

Literacy Reflection Guide

Definition:

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) *literacy* is defined as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."

Statistics:

- In 2011, of the Fourth-Graders who scored *below* the 25th percentile in the National Report Card (NRC) Reading proficiency test: 25% were African American and 35% were Hispanic.
 - A total of 74% were eligible for free/reduced-priced school lunch.
 - 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare.
- Of the Fourth-Graders who scored *above* the 75th percentile in the same test: 71% were Caucasian, while only 7% were African American and 11% Hispanic.
- In 2011, of the Eighth-Graders who scored *below* the 25th percentile in the NRC Reading proficiency test: 26% were African American and 32% were Hispanic.
 - A total of 67% were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch
- Of the Eighth-Graders who scored *above* the 75th percentile in the same test: 72% were Caucasian, while just 6% were African American and 11% Hispanic.
 - 71% of these students had at least one parent who graduated from college.
- 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.
- More than 60% of all prison inmates are functionally illiterate.
- The United States ranks **fifth** on adult literacy skills when compared to other industrialized nations.

Resources:

- The U.S. Department of Justice states, "The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is *welded to reading failure*."
- USA Today, "Literacy study: 1 in 7 U.S. adults are unable to read this story"
 - http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-01-08-adult-literacy_N.htm
- Connecting Literacy and the American Dream, an essay by Forrest Chisman:
 - <http://www.caalusa.org/caaloccasionalpaper1.pdf>
 - How does the connection between slavery and our current situation strike you?

- Is it helpful to trace the history of Literacy Movements and their problems? Why or why not?
- Calvin Students at Cook Library Center
 - <http://www.calvin.edu/news/archive/helping-out-at-cook-library-center>

What Now: Resources for Further Engagement

- **Cook Library Center**
 - Located on Grandville Avenue, the Cook Library Center caters to the Roosevelt Park community providing After-School programs and other tools for the literacy development of students and adults.
 - <http://gaah.org/clc>
- **Grand Rapids and Kent District Libraries:**
 - Located downtown, in East Grand Rapids, in Kentwood and other areas, libraries are a terrific place to volunteer with organizing summer reading programs.
 - <http://www.grpl.org/>
 - <http://www.kdl.org/>
- **Literacy Center of West Michigan:**
 - Located on Monroe Ave in Grand Rapids, the Literacy Center has been working for West Michigan literacy for more than 20 years.
 - <http://www.literacycenterwm.org/>
- **ProLiteracy:**
 - ProLiteracy works with its members and partners, and the adult learners they serve, along with local, national, and international organizations. ProLiteracy helps build the capacity and quality of programs that are teaching adults to read, write, compute, use technology, and learn English as a new language.
 - <http://www.proliteracy.org/>

If you have any suggestions or comments on what we can improve, please contact us at slc@calvin.edu or 616-526-6455.



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