

# WE LEARN

## (Women Expanding—Literacy Education Action Resource Network) Project Questionnaire for librarians working with literacy Resources and Curricula for Women Achieving Literacy

**WE LEARN** values and promotes literacy and literature for *all* women—especially those with lower-level English reading and writing skills. Education can become a liberatory opportunity for women disadvantaged by traditional schooling. Women and girls need and deserve access to a variety of creative educational opportunities, programs, resources, and materials at all levels of readability.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to discover what materials librarians currently use to meet the needs of women learners in a way that helps women understand their situation *as women* and as people whose lives are further complicated by issues related to race, ethnicity, age, culture, sexuality, physical or learning disability, or class. *What* resources are currently being collected on library shelves by librarians? *How* they are being used? What curriculums and reading materials from the library's general collections are being used to meet the specific needs of women with lower-level literacy skills?

### HISTORY

A similar study was conducted in 1999-2000 with literacy workers. Results of that study will be available on ERIC in the Spring of 2001. That questionnaire has been modified to continue this research with both literacy workers and now also with librarians. The estimated time to complete this questionnaire is about 1 hour.

### OUTCOMES

Portions of this research will be used in a dissertation for a doctoral degree in education. Additionally, the benefits of this study will be made available to literacy communities in the following ways:

- Results posted on [www.litwomen.org/WLindex.html](http://www.litwomen.org/WLindex.html) in the Spring of 2002
- Results provided in print format to those who participate by answering the questionnaire
- Summary prepared for publication
- Specific information about materials and resources will be compiled, annotated, and added to the preliminary resource listing already available at [www.litwomen.org/Resources.html](http://www.litwomen.org/Resources.html)

This research also contributes to a process underway to establish WE LEARN as a non-profit organization—resource center / clearinghouse—dedicated to women-centered literacy publishing, review, networking, and distribution. What I hope will emerge is an on-going and vital community of learners, literacy workers, librarians, educators, and writers integrally committed to and involved in the process of creating women-centered (feminist) adult basic literacy materials.

*Please distribute freely.*

This questionnaire is also available at [www.litwomen.org/libq.html](http://www.litwomen.org/libq.html).

### **Please return by September 15, 2001 to:**

Mev Miller  
1483 Laurel Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55104

### **Questions & replies can also be directed to:**

Phone: 651-646-0097  
Fax: 651-646-1153  
[mev@winternet.com](mailto:mev@winternet.com)

This research is being conducted by Mev Miller as a section of information for her dissertation for an Ed.D. in Critical Pedagogy (with emphasis on issues of literacy and adult women) at the Univ. of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, MN. Mev is also a co-founder of *Women Leading Through Reading* in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. More information can be found at [www.litwomen.org/wltr.html](http://www.litwomen.org/wltr.html).

## Section A: Site Specifics

Please have this section filled out by someone in your library/resource center familiar with this information. This person need not be the same person who responds to sections B & C. You may replace this section with institutional literature (such as an annual report to donors) if it contains this information—please send it with completed sections B & C. The site questions are intended to provide an understanding of the places where certain types of materials are being used. These responses will be kept confidential and summaries will protect the specific identity of the respondents.

Name of library/resource center \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Website URL \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the general focus of your library or your mission statement if you have one:**

### Type of organization (check all that apply):

Public library       K-12 school library       College/University library  
 Prison library       Corporation library  
 Resource Center / library connected to a \_\_\_\_\_

### Connections to literacy: (select all that apply)

Our library sponsors it's own literacy program. In this, we offer (check all that apply):  
     classes     individual tutoring     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Our library hosts a literacy program that is independently controlled

Our library works in direct cooperation with local literacy efforts (if yes, how. Please be specific)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other connections to literacy (please be as specific as possible)

We have a distinct selection/collection of literacy materials.

We have a librarian assigned to the collection development of our literacy-related materials.

We rely on our general collection for literacy materials.

Other or additional collection considerations (please be as specific as possible)

## Section B: Specific Questions on Reading / Resource Materials

Which of the following published materials do you shelve in your collection? How would you rate them? Please use open spaces on the form or additional paper if you need more room for your comments.

Title	On our Shelves	NOT on our shelves	Don't Know It	Please rate this material: 1 = Excellent 3 = Average 5 = Poor	Where do you use this material: LC = Literacy Collection; GC = General Collection; RS = Reference Section; C = Classroom/Resource Center; O = Other (Please identify) (Circle all that apply)
<i>Making Connections: A Literacy and EAL Curriculum from a Feminist Perspective</i> (CCLOW)				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>16 Extraordinary American Women</i> J. Weston Walch				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>Push</i> by Sapphire				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>When I Was Puerto Rican</i> by Esmerelda Santiago				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>Beginning to Heal</i> by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>Breaking free from Partner Abuse</i> by Mary Marecek				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<i>Chicken Soup for a Woman's Soul</i> by Jack Canfield				1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O
<b>“New Books for New Readers” Series (Univ. of Kentucky):</b> 1) <i>Heartwood</i> 2) <i>Why Work?</i>				1   2   3   4   5 1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O LC   GC   RS   C   O
<b>Seal Press:</b> <i>You Can Be Free</i> by Ginny NiCarthy  <i>Working Parts</i> by Lucy Jane Bledsoe  <u>“Women Who Dared” Series:</u> 1) <i>Getting the Real Story</i> 2) <i>Heart in Politics</i>				1   2   3   4   5 1   2   3   4   5 1   2   3   4   5 1   2   3   4   5	LC   GC   RS   C   O LC   GC   RS   C   O LC   GC   RS   C   O LC   GC   RS   C   O

What additional comments do you have about any of the titles listed above (for example: reading level, general effectiveness, and so on)??

Title	On our Shelves	NOT on our shelves	Don't Know It	Please rate this material: 1 = Excellent 3 = Average 5 = Poor	Where do you use this material: LC = Literacy Collection; GC = General Collection; RS = Reference Section; LC = Classroom/Resource Center; O = Other (Please identify) (Circle all that apply)
<b>From Laubach Literacy &amp; New Readers Press...</b> <u>"Quick &amp; Easy Guides":</u> 1) <i>Women's Health</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>"Controlled Readers"</u> <i>Pat King's Family</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>"Writer's Voices Series":</u> <i>Selections from...</i> 1) <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings/Heart of a Woman</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>"Today's World Series":</u> 1) <i>Domestic Violence</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O

What additional comments do you have about any of the titles listed above (for example: reading level, general effectiveness, and so on)??

Title	On our Shelves	NOT on our shelves	Don't Know It	Please rate this material: 1 = Excellent 3 = Average 5 = Poor	Where do you use this material: LC = Literacy Collection; GC = General Collection; RS = Reference Section; C = Classroom/Resource Center; O = Other (Please identify) (Circle all that apply)
<b>Laubach continued....</b> <u>Miscellaneous Titles:</u> 1) <i>The Childbearing Year</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
2) <i>A Good Beginning</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
3) <i>When a Baby Is New</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
4) <i>As a Child Grows</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
5) <i>Your Home Is a Learning Place</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
6) <i>You and Your Child's Teacher</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<b>Distributed by Peppercorn Books</b>  1) <i>Who Holds the Mirror</i> from the Breast Cancer Oral History Project				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
2) <i>Learning for Our Health &amp; Women Getting Together</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
3) <i>Welfare Rights &amp; Change</i> (from Literacy South)				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>"Black Leaders... Series"</u> 1) <i>Sojourner Truth</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
2) <i>Harriet Tubman</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>"Our Lives Series"</u> <i>So Many Things I Could Have Written</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>Avanti Books Readers</u> <i>My Deaf Son</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O
<u>Spike Press</u> <i>A Woman's Work</i>				1 2 3 4 5	LC GC RS C O

What additional comments do you have about any of the titles listed above (for example: reading level, general effectiveness, and so on)??





- 9) Does your library create its own printed literacy materials? Why? If yes, what are they?
- 10) Does your library maintain a listing or indexing (card catalog) of literacy materials specifically for adult patrons with basic literacy or ESL reading skills? How do your patrons know about it?
- 11) Who in your library makes the decisions about what literacy materials to add or keep in your collection?
- 12) What resources or review media do you use to find out about new literacy materials for your collection?
- 13) If literacy workers wrote reviews about the effectiveness of specific women-centered literacy materials, would you find this useful? Why or why not?
- 14) Would you refer to a resource/networking center dedicated to women-centered literacy materials? Please comment on what would work best (e.g., printed newsletter, website, mailing list) and what it should do or include.

15) What factors are important to you in choosing literacy materials for women or on women's issues?  
How would you rate the following?

	Extremely important	Important	Not so Important	Doesn't matter	Comments on this?
Length (in general) ....and specifically 1-2 pages 3-4 pages more than 5 pages					
Content					
Quality of writing					
Reading level					
Comprehension questions					
Workbook format					
Overall size of book					
Price					
Accompanied by an audiotape					
Accompanied by a website					
Accompanied by a software program					
Accompanied by a teacher's guide or resource book					

Other considerations—please be as specific as possible.

## Section D: List of Responders

Please indicate who in your library / resource center responded to each section.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Name of Responder(s)</b> (please print) More than one person may answer each section. Please indicate by (*) who primarily handled each section.	<b>Position in Organization</b>	<b>May I contact you</b> for additional information or for clarification on responses?
<b>A: Site Specifics</b>			_____ no  _____ yes by phone _____ email _____ fax _____ mail _____
<b>B: Specific Questions on Reading / Resource Materials</b>			_____ no  _____ yes by phone _____ email _____ fax _____ mail _____
<b>C: What Additional Women-centered Resources Do You Use?</b>			_____ no  _____ yes by phone _____ email _____ fax _____ mail _____

**Deadline: July 1, 2001.**

Thank you for participating. Please return to:

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 1483 Laurel Ave.  
 St. Paul, MN 55104

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 651-646-1183 (fax)  
 mev@winternet.com