development themes. Useful for adult groups that are stuck in their situation and need ideas from others.
<http://www.well.com/index.html>

W.K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources

Developed with a grant from Kellogg Foundation, the University of Nebraska has a good collection of resources organized online for Community Development, Strategic Planning, Telecommunication, Educational Leadership Development, Economic Development Land Use, Natural Resources and Health Care. Good for leaders to use in planning how to steer community task group directions.
<http://www.unl.edu/kellogg/main.html>

W

World Education

51 New England Literacy Resource Center
NELRC is one of the few agencies in the US devoted to making citizenship literacy and community action a part of adult literacy and ESOL education. They have a source book available online, Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook, for adult educators to use to guide citizenship literacy initiatives. They also have a web site called the "civic participation collection" which is a rich resource of ideas and resource materials. This web site contains numerous helps on community action, EL/citizenships instruction, citizenship preparation, publications and other collections available, policy and legislation, facts and statistics and online discussions. They publish an online newsletter called The Change Agent which is a theme-based newspaper focusing on social justice-related issues and ways these issues can become a part of the citizenship literacy learning environment. They do workshops nationally and internationally to equip community leaders with the basics on how to get started on citizenship literacy initiatives.
<http://www.nelrc.org/civic.htm>

World Vision

This is a widely recognized international relief and community development organization. Its U.S. branch has useful resources for local faith-based organizations that want to do relief and community development projects. See their church resources links. Churches At Work is a toolkit produced by a consortium of organizations and managed by staff from World Vision and the Community Information Exchange.
<http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/atwork.nsf/stable/index.htm>

White House Urban Policies

Recently released presidential documents on urban issues.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/>



Description of Literacy Levels

When literacy was simply thought of as reading, it was typically measured in grade-level equivalents. An adult's literacy skill was said to be at first grade or fifth grade, for example. A more complex, more realistic conception of literacy emphasizes its use in adult activities. To determine literacy skills in American adults ages 16 and older, the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) used test items that resembled everyday life tasks. It involved the use of prose, document and quantitative skills. The NALS classified the results in five levels of proficiency with level one being the lowest level of proficiency and level five the highest. These levels are now commonly used to describe adults' literacy skill levels.

Prose literacy

The prose literacy items assessed the adults' ability to handle written text such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction. It assessed the ability to handle both expository and narrative prose. Expository prose involves printed information that defines, describes or informs, such as newspaper stories or written instructions. Narrative prose assessed the adults' ability to understand a story. Prose literacy tasks included locating all the information requested, integrating information from various parts of a passage of text and writing new information related to the text.

Document literacy

Document literacy items assessed the adults' ability to understand short forms or graphically displayed information found in everyday life, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphs. Document literacy tasks included locating a particular intersection on a street map, using a schedule to choose the appropriate bus or entering information on an application form.

Quantitative literacy

Quantitative literacy information was displayed visually in graphs or charts or in numerical form using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages or time units. These quantities appeared in both prose and document form. Quantitative literacy referred to locating quantities, integrating information from various parts of a document, determining the necessary arithmetic operation and performing that operation. Quantitative literacy tasks included balancing a checkbook, completing an order form and determining the amount of interest paid on a loan.

The National Adult Literacy Survey captures well the printed and written information dimensions and related reasoning skills but isn't as complete as the National Institute for Literacy's *Equipped For the Future* competency standards for adult literacy. These standards also include the communication, interpersonal relationship and lifelong learning dimensions to literacy development. The *Equipped For the Future* standards are reviewed elsewhere in this report.

Almost all adults in Level 1 can read a little but not well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, a medicine label, read a simple story to a child or fill out a deposit slip correctly. Adults in Level 2 usually can perform more complex tasks such as comparing, contrasting or integrating pieces of information but usually not higher level reading and problem-solving skills. For example, those at Level 2 could correctly write their signature on a social security card and fill out a simple job application. But they could not read correctly a sales graph or figure out what the gross pay was on a paycheck stub or add correctly the cost of a meal. Adults in levels 3 through 5 usually can perform the same types of more complex tasks on increasingly lengthy and dense texts and documents. These levels use a broad range of information processing skills in various combinations. For example, people at Level 3 could figure out bar charts and graphs but could not correctly read a bus schedule. They could not figure out the correct number of minutes that it would take to get from one location to another. People at Level 4 could read the bus schedule but not summarize the views of parents and teachers found on a summary chart which involved comparing parent and teacher data across four questions and across three levels of schools. They could not correctly estimate the cost per ounce of a food product when given a food store shelf label with this information on it or figure out interest charges on a home loan.

In summary each scale was divided into five levels that reflect the progression of information-processing skills and strategies. These levels were determined not as a result of any statistical property of the scales, but rather as a result of shifts in the skills and strategies required to succeed on various tasks along the scales, from simple to complex.

For a review of the levels of literacy found in the National Adult Literacy Survey see <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/>. This site also contains samples from the survey instruments.

Many factors explain the relative high number of adults in the lowest level of literacy. Twenty-two percent of adults in Level 1 were immigrants who may have just been learning to speak English. More than 60% didn't complete high school. More than 30% were over 65. More than 25% had physical or mental conditions that kept them from fully participating in work, school, housework or other activities, and almost 20% had vision problems that affected their ability to read print.⁴⁵

TABLE 8 | National Adult Literacy Survey⁴⁶
5 Literacy Proficiency Levels

Level One

PROSE

Most of the tasks in this level require the reader to read relatively short text to locate a single piece of information, which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive.

DOCUMENT

Tasks in this level tend to require the reader either to locate a piece of information based on a literal match or to enter information from personal knowledge onto a document.

QUANTITATIVE

Tasks in this level require readers to perform single, relatively simple arithmetic operations, such as addition.

Level Two

PROSE

Some tasks in this level require readers to locate a single piece of information in the text; however, several distracters or plausible but incorrect pieces of information may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Other tasks require the reader to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast easily identifiable information based on a criterion provided in the question or directive.

DOCUMENT

Tasks in this level are more varied than those in Level 1. Some require the readers to match a single piece of information; however, several distracters may be present or the match may require low-level inferences.

QUANTITATIVE

Tasks in this level typically require readers to perform a single operation using numbers that are either stated in the task or easily located in the material.

Level Three

PROSE

Tasks in this level tend to require readers to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make matches that require low-level inferences. Other tasks ask readers to integrate information from dense or lengthy text that contains no organizational aids such as headings. Readers may also be asked to generate a response based on information that can be easily identified in the text. Distracting information is present, but is not located near the correct information.

DOCUMENT

Some tasks in this level require the reader to integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents. Others ask readers to cycle through rather complex tables or graphs which contain information that is irrelevant or inappropriate to the task.

QUANTITATIVE

Tasks in this level, two or more numbers are typically needed to solve the problem and these must be found in the material. The operations needed can be determined from the arithmetic relation terms used in the question or directive.

Level Four

PROSE

These tasks require readers to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages. More complex inferences are needed to perform successfully.

Level Four

DOCUMENT

Tasks in this level, as those at the previous levels, ask readers to perform multiple-feature matches, cycle through documents, and integrate information; however, they require a greater degree of inferencing.

QUANTITATIVE

These tasks tend to require readers to perform two or more sequential operations or a single operation in which the quantities are found in different types of displays, or the operations must be inferred from semantic information given or drawn from prior knowledge.

Level Five

PROSE

Some tasks in this level require the reader to search for information in dense text, which contains a number of plausible distracters. Others ask readers to make high-level inferences or use specialized background knowledge. Some tasks ask readers to contrast complex information.

DOCUMENT

Tasks in this level require the reader to search through complex displays that contain multiple distracters, to make high-level text-based inferences and to use specialized knowledge.

QUANTITATIVE

These tasks require readers to perform multiple operations sequentially. They must anatomize the features of the problem from the text or rely on background knowledge to determine the quantities or operations needed.

CONTINUE ABOVE

J. Marion Sims Foundation

ADULT LITERACY & BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVE

NOTES & REFERENCES

¹ This is the definition found in the National Literacy Act of 1991. See <http://www.nifl.gov/public-law.html#section three>.

² Equipped For the Future, Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy, <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html>.

³ See <http://www.nifl.gov/> for the entire EFF report from which this is taken.

⁴ See <http://www.nces.ed.gov/naal/> for a review of the National Adult Literacy Survey. Samples of test questions and detailed coverage of what the survey is about can be found at this site.

⁵ See the National Institute for Literacy for a copy of the complete Literacy Summit report. The challenges are reviewed in Table 5. <http://www.nifl.gov/>.

⁶ Based on the assessments of the National Commission for Civic Renewal. See their web site for details.

⁷ For example, John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann's work on asset mapping has shown that associations are alive and well and, even in the poorest of neighborhoods, people belong to many formal and informal associations. They are just different from the typical "membership" organization of the past. See the Asset-Based Community Development Center's web site.

⁸ See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 583–607.

⁹ The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Healthy Communities program was nationally recognized throughout the 1990s. With government cutbacks, the entire program has been terminated. Many attribute the success of First Steps to the effective work that the Healthy Communities' program did in equipping adults with the basics in civic literacy that allowed them to respond well to the First Steps requirements. Those counties that didn't participate or participated late in the training process of Healthy Communities are those now struggling to meet the civic engagement requirements of First Steps. Success by Six is also building necessary social capital in communities across SC.

¹⁰ See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 583–607.

¹¹ See Putnam, Robert (1999). *Bowling Alone in America*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

¹² See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 593–594.

¹³ See a full discussion of this point in Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, p. 605.

¹⁴ As reported in Jalandoni, Nadine and Keith Hume. (2001) *America's Family Volunteers*. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector.

¹⁵ Egan, Gerard and Michael A. Cowan. (1979) *People in Systems: A Model of Development in the Human Service Professions and Education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc. p. 6. The leaders engaged in the 24-nation survey of civic education are using a similar model. See endnote 13 for citation.

¹⁶ Hahn, Carole L. (1999) "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States" in Torney-Purta, Judith, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo. (1999) *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, pp. 593–594.

¹⁷ See the CINET web site for a complete report on these standards, <http://civnet.org/resources/teach/national/toc.htm>.

¹⁸ National Commission on Civic Renewal. (1998) *A Nation of Spectators: How Civic Disengagement Weakens America and What We Can Do About It*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland.

¹⁹ See CINET <http://www.civiced.org/>.

²⁰ Hodgkinson, V. and Weitzman, M. (1997) *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

²¹ Consult the nearest urban and regional planning department at the state's land grant university as that tends to be where such professional programs are housed (in South Carolina it is Clemson University) nearest you for help on how to conduct community build out exercises. Consult the American Planning Association press for publication on this, including those involving children and youth in such experiences. See <http://www.planning.org/>. Click on "Your Community" for the Kids and Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Collaborative Planning resources, including a summary of effective practice community initiatives from which to gain ideas.

²² See Mullabey, Ramona, Yve Susskind, and Barry Checkoway. (1999). *Youth Participation in Community Planning*. Chicago: American Planning Association, Planner's Book Service. This recent publication demonstrates how various communities have encouraged young people to solve problems, voice their opinions, and make a difference in communities across the US. It is a good how-to manual as well as great case-study report. It can be ordered online at <http://www.planning.org>.

²³ See the South Carolina Arts Commission at <http://www.state.sc.us/arts>.

²⁴ See <http://www.ncl.org>. Do a search on "healthy communities" and a number of All-American City stories will come up for you to learn from.

²⁵ See <http://www.healthycommunities.org>.

²⁶ See the South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership at <http://scl.clemson.edu>.

²⁷ See the Search Institute at <http://www.search-institute.org>.

²⁸ See ABCD at <http://www.northwestern.edu/IPR/abcd.html>. Some of their asset inventories are available online. Their new book on the Organization of Hope: A Workbook for Rural Asset-Based Development is very useful. See their "networks" section for discussion on the ABCD Neighborhood Circle's project. See their "mapping resources" section of various inventories.

NOTES & REFERENCES

²⁹ See the National Issues Forum at <http://www.nifi.org/>.

³⁰ See the Kettering Foundation site at <http://www.kettering.org> for details.

³¹ Barbara Brown, Cooperative Extension Agent in Sumter County, is the leader of the Issue Forums. She can be reached at 803-773-5561.

³² Contact Dr. Kathleen Wilson, Director, Center on Neighborhood Development, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University, 158 Poole Agricultural Center, Clemson, SC 29634, 864-656-6732 if your community is interested in holding such a forum.

³³ See the United Nations sites for what some of these projects look like in other nations at <http://www.unifem.undp.org/>.

³⁴ This table was developed based in part on information from the following sources: 1) Sharon Darling (2000) Testimony before the committee on appropriations, subcommittee on labor, health and human services, education and related agencies, US House of Representatives, <http://www.famil.org/policy/sdtestimony.html> 2) Rasiniski, T., & Padak, N. (1993). Initiating even start programs (Occasional Paper #1). Ohio: Kent State University; 3) Research: Literacy facts and figures; 4) Rasmussen, J. The BC framework of statements and standards of best practices in family literacy (1999). <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/framework/page2.htm>. 5) Sapin, C., Padak, N.D. (1998). The family literacy resource notebook, Ohio: The Ohio Literacy Resource Center, pp. 4.1–4.6.

³⁵ See the National Civic League's site for good definitions of community and see Helping Families Survive and Thrive, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina for help on defining family, <http://www.ncl.org>.

³⁶ More than 600 communities throughout the U.S. have such statements that are guiding significant community action. For examples of shared visions and common values that communities have created, see the community reports featured in the resource section of this report. For an extended listing of communities, consult the South Carolina Center on Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership's web site at <http://sclc.clemson.edu>.

³⁷ See Jacksonville and Pasadena's quality-of-life indices for two examples that many communities have followed to begin to define their own sense of quality of life. City of Pasadena, Public Health Department, 100 North Garfield Avenue, Room 136, Pasadena, CA 91109. Jacksonville's reports are online at <http://www.jcci.org/indic.htm>.

³⁸ See the rich array of resources on this principle from the Asset-Based Community Development Center at Northwestern University, <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>.

³⁹ See Linney, J.A. and Wandersman, A. (1991) Prevention plus III: Assessing alcohol and other drug prevention programs at the school and community level, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. This is a free publication that will help your group work through a complete evaluation process. Also see Jacobs, F.H. (1987) The five-tiered approach to evaluation: Context and implementation. In H.B. Weiss and F.H. Jacobs (Eds), *Evaluating family programs*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter Publishers. Also see *Evaluation from the start: An evaluation guidebook for fatherhood programs* available through the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina, 2601 Laurel Street, Columbia, SC 29204. This is a free publication and a self-help guidebook on setting up an evaluation for your community projects. If your group is struggling on what types of outcomes you want for families with young children, consult the Search Institute at <http://www.search-institute.org>. They have identified 40 outcomes for parents and other significant adults and for infants, toddlers, children and adolescents. These outcomes, stated as assets for healthy child development, are not a bad place for groups to begin focusing their efforts.

⁴⁰ This section is based on three works: 1) Ayre, D., Clough, G. & Norris, T. (2000). *Facilitating community change*. Boulder, CO: Community Initiatives; 2) Mattessich, P., Monsey, B. & Roy, C. (1997). *Community building: What makes it work: A review of factors influencing successful community building*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation; and 3) Dombro, A.L., O'Donnell, N.S., Galinsky, E., Melcher, S.G. and Farber, A. (1996). *Community mobilization: Strategies to support young children and their families*. NY: Work and Family Institute <http://www.familiesandwork.org>.

⁴¹ This section is based on information from the following sources: 1) Auerbach, E.R. (1995). Which way for family literacy: Intervention or empowerment? In L.M. Morrow (Ed.), *Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities* (pp.11–28). Delaware: International Reading Association; 2) Auerbach (1995a). Deconstructing the discourse of strengths in family literacy. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 27 (4), 643–661; 3) Auerbach, (1989). Toward a social-contextual approach to family literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59, 165–187; 4) Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. *Lessons learned* (2001a). <http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com/ll.html>; 5) DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, and Siedenburg, pp. 2, 7–8; 6) DeBruin-Parecki, A., Paris, S.G. & Seidenberg, J.L. (1996). Characteristics of Effective Family Literacy Programs in Michigan, Technical Report TR96-07, Michigan: National Center on Adult Literacy; 7) Gadsen, V.I. (1994). Understanding family literacy: Conceptual issues facing the field. *Teachers' College Record*, 96, 58–86; 8) Gadsen, (1992). Giving meaning to literacy: Intergenerational beliefs about access. *Theory into Practice*, 31, 328–336; 9) Morrow, L.M. (1995). *Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities*. Delaware: International Reading Association; 10) Rasmussen; 11) Weinstein-Shr, G. (1995). Learning from uprooted families. In G. Weinstein & E. Quintero (Eds.), *Immigrant learners and their families: Literacy to connect the generations* (pp.113–133). McHenry, Illinois: Delta Systems Co., Inc.; 12) Weinstein-Shr, (1993). Restoring the intergenerational cycle of family teaching: Family literacy in multilingual communities. Washington D.C.: Southport Institute for Policy Analysis. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 373 604).

⁴² Padak, N. & Rasiniski, T. (1998). Family literacy programs: Getting started, *The Family literacy resource notebook*, Ohio: Kent State, p. 4.5

⁴³ DeBruin-Parecki, Paris & Siedenburg, J., (1996). pp. 12–13.

⁴⁴ See the resources available on line through the Children, Families and Youth national initiative for help on the design of your evaluation program. See <http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm>. Their evaluation guide follows Francine Jacob's Five-Tier Approach to Evaluation. The Five Tier model is also explained in Heather B. Weiss and F.H. Jacobs (Eds.), *Evaluating family programs*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter Publishers

⁴⁵ Information courtesy of the National Institute for Literacy. <http://www.nifl.gov>.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1992) *National Adult Literacy Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education. See <http://www.nces.ed.gov/>.