



Improving Health Care by Tapping Adult Education Expertise

Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit

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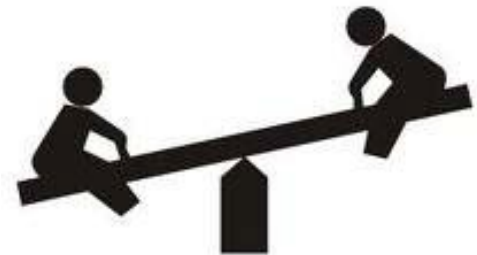




Our Goals:



- To show how the expertise of adult literacy learners, teachers and programs can help improve health care delivery
- To inspire more people to value this expertise and use it in creative ways
- To flip some notions on their head (who can learn from whom?)



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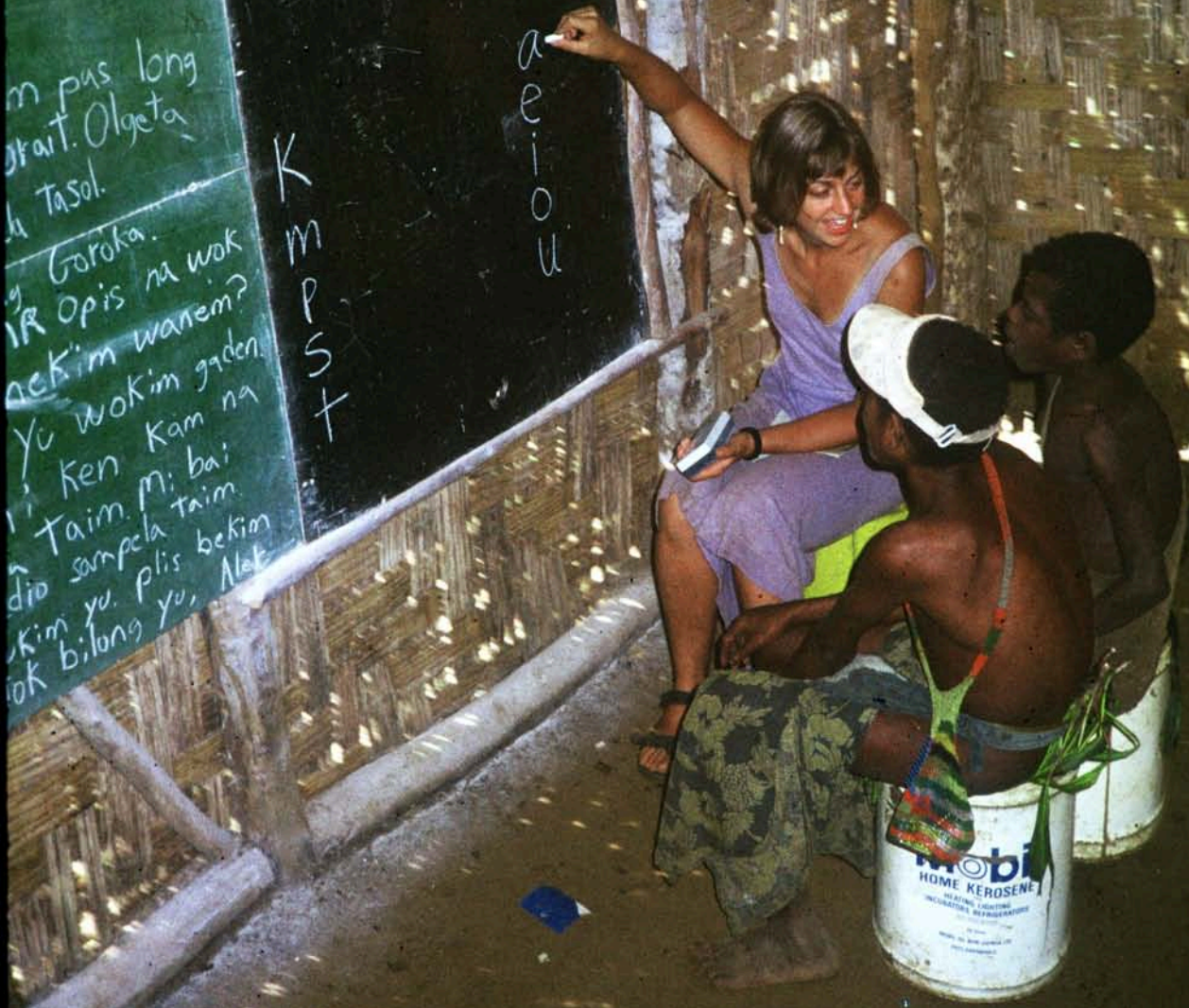
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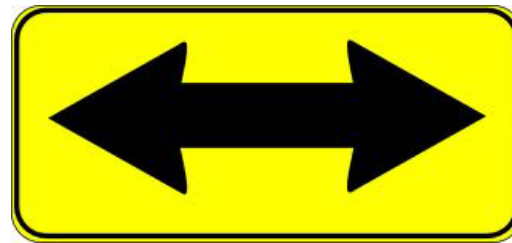
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What is Health Literacy?

- It has evolved and expanded over the years
- It is now seen as a Two-Way Street
- It applies to people like patients and students, you and me, AND doctors and health care professionals
- We can help each other with our own types of expertise



Health Literacy Includes:

- Finding health information
- Understanding it
- Evaluating it
- Communicating it
- Using it...acting on it...to live healthier!



Health Literacy:

- Health literacy allows the public and personnel working in all health-related contexts to **find, understand, evaluate, communicate, and use** information.
- Health literacy is the use of a wide range of skills that improve the ability of people to **act** on information in order to **live healthier lives**.
- These skills include **reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy, and critical analysis**, as well as **communication and interaction** skills.

Health Literacy

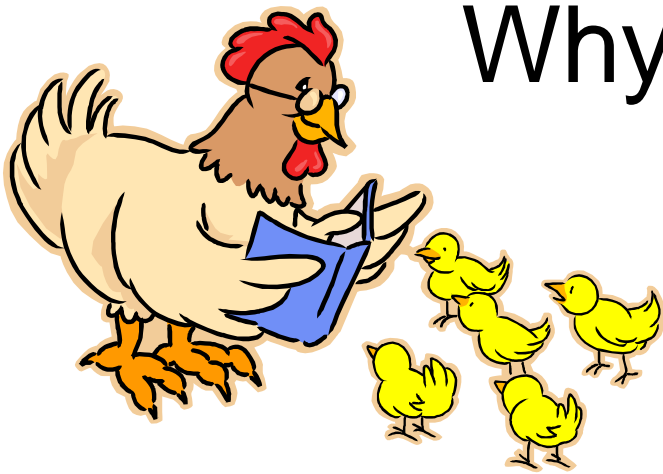
Find the previous definition and fuller concept in:

The Calgary Charter on Health Literacy

**Rationale and Core Principles for the Development of
Health Literacy Curricula**

http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/Healthlitinst/Calgary_Charter.htm

(or Google it!)



Why are Literacy Programs a good venue?

- Organized pool of hard-to-reach patients
 - Health Programs are looking for them
 - Adult Literacy Programs have them
- Culture of education supports learning
- Teacher as liaison
- Safe and trusting environment
- Scheduled gatherings with more face time



Who Are Adult Literacy Students?

- Diverse in language and culture
- Lower literacy levels
- Low income and uninsured
- Represent your local “hard to reach” health consumers
- In greatest need of accessible health information and services



They are the end users

- They are the ones whose opinions count
- They know what they want
- They know what they need
- They know what the barriers are
- They know how they can best understand the information
- They know what supports they need to access services
- *If it's easier for adult learners, it's easier for everyone*

How can literacy students help to improve patient care?



- Pilot test written materials, programs and systems
- Do a walk-through of the building to assess ease of access and navigation
- Provide feedback and recommendations through focus groups
- Promote health services to those in their community



Who are the teachers? What is their expertise?

- Trained in adult learning and teaching
- Skilled in addressing different learning styles
- Experienced in communicating with AND teaching diverse learners
- Work in a culture of equal power dynamic with students: can improve confidence and willingness to act
- Experienced in guiding people to use new information and skills to improve their lives (taking it to the next level!)





How can literacy and ESOL teachers help to improve patient care?

- Advise and mentor health professionals and staff
- Participate in health literacy trainings
- Act as liaison to their students (who are the end users!)
- Work with outreach and health education departments
- Teach onsite health literacy classes
- Help patients get to the next level:

Taking action to improve health!



Resources

The Health Literacy Special Collection

Online resources for teaching health literacy and partnering

www.healthliteracy.worlded.org/

The Health Literacy Discussion List

A Community of practice & professional development forum

<http://lincs.ed.gov/mailman/listinfo/healthliteracy>

The Calgary Charter on Health Literacy: Rationale and Core Principles for the Development of Health Literacy Curricula

http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/Healthlitinst/Calgary_Charter.htm

LINCS Literacy Directory

Find a literacy program in your local area

<http://literacydirectory.org/>

Questions...?

- It all sounds great, **but** _____
- What makes it harder/easier to connect with an adult literacy program?
- What would you like to know about the adult literacy field that would help bridge the gap?
- How can both parties be sure to get what they need?

Feel free to contact me:

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