

Literacy for All: Advocacy, Libraries, and Literacy
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Dan Miller: Good afternoon and thank you for joining us. My name is Dan Miller. I am the Acting Director of the National Institute for Literacy. The Institute and its regional resource centers are pleased to host today's webcast in conjunction with our longtime partner, the American Library Association and its Committee on Literacy. Since 1991, the Institute has worked to provide national leadership on the issue of literacy across the lifespan. An important part of the Institute's mission is to serve as the national resource for adult literacy programs and as the clearinghouse for scientifically based research and resources on reading, reading instruction and adult literacy.

The Institute views literacy as more than just an individual's ability to read. Rather, literacy represents the sum of many skills -- reading, writing, speaking in English, computing, and solving problems -- at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family and in society. Developing and improving these skills is a lifelong process and the nation's libraries play a pivotal role in these activities.

While the Institute's publications and research can be found in a variety of government and academic institutions as well as public libraries, libraries and librarians are audiences that we don't often reach in our work. I know that today's webcast and our discussion this afternoon will serve as a turning point for greater sharing of resources and opportunities to collaborate.

Libraries continue to be the hubs for community gatherings, the place where many literacy practitioners train and tutor students, where the books they house open doors for children, youth, and adults. Through our publications, research, national discussion lists and trainings, the Institute has much to offer libraries, librarians, and their patrons.

In many ways, today's webcast is a culmination of a 17-year partnership with the American Library Association and its Committee on Literacy that began not long after the Institute was founded. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ALA and the Committee for their support of literacy and the Institute.

Today's event is a new beginning in our joint work, supporting and celebrating lifelong literacy. I would like to thank you, our viewing audience, and remind you to take a few minutes to post your questions on the website this afternoon. I'm delighted to be joined this afternoon by Jim Rettig, President of the American Library Association. Jim?

Jim Rettig: Thank you, Dan. Let me begin by thanking you and the Institute for your support for this summit, its ongoing commitment to libraries and literacy, and partnership with ALA and our Committee on Literacy. This seminal webcast would not have happened without the Institute's interest and enthusiasm.

Basic literacy, the ability to read and write, is absolutely fundamental to success in life. These skills should not reach a plateau. They should grow in scope and potency over time

as a person matures and experiences varied situations that require a broader range of ability to comprehend and use language and the written word.

Learning to read and write is a social process. Nobody is ever on their own in acquiring and improving literacy skills. Their constant partner is the library. Our well-developed network of libraries is an asset that American society all too often takes for granted and all too rarely fully appreciates. Taken collectively, our public, school, academic and other libraries are the only agency in American society that offers universally accessible lifelong learning opportunities. Libraries serve every economic class, every age group, every educational level, everyone.

In a world of constant technological change, rapid globalization and economic turmoil, lifelong learning is a necessity for individuals, organizations, institutions, and our society. Literacy is the foundation for lifelong learning. It is a universal necessity. Libraries promote and support literacy for all.

Our libraries form a complex info ecosystem. In an ecosystem, what affects one part of the system affects the whole. If any part of the system is weak or threatened, the whole system is weak or threatened. An example helps to illustrate the importance of supporting the entire library ecosystem. In 2006, the SKILLS Act, The Strengthening Kids Interest In Learning and Libraries Act, was introduced in the US Congress. The SKILLS Act was written to remedy a deficiency in No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind requires schools to have personnel in a range of positions labeled highly qualified. Alas, school librarians are not among those required positions. This flaw in NCBL leaves our children behind.

Literacy skills develop over time and grow in complexity, encompassing not just the ability to read and write, but also information literacy, the ability to recognize information needs, to know where to look for information, to seek information and to evaluate it. A big part of knowing where to look for information is to know one's library. Those lessons begin in our school libraries, if our students have a librarian to teach those lessons.

The importance of the SKILLS Act is obvious to school libraries. It is just as important to our public and academic libraries. For more than 30 years I have worked in university libraries. The students I have served have mastered the sort of abilities we typically associate with literacy. But far too many have entered college lacking the experience and understanding of libraries to do the sort of work college faculty expect of freshman. Students who have not received a strong foundation through their experiences in the sort of libraries the SKILLS Act called for require remedial education when they reach college. Academic libraries have a strong stake in our school libraries. So do public libraries.

When school systems fail to provide, or even worse eliminate, school librarian positions, student and their parents have no place to turn but to their public library. The librarians in our public libraries do what they can, but they cannot replicate the learning experiences

and opportunities that students would experience with their school librarian. School librarians spend the overwhelming share of their time teaching either in the classroom or in the library, often side by side with the teachers.

In January, I visited a high school library in Henrico County in Suburban Richmond, Virginia. The librarian and a history teacher collaborated on an assignment on Greek mythology. The students spent an entire class period in the library getting started on this interesting assignment. Each received a slip of paper at the beginning of the class and on that slip of paper was the name of a Greek god or goddess.

The slip also noted some of things that shaped the deity's reputation, murder, adultery, abduction, et cetera. They were also assigned to either the defense or the prosecution. The students had to look in the Code of Virginia to determine if the god might have violated any laws. They then had to do additional research on the god's life and legend. Their assignment was to develop over the following week an oral argument that they would present to a jury of their fellow students, making the case for acquittal or for conviction of the god.

The students were engaged, although some assigned to the defense felt a bit intimidated. They worked and helped each other. They asked the teacher and the librarian questions. Through this creative assignment, they learned about a Greek deity, civil law, mythology, and information resources. As they did their research, they exercised their reading ability. Delving into the Virginia Legal Code undoubtedly stretched their reading comprehension. I didn't share my defense strategy with those students, but I wonder how many of them, as I would have, moved for dismissal of all charges because the student court, mere mortals all, doesn't have jurisdiction over a god.

If they hadn't yet reached that level of information literacy, this assignment certainly helped them grow in that direction. This is not the sort of experience that even the most dedicated public library can give these students. Public libraries, academic libraries, schools -- all need school librarians. Above all, our children need school libraries and librarians. Our libraries form an integrated ecosystem that serves everyone from birth throughout life helping them develop and improve their literacy skills and their talents to the greatest extent possible.

30 years ago, Pink Floyd sang, "We don't need no education, teacher leave the kids alone. All-in-all, it's just another brick in the wall." Good pop music maybe, but very poor educational policy. Literacy does not build brick walls of thought control such as those decried in the song. Reading and writing lay a solid foundation for life long learning and engagement with the world far beyond the walls of one's own experience. Libraries play an incredibly important role in helping individuals develop the literacy capabilities they need for that expanse of lifelong learning -- books for baby's programs, pre-school story hours, classes in English as the second language, collaboration between K12 teachers and librarians, term paper clinics for high school and college students, cultural programming for all ages and more.

The SKILLS Act did not, alas, become law in the last Congress. We will of course have new opportunities in the current Congress to make sure that our students won't be left behind. No matter where one serves in the library world or as a Literacy Advocate, all of us have a vital stake in making sure that the vision of the SKILLS Act becomes a reality for the sake of our children, for the sake of our society, for the vitality and future of the United States and the global society of the 21st Century.

After a short break, we'll be back with Sandra Newell, Chair of the Committee on Literacy.

Sandra Newell: Dan and Jim, thank you on behalf of the Committee on Literacy for being a part of today's Library Literacy webcast summit. You certainly set the stage outlining the issues, challenges, and rationale for the role of lifelong learning by all types of libraries.

I'd like to introduce my colleagues, Dinah O'Brian, from the Plymouth Massachusetts Public Library; Mark Pumphrey, Polk County, North Carolina Public Library; and certainly Dale Lipschultz, our ALA Literacy Officer with Office of Literacy and Outreach Services.

Literacy has been a part of my career since I took my first job in the mid 1970s as a young professional working in the Florida Panhandle at the Northwest Regional Library System. At that time, it was my job to lug bags of books to adult basic education classes over a six county area, and it was a challenge to get those adult students to check out our books. About that time, ALA was really getting involved in literacy by publishing Helen Lyman's books on adult literacy and holding the first White House Conference on libraries in 1979. Our Library Literacy crusaders were on the forefront, encouraging libraries to expand their literacy programs while certainly working closely with other literacy providers in their community. It was in 1981 when Robert Wedgeworth, the ALA Executive Director and Peggy Barbara, the Director of ALA's Public Information Office, and the other adult literacy organizations across the country came together to found the National Coalition for Literacy.

ALA support for adult literacy continues to grow. Our ALA leadership realizes that basic literacy is the cornerstone to everything libraries do. In fact, literacy puts a face on our library work as few other services can. As librarians, we know that change happens inside the heads of our customers because they sometimes tell us. John tells us that he borrowed -- the book that he borrowed helped him to get a job, and Maria tells her children's librarian that she can finally help her child with homework because of the library work. Librarians, no change happens inside the people we serve because of the library work, but often our work is invisible.

I want to now share a story of how individual change really becomes visible and has its impact on literacy at the local, state and national level. As ALA was expanding their support of literacy in the early 90s, Palm Beach County Public Library started their own Literacy Program just in time for Joses DeMoranville. Joses grew up in New York City,

where he was third of 28 children. He was on the streets by third grade, first shining shoes in bars and then working as a laborer. He quickly got into a mix of trouble with alcohol and drugs and never learned how to read.

Like most adults in his situation embarrassed, Jose kept the fact he could not read a secret. Well, he finally got hurt on the job and couldn't do physical work any longer. He was in his 40s. It was at that point when his mentor in the 12-step program found out that he couldn't read, and he took him to the Palm Beach County Public Library. Jose was lucky. The library had one of those -- one-to-one tutoring program, confidential -- and Jose was matched with the carrying volunteer. Gradually as they worked together, the written words started to make sense for Jose. His tutor was trained and supported by the Library's literacy staff and Jose's tutor had lots of patience and Jose had grit and determination.

Once he learned to read, he was referred to the school's Adult Education Program. And with his new skills, for the first time he was able to read to his granddaughter, something he could never do for her mother. Well finally, Jose and his wife moved up to Tallahassee where I live and enrolled in the Leon County School System's Adult Education Program. He again found caring teachers, vital to a learner's success. After three months of instruction, Jose took the GED test and to his surprise he passed. Yes, Jose received his high school diploma and he continued his education at technical school in architectural design and draftsmanship.

Now Jose has a well paying job at Home Depot. And as he tells it and I wish he were here to tell you the same, I don't just have a job, I have a career -- all because of that lifeline provided by the Palm Beach County Public Library and the Leon County Schools. Jose is now a literacy leader in Florida. He is Vice President of Volunteers for Adult Literacy in Florida, where actually I serve as President. And Jose has such a passion and commitment to give back. He also has a way with words and he is always out there telling a story, recruiting and supporting students, fundraising for literacy, and doing whatever he can to give back. Jose is just one example of why libraries provide direct literacy instruction to make a visible difference in a person's life.

This is just one of hundreds of thousands of people helped by our libraries and literacy partners. Literacy covers the life span. When one person learns, whether it's Jose, a parent, a college student, or a teenager, we all win. And libraries, if they do it right, are always part of the picture. And all libraries and their education partners play a vital role one person at a time.

Now while Jose was learning, ALA's commitment to literacy continued to grow and gained visibility. It was in 2001 when ALA's Committee on Literacy was formed with Peggy Barbara as the first chair and we've never looked back. Today we are at this historic library literacy summit convened by ALA and the National Institute for Literacy.

When libraries take a leadership role in literacy, we finally have a voice for what we do. The voices of the learners, whatever their age, proud of their achievements, proud they

are contributors, paying taxes, helping their families proud, because they now have access to everything in our libraries. I found from personal experience that a library that provides direct instruction of reading and writing recruits a customer and an advocate for life.

Now let's sort of step back and take a look at the practical side of the library literacy field. My biggest suggestion to you is to involve adult learners in your library program as much more than learners. Bring them on your team. Invite students to the table as you plan your program. Ask them to evaluate the program. Ask them to evaluate your library. Get their advice on items to add to the collection. Provide students opportunities to support each other. And definitely ask them to be an advocate for your library. Dollars are tight. But when you have a spokesperson like Jose saying because of the lifeline provided by the Library, I don't just have a job, I have a career. You know why libraries are in the literacy business.

Now, literacy is what all libraries do. All libraries should be teaching people how to read and through reading acquire 21st century literacy skills. In this century, librarians are trainers, teachers, educators, strategy guides -- we do it all. We know that how libraries do literacy differs from library to library and community to community and that's okay. It's up to you. It's up to you to decide what role is right for your community that the day is past when you as librarian can be a passive literacy supporter.

This summit is an opportunity to explore the roles of your library and for you as a librarian in literacy. What you play now and what you could be doing. Today we'll talk about literacy in all libraries of all kinds. Public libraries and services for adult learners you'll hear in just a minute. School and academic libraries, we'll talk about how you can advocate for literacy in libraries and we'll offer you tools on how to do this to help you with your work. Finally, we'll challenge you to do more.

Dinah O'Brian: So that was wonderful Sandy. As we all go to work in the morning, sometimes in New England we walk under the sign literally carved in stone that says, "The People's University and Free to All." And it's up to us as we walk to work to figure out what we really mean whether we are absorbing that statement or what we are actually doing to make those words come to life for ourselves and for our community.

Our entire profession is predicated on the assumption that those that we are serving can actually read. Nothing can be farther from the truth. There are many in our communities who cannot walk to their driveways and pick up a newspaper, who cannot read their children a bedtime story, who cannot go to the grocery store and write a check and we need to address those issues with every citizen in our community. They need to know that by walking into a public library, they could be confident that they are getting the best possible service available in their area. They have access to books, periodicals, newspapers, databases, CDs, DVDs, programs, leisure reading, educational materials and at times a warm and a cool place to spend an afternoon or an evening, simply meeting neighbors or talking with friends.

By entering our buildings, they need to know that they truly have free and open access to the Peoples' Universities and we need to remember that our careers are based upon one simple fact that I repeat we overlook on a daily basis -- that those who enter our building or seek our assistance, necessarily can read. Not all of them can.

In every community and every state in the nation, a certain percentage of the population as I said previously cannot make those simple choices, and it is up to us as librarians to assist them in making those choices. If they cannot understand the computer screen in front of them, our online databases aren't doing them any good. If we bring them in for programs and hosts of other activities, we can't take for granted that they can read our fliers and come to our institutions to participate in our programs. We have a real disconnect here.

A gaping hole in library services, this disconnect was identified at the Plymouth Library during the mid-80s. Immigrants were again flocking to the shores of Plymouth, Massachusetts, a population of about 60,000, and the need for ESOL services was easily discernible. Addressing the issue in the typical independent Yankee sort of way, it was determined that a program of one-on-one tutoring would be provided to these individuals. And we wouldn't take and adapt a certain program, we would do it with dribs and drabs and make it up as we went. Sound familiar?

The first step was to identify which library department would host the new program and where we could get the best results. We canvassed the library and it didn't look good. Librarians are not classroom teachers, so we developed a new department to add to our roster of library services, hired and educated around it, and called it adult literacy. Within five years we had over a 100 active tutor learner pairs, the collection of wonderful ESOL materials, professional staff in place, and the entire force and will of the public library behind the program. We also had the benefit of the local economic development commission sending us students who needed our help. We were meeting our mission, all was right with the world -- or so we thought.

During the first economic downturn in the early 1990s, we began receiving requests from native English speakers in our community for assistance in completing their formal education. These requests were not coming from recent high school drop outs, but middle to late middle aged citizens who realized that they needed a basic GED program in order to survive hard times. Learning from our ESOL efforts, the library stepped up, and in conjunction with our local office of economic development, began offering ABE and GED classes. We taught outside the box and taught and received funding to the Massachusetts Department of Education. We hired certified teachers. We pulled on our local connections to get classroom space and we've never looked back. To date, more than 400 adults have successfully completed their secondary education through the library, and twice that number have gone through our learning lab, and the library has firmly established itself as a resource for economic development.

I just want to interject a few personal statements here that we've recently heard from our learners. I drove to Maine for the first time and read the road signs. I found out I don't

have to clean houses for a living. I just enrolled in a Masters of Education Program to give back what has been given to me. My personal favorite, spoken to our original literacy coordinator: Can I take your picture? You saved my life.

Another one was spoken to me as I handed a GED diploma to this older woman, well she is my age, and she said the circle is broken. You just gave me my diploma, but you've also handed one tonight to my daughter and to my niece. As a public library director having experienced first hand the power of being able to read, and conversely the inability to read, and the strength that that has over the lives of our citizens, I've come to understand that reading is the core of our profession. Without reading there is no ability to access the information we so proudly collect and offer to our public. I am keenly aware that when we discuss literacy, we have only recently acknowledged the basic foundation and yet have taken no professional sense on this issue.

We are content to refer citizens to various social service agencies all the while wondering while they are not considering us an essential service to our community. We should be the first place government, business, and individuals think of when addressing the adult educational and economic issues that face our communities. We must be the lead agency and I am overjoyed that ALA has taken the lead on this issue, and through this summit, and through the work of its Literacy Committee and Literacy Assembly, which I chair.

If we are truly the People's University, we must take responsibilities. Library schools must teach that adult basic education and ESOL services are indeed the purview of the public library system, just as they teach reference, information management, and youth services.

Basic literacy is the foundation upon which all other literacies are based and indeed upon which our profession is based. And I just like to close by reminding you that in our urban areas, small cities and towns, the greatest resource for adult education is the public library. And moreover it is through the public library and its community involvement and its staff commitment that change can happen in so many lives. Mark?

Mark Pumphrey: Thank you, Dinah. In the early 1900s, public libraries really took hold nationwide in the United States around the common purpose of providing adult education. I am a public library director who believes that adult education is still our core purpose. That term "Adult Education," as defined by the public library community, has evolved into what we now call "literacy". It has also grown to be not just literacy for adults, but literacy for all age groups. It now includes the goal of providing literacy services for pre-school children at public libraries through early literacy programs such as "Every Child Ready to Read" developed cooperatively by the Public Library Association and the Association of Library Service to Children.

It includes parenting programs for parents of children in such early childhood literacy programs at the public library, often referred to as "Family Literacy" programs. It includes literacy programs such as tutoring for school age children both at the public library and at library outreach locations. It includes special tutoring programs for those

with disabilities. It includes programs to train tutors. If it does not always include GED preparation courses such as those provided by high schools, community colleges and basic education programs, it most definitely does include the provision of pre-GED level literacy training, materials, and trainers at many public libraries.

Many of these public library trainers are volunteers. Some now are professional literacy coordinators hired by public libraries to provide literacy programs and services to the community, and some of these also have teaching credentials. With the mounting job losses in the current economy, it includes job search, interviewing, and job-training skills, the kind of functional literacy skills required to cope in an increasingly complex world and the kind of workplace literacy skills needed by displaced workers.

The public library is the heart of all communities, and it is a warm and welcoming heart, providing literacy to new Americans learning to speak English and those speaking citizenship in their new country. In the past two decades, the term "literacy" has broadened further in the public library community to include not just basic literacy, but also a number of satellite literacies -- information literacy, financial literacy, civic literacy, media literacy, cultural literacy, digital literacy, and even social literacy to name a few. If you work in a public library, literacy is your business. It is your job. It is the product we provide. Call it lifelong learning, call it adult services, call it children services. It is all literacy.

In the days from the late 60s through 1997, public libraries were invigorated by Federal Library Services and Construction Act Funds specifically earmarked for library literacy Programs. Library literacy thrived in public libraries large and small throughout the country as a result. But then the funding ran out. Since that time with notable exceptions in every state, library literacy efforts have fallen off dramatically and in some cases have been closed down altogether.

Yet we still line up to claim the goal of literacy whenever funding of any kind is available. Literacy has a nice ring, but where are the programs? Why have we collectively clung to the name of literacy, but have not in the public library community as a whole preserved in the challenge -- persevered in the challenge of providing Library Literacy Programs or support services whether we have special funding or not?

I realize that many librarians who once had thriving Literacy Programs or support services are in small, inner city, rural, underfunded, or understaffed libraries. I'm the director of one of them and I am not saying that we can all provide full blown library-based literacy training programs, but what I am saying is that we can all do something and that many of us, and I include myself in this, can do much more than we are doing now. If all of us without sufficient resources take just a small action on behalf of literacy at our libraries, we can united become part of a large solution.

We need a collective mind shift among public librarians so that every frontline worker, every volunteer, every public library administrator, and by extension every public library board member, every friend of the public library, and every local public library advocate

understands that we must be counted among the leading advocates for literacy in our communities. To be engaged in the promotion and provision of literacy in public libraries is to be doing our jobs as public librarians and public library workers and supporters.

I first became passionate about Library Literacy Programs and Services nearly 30 years ago, when I was the director of a prison library in Kentucky. Men and women in prison are expected to reintegrate themselves into the workforce in society when they get out, but many of them do not have the reading, writing, computational, and now computer skills needed to do so. Through seven years of work as a State Library Institutional Consultant, I saw every kind of mental and physical disability, every type of coping behavior in prisons, and every obstacle thrown in the path of minorities, from impoverished Lakota Indians in South Dakota to less than fully integrated African-Americans in South Carolina. Add to these troubles an inability to read and write at a level to enable a person to function as a productive member of society, and we can understand why and how a kind of paralysis sets in.

But I prefer to focus on the change that can occur when someone like you or me decides to share the burden of such a life. I think of the literacy student from Columbia, South Carolina, living on what might as well be another planet on the plains of South Dakota, and making it all work because she was helped to learn English by a few caring people in succession who took the time to tutor her. And I think about the prison inmate in South Carolina who, upon graduating from the prison library literacy program, wrote to the governor of the state to say, "Two years ago, I could not read or write. But look at me now, I'm writing to you."

There are many root cause problems in our country that literacy training can help address. And libraries, as providers of literacy programs and services, are part of the solution to those root cause problems. Many of you are doing library literacy now, but my takeaway message for the today is this. Become advocates for literacy at your public library. Get everyone at the library involved. Literacy at the public library is everybody's job.

Finally, I would like to issue some challenges. In these times of economic hardship and loss of jobs, I challenge the federal government to restore funding for library-based literacy programs and services at a comparable or a greater level than was offered during the golden years of library literacy development from the 1970s through 1996. I challenge the American Library Association to prepare a statement that codifies that providing literacy programs or support services is a universal core goal for all libraries. I challenge each state library association that does not already have a literacy committee or roundtable to add one in which their members may participate. And I challenge each state library association to reach out to area literacy agencies and find ways to work together. Plan a joint workshop with members of the state literacy association. We did this in North Carolina through our library association's literacy roundtable, and the merger resulted in a sharing of information, resources and pledges of support that was incredible.

Half or more of our audience today are literacy coordinators not based in libraries. And I challenge you, as well, to do the same thing. If the librarians do not come to you, then go to them and propose a joint workshop. And I challenge every local librarian and library worker to become an advocate in your own community for the role of libraries, librarians, and library workers in the provision of library-based literacy programs or support services. Thank you.

Dale?

Dale Lipschultz: Thank you, Mark. And thank you, Sandy and Dinah, for your wonderful words about libraries, about literacy, about communities, and about everything else that we do and the more that we can be doing.

A couple of things before we go to our next presentation. First of all I want to remind all of you, the viewers, that you can ask us questions following the next presentation. We'd love to hear from you. We'd love to respond to you. We'd love to hear what you're doing in your local community, how you can help us, and how we can help you.

Our next segment is a video section that was made in Paducah, Kentucky. And I am pleased to welcome Stacey Nickell, Director of Library Services at West Kentucky Community & Technical College, and Terri Kirk, School Media Specialist at Reidland High School in Paducah, Kentucky. Both Stacy and Terri will be joining us on this video to discuss libraries, literacy, and community collaborations.

Terri Kirk: Hi, Stacey. Could you tell me what you are doing at WKCTC about literacy?

Stacey Nickell: Sure, Terri. One of the things you have to understand is that as a community college we have an open door admissions policy. And what that means is we get students from a broad spectrum of reading abilities. Most of our students are quite literate, but we do have some low literate individuals. We're also different in that we have traditional age students and we also have non-traditional students, adult learners who are retraining or for some other reason coming back to get more education.

A lot of our students are low literate and they are placed into developmental reading classes because they're not quite ready for college-level reading. We do a library instructional session with those students, and our goal in the library instructional session is basically to make them feel comfortable. A lot of times, unfortunately, people might have a negative experience when they were younger. So we want to make sure that they feel comfortable in the library. They feel comfortable asking questions.

Terri Kirk: Probably a lot of them too hadn't been in the libraries that looked like your library with computers and things like that too.

Stacey Nickell: Absolutely.

Terri Kirk: They probably would have taken the more traditional just books on a shelf kind of facility. So they probably do feel a little intimidated when they come in.

Stacey Nickell: Absolutely. So what we do with our instructional session is just very very basic. We teach them how to do a search in the online catalogue and then actually go to the shelf and locate that item, because a lot of our students don't even know how to do something basic like that. We also teach them how to write a citation for a bibliography or work cited page, what the elements of the citation are, which part is the author, which part is the title et cetera. And so what we've done to kind of spice up our instructional session is we've created games for the developmental students to use to get these concepts across. Now aren't you doing something with gaming?

Terri Kirk: I am and I think I'm kind of doing the same -- I have the same idea that you have about getting people comfortable in the library, because my students, who are at the high school level, and sometimes they are not comfortable being in a library and they have had bad experiences from middle school or elementary school. And they think that the library isn't a very fun place to be. It's boring and it's quiet.

So I have started having a game club and it's just a very traditional kind of club that we meet during club times with the kids. We started out as a chess club and it developed into a sort of just a board game club. So we play Clue and Battleship and games that they liked to play when they were kids to let them see that their library is not just a place to come and work but it's also a place to come and have fun. It's been kind of interesting because a lot of the kids that are in the game club are boys. And that's one of our target audiences, always to get boys involved in the library. So with our game club then we have an event every year that's -- we call Cyber Night and it's -- it actually lasts all day on a Saturday and we come up and play videogames.

Stacey Nickell: Wow.

Terri Kirk: And it's been a great success. And in conjunction with that, then I've ordered some books that are about some of the games. There's a series about the Halo games that the kids like. And even if they don't really like to read, they'll pick up a book like that because it's something that interests them.

Stacey Nickell: We have some other materials in the community college library, reading materials. Part of what we try to do is just encourage pleasure reading as it -- because a lot of people just watch TV. And so with the developmental students part of what we do is we have a lease plan, where we can lease the bestsellers and other high-interest reading materials just to get them reading. Another thing that we do is we collect easy books or children's books for our non-traditional developmental students so that they can read those to their children and then somehow break the cycle of illiteracy or low literate.

Terri Kirk: I've kind of used picture books too in the high school. And at first when I bought picture books, I thought more of my art students that they would like to see the art in picture books. But then I realized that that's the same thing, they babysit, so they can

check out those books to take to babysit, they have -- when they babysit or they can have younger brothers and sisters that they might read to. We also have a child development class and those students are -- may go out into the community and work at the preschool level. And so they have to make lesson plans and they read the books. So I've had those books too.

I also have books that are written on a lower level from our reluctant readers. Now I have some books that are written at a very low level for children that are non-readers. But a lot of our students at the high school level are low-level readers.

Stacey Nickell: Right.

Terri Kirk: Not necessarily non-readers. So there is this couple of different series, but one of them I particularly like is there are about 80 pages. They're small, they can put them in their back pocket and they have great graphics on the front. And the titles are usually things like one word. I can think of one off the top of my head is called Grind and it's about skateboarding. They are written at a low level, but you wouldn't be embarrassed to carry them around. And when I first got them, I kind of kept them aside for the lower level readers. But then I realized that all the kids were liking the books, because some times you just want to find a little book to read.

So in our school of course we focus on reading. And I think one of the main keys to that is having books that appeal to all types of students. So I try to get books for boys, books that girls like. They -- into fantasy with all the series books. But particularly I have to think I have to focus on books for -- about sports. That seems like that's -- If you can get a boy that comes in and says, "Well," I say, "What do you like to do?" "Well, I like to play soccer." "Hey, here is a book for you. This is about a soccer player. It's really got a good story to it." And then they sort of pick up and start reading. So it's not uncommon to be at my school and see kids reading books and I think that's exciting.

Stacey Nickell: Since we have such a wide range of ages for our students, we don't want to forget the traditional age student, the 18 to 20 year old. So we've also started collecting graphic novels and those have been wildly popular.

Terri Kirk: Yes. I have some of those too and they are popular. Now Stacey, tell us about the QEP that your university was part of?

Stacey Nickell: Okay. Well, as part of the accreditation process you have to select a Quality Enhancement Plan, or what's called a QEP, and it's basically any kind of subject that benefits student learning. And so our college decided on reading comprehension for our QEP.

And so as part of that we've done the "One Book, One Community, One College," have a book read for the community and we did that last fall. And I think what makes our program unique is we not only involved the college, but also the McCracken County, the public school system, we had many many partners, we also had the public library, the

independent theater downtown, we also had our Challenger Center that's here on campus. Am I forgetting any one...?

Terri Kirk: Well, and MyKnet.

Stacey Nickell: MyKnet, that's right.

Terri Kirk: And I'm going to explain a little bit about what MyKnet, if you want it...

Stacey Nickell: You go ahead.

Terri Kirk: Okay, all right. Well, MyKnet -- I've always described MyKnet as a mini ALA because it's in our little town, our little community and it's all kinds of librarians and we meet once a month. We have the -- of course the college library, the school librarians, we have church librarians, public librarians and hospital librarians. So we have -- we invite everybody that would like to be involved in it. And we have our traditional once-a-month meetings, but we got very excited about the program that the KCT&C invited us to be a part of with the QEP.

I think MyKnet has been a really good program for our community, because we do lots of things, fun things like we participate in the Labor Day parade with a book cart drill team and we participated with a precision book reading float at one time. So we've gotten a lot of interest and excitement about, I think we've got some really good press with the Rocket Boys initiative, so --

Stacey Nickell: Yes, the Rocket Boys initiative was very successful. We actually brought Homer Hickam, the author of Rocket Boys, here on campus and brought in several of the different high school students. And we filled our theater with the high school students. And then I think later on that afternoon he was at the public library to give a presentation, so...

Terri Kirk: And that was open to the community.

Stacey Nickell: Yes, that was open to the community.

Terri Kirk: I think we got some really great press on that. That was covered in our newspaper so well. One of the things I thought was really fun too is that I think about maybe a month before the author came, the little independent theater that you mentioned showed the movie.

Stacey Nickell: Yes.

Terri Kirk: October Sky, Rocket Boys, whichever one, I don't know which one -- the title of the movie was, but that little theater was packed that night. And it wasn't just librarians and students. It was people from all ages across our community. So I think that was very successful.

Stacey Nickell: I think our MyKnet group has been very successful in not just promoting libraries, but reading, and that's the cornerstone of literacy.

Terri Kirk: That's exactly right. Well, talking about the Rocket Boys initiative, I'd like to share what we did at our school to get our kids involved. And our honors and IT students were required to do summer reading. And it's not so much to test their literacy skills. It's more to test their will to being part of an honors program, to see that they're really dedicated to that.

So the APT Journal and I talked and since that book was coming up as a one community read. I said, "Would you be interested in having your kids read this?" So she agreed. And so at the same I went to ALA last summer in Anaheim participated in a big game. And it's an alternate reality game I think they're called and part of it was to finding the answers to questions and then a team event that you had to turn in.

So when I got back from ALA, I started thinking how could I use that with my students? I just thought it was such a cool and fun activity that I learned a lot about California, but I really thought it would be useful in the schools. So then it just like a light bulb came on in my head, I think I could use it with the Rocket Boys since we read it in the summer and Homer Hickam wasn't coming until October. I was afraid that kids would have gotten -- kind of forgotten about what was the book was about.

And so about a week before he came, I developed -- well over the summer I wrote the questions, but working with English teachers and honors junior English teacher also brought his kids in -- we did a game and I had about 15 or 20 questions and I tried to get the higher level thinking questions, not necessarily about what happened in the book, but why that book was chosen and part of the reason why that is about coal mining in West Virginia. Well, our state in Kentucky is known for coal mining, but our students in Western Kentucky don't really have that connection. So I tried to make them realize that the book was chosen thinking of Kentucky students and that we need to know something about our heritage of coal mining. And I did some things about Sputnik and I didn't just say what year did Sputnik go up. I did some things like who developed it and how did he die?

So they had to look at some different kinds of questions and I had a few of the knowledge level questions to make it easier. But then -- so the day of the event we did it for two days. We hid the questions all over our campus. I was at the football stadium. I even taped one under the table in the library so they had to lay on their back to find the question and the kids were put into teams and they were so great because they came in with team tee shirts and walkie-talkie. So I had one stationed at the computer and the other one was out finding the questions, because they got points on how quickly they got the answers. So first team got more points and then farther along.

So it was a really great even. And with MyKnet, I shared those questions, some of the other libraries just gave the questions out and had the kids look them up in the library

instead of going to the more elaborate hide them all over campus because it was kind of a big deal. And thankfully, we had great weather that day. So if anyone is interested, they could e-mail me about that if they'd like to do something like that. But I think that was a really fun way to present a book that the kids had already read and to get them to rethink about it and they were very excited when Homer Hickam -- he said the auditorium was packed.

Stacey Nickell: It was absolutely and we're looking forward to our next big read. My understanding is that we're in negotiations with an author to come so we don't know exactly who the author is or which book we'll do, but I look forward to working with other elements of the community, the public schools, the public library.

Terri Kirk: You think it's going to be that way again that fills out, will all be together and working...

Stacey Nickell: I believe so, I believe so.

Terri Kirk: I think it was a great success for our community. So, let's see, do we have anything else we want to talk about that we're doing in our areas? We're promoting reading as a group, both at the community college level and of course at the public school level and we're looking forward to an exciting time with our next community read. Thanks a lot.

Stacey Nickell: Thanks.

Dale Lipschultz: Stacey and Terri, thank you for sharing your program with your collaborations and your innovations.

It's my pleasure to introduce or reintroduce members of the panel to answer some of your questions. First, Sandy Newell, Chair of the Committee on Literacy; Jim Rettig, ALA President; and Dan Miller, Acting Director of the National Institute for Literacy.

We're going to begin with first a question for -- we're going do the first question for Dan Miller as soon as I can find it, which I have right here. Actually we're going to start with Sandy. Sorry. What happens when you lie? Sandy, this question comes from Melissa at the Multnomah County Library that I know is in Portland, Oregon. And Melissa asks, we have many adults reading at a very low level, how can we best help these new readers whether they are native English speakers or non-native speakers beyond special collections of easy to read materials? We can and do connect patrons to community services but could you speak to the library's role in meeting the needs of these invisible learners.

Sandra Newell: There is so much you can do. A couple of things that our libraries in Florida, where I work, have done, they've called their own local summits to pull together and identify what are some of the issues for that particular community. In Gainesville, they actually identified the fact that there wasn't a trainer of volunteer literacy programs

in the area, so the library actually took over that role when that coalition created their own directory.

You can do something really simple like a short story discussion program, which is really read aloud to the learners so we have -- I don't know whether these are English language or it sounded more like basic ed, but again that reinforces all the critical thinking, learning the words. Lot of communities do the big read, have audio books if you are targeting learners who cannot read very well or if they are English language speakers then you may be have the book in their language and they learn discussing that. That's just a few things.

Dale Lipschultz: That's great, thank you Sandy. Dan, I found the question for you.

Dan Miller: Okay.

Dale Lipschultz: This is from John from the Omaha Public Library. I am a public librarian and I am also a board member on my local literacy organization. Our organization is a separate entity. Our non-profit literacy organization is facing financial hard times. Is there Federal stimulus money for adult education programs and where can we find information about this?

Dan Miller: Okay, that's an excellent and a timely question. It's unfortunate that the adult education provider system, delivery system in the country did not get any earmarked money for adult education and literacy. However, the Department of Labor, the Employment and Training administration, the workforce system in United States, got significant amounts of money for worker training and retraining, and that is where most literacy providers should be looking for funding. The Department of Labor has issued its technical guidance to the state and the local workforce boards. If you don't know who those people are, you should know who they are, and I would encourage you to try and make contact with the local workforce board or the state organization.

There just are hundreds of millions of dollars that are flooding the workforce system right now. The Department of Labor has indicated that they will need to be working with every community partner that they have in order to get the money out to people who need the services, and the Department has been very emphatic about this being the one opportunity to get it right.

And so I would encourage you to work with your local workforce boards. Now also, the governor in each state, if you are a state person, the governor has the opportunity to set aside 15% of the funds for state initiatives. And it's an excellent opportunity for libraries, adult education providers, people who are in the literacy field to be working with their state partners to try and figure out some innovative and creative ways that states can work with their Governors to use that set aside money.

We'll be doing a webcast with the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the Adult Education and Literacy providers with the Department of Labor at the end of

this month. And I would encourage you to get on the ED website and if you can find the division of adult education and literacy on that website, we'll be announcing that webcast and we would encourage you to get on with Department of Labor and find out what funds are available.

Dale Lipschultz: Thanks Dan. Jim, I have a question that seems to be made for you. It is from David from the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hills. I think they just recently won a national championship. But he did write a question, do any library school's curricula adequately address the needs of public libraries for literacy education and adult learning services?

Jim Rettig: I'm not familiar with the curriculum of each and every library school by far. I think that if the UNC School doesn't offer what you're looking for along those lines, talk to faculty members, design a course for yourself, an independent study course, tie it into community activities that are supporting adult literacy and get credit for too.

Dale Lipschultz: Great, thank you. Sandy, I have one more question for you that I'd like to pose and it's from Gene at the Birmingham Public Library. What is the number one thing a library can do to support literacy efforts in the community?

Sandy Newell: Number one, the answer I'd give is to do the right thing for your own community. You have to do more than books, that's one thing because the books themselves and the materials or even the videos might be selling themselves a little bit better right now. But you have to partner with adult education providers or provide a program yourself. You have to do one or the other to really make an impact on current learners.

And then of course make your services real accessible to low-level readers or to non-English speakers. So make sure that something as simple as your brochure for getting a library card is simply written, or make sure that if someone sort of is reluctant to fill out your library card, the application, that you actually just do an interview and get the information that way. So there is not one, there are many and there are a lot of ideas on the builddliteracy.org site, which you got the URL there, many many good ideas that are out there, just a few.

Dale Lipschultz: I have a question for both Jim and Sandy, and I think Dan, you can you probably jump in sort of the part of 'no child left behind'. And this question is from Helter Weisberg who is a retired school librarian in New Jersey and also a member of the Committee on Literacy. Helter writes, on behalf of the many school librarians who cannot be watching this because they're working with their students, I would like to thank Jim Rettig for his perceptive comments.

Just recently the Woodbridge New Jersey Board of Education decided to eliminate elementary librarians because students have access to the Internet and "Don't need librarians." How do presenters and panelists view this too often heard opinion?

Jim Rettig: Well, it's horrible. Well, what else can we say about it. I was at the Texas Library Association conference last week, and I was talking to one of the leaders in the public libraries there and she told me about a new high school in her community that was designed without a library, let alone a librarian, because, like you said, it's all on the Internet.

Maybe what we need to do is devise some information-seeking tests for these decision makers who believe that and let them find stuff on the internet that isn't on the internet and maybe that would wake them up a bit. But the real argument has to be made in terms of what's good for the children. What are we going to do to educate these people so that they can function and thrive in the 21st century?

Sandra Newell: And just throwing in another thing. I love your idea of having your own quiz or test or whatever you might call up for local leaders, but the other thing too would be to really help people understand that libraries have librarians to help find and that -- and I love your test, because this would be, let them go out there and try to find good credible information.

And the problem is our work is invisible. Many people and I challenge, we as librarians we think oh, everybody loves this and knows everything that we do. They don't. And that's up to us as librarians to get out there to go to the Chamber of Commerce and talk with those folks to connect with the city council people or the county commission people so they really understand what library services are because we've got to push it out there because if we do not do that, then it will be easy to close this down like the story you just told.

Mark Pumphrey: I'd like to build on that a little bit and say that anytime we lose a literacy resource, it's devastating to a community, and I think that speaks to building authentic partnerships within your community. That does a couple of things. It provides better services for the adult learners and also creates other advocates for the literacy community, not the library, not the school system, not the -- whatever it is but the entire system.

I think it's very important that especially in times of tough economics that we really leverage each others' resources, that we realize that not one provider can do everything. Acknowledge that the people who come to us have many needs and they are varied and that not any single provider can respond to all of those needs and it really is in all of our best interest to cooperate with each other.

The libraries provide a very meaningful and critical service for many people. So do the literacy providers who have access to other resources just like our housing specialists, our welfare specialists. People are hungry, people come to us with substance abuse problems, and it's just not good for anyone of us to think that we can do everything. We need to reach out, build these networks to support families and in the long run and secondarily, that also supports the literacy system as well.

Dale Lipschultz: Jim, I have a question has a question for you here. Well I thought I did. And it's from Becky of [Christ] College. I'm an academic librarian and wondering, do you have advice on how I can interest busy college students in the book club, a more practical question?

Jim Rettig: Unfortunately I don't have any experience in doing that myself. Our biggest challenge especially this time of year in an academic library but our biggest challenge in any kind of library is getting peoples' attention. There are so many demands day to day for peoples' attention. It's one of the challenges of letting those decision makers, the city council men, et cetera know the value of the library.

The Chronicle of Higher Education used to have wonderful thing each month or so that listed the best selling books in college book stores, which would have given you a sense of the student's interest. They don't do that any more unfortunately. But ask the students, if you have a student library advisory committee such as many libraries in colleges and universities do, work with them. They have the connections with the students. And work with your Vice President for Student Services Office so whatever it is at your institution. And there is a push around the country for extracurricular educational opportunities outside the classroom learning experiences, and it sounds like you can make a big contribution with this book club idea at your institution.

Dale Lipschultz: Thank you Jim. Dan, I have a question for you. It's from Shahid at Walden University. And it's a two-part question.

Dan Miller: Oh.

Dale Lipschultz: Right, but we like that.

Dan Miller: Okay.

Dale Lipschultz: The first part is, what do you see as the role of public health practitioners regarding literacy? And the second part is how can we increase health literacy in our communities?

Dan Miller: Well, health literacy is a topic that is of great interest to a broad base of people right now, so it's a very timely topic to talk about. One of the most important things I think we can do is begin to talk about literacy as a health issue as opposed to sort of what we see in the medical profession as health literacy, which is more about reading prescriptions and that kind of thing.

But health literacy is really about taking -- having information to take care of yourself and your family. So, I think making people aware of the literacy issue in general is very important, making people aware that literacy is connected to good health, good literacy is connect to good health, focus on the statistical information and the data that we have about what happens to people when they have poor literacy skills as opposed to good literacy skills.

I think that changes -- it shifts the argument just a little bit and then I would begin to work with the medical community in your area. Because I am not sure that the medical community is really focused on the more nuanced discussion that I've tried to be -- tried to talk about, which is that there is a correlation between illiteracy and poor health. And so, I think that you can do both of those things and have some significant impact in your community.

Dale Lipschultz: Thanks Dan. Sandy, I have question, it's more of a comment, but I think it's important for you to respond to and may be I can jump in a little bit as well. And this from Lori at the Morse Institute Library in Massachusetts, and her comment is, in my suburban Massachusetts community we've created a collaboration that now involves five local public libraries. This helps both ESOL and basic ed students. It's been great to share resources and trainers and facilities and to provide support to our volunteers. This has been very successful consider this when offering literacy programs. I think it's important to discuss this as sort of the collaborations and partnerships that every library is not an entity on to its own, but as Jim said, part of an ecosystem.

Sandy Newell: I think absolutely as far as everybody reinventing the wheel is sort of silly and as librarians, we should know that if nobody else would. So it's exciting to hear that there are five different public libraries that have actually come together to share resources and there is just lots of different ways that this can happen. I love the fact of sharing trainers, developing curriculum for tutors to put into tutor training about the public library. And if you did templates and put those out there, then that's an excellent way because very much we're hearing the whole theme of partnerships and collaboration.

Dale Lipschultz: And I think it's important as we talk about English language learners to really acknowledge the importance of partnerships in the community not only with libraries, but with adult education groups, with the Office for Citizenship and sort of the resources that are provided through linking with all of these different groups.

I'm going to read a question that Jim can probably address, that Sandy can possibly address, which is the other piece. I think I can probably respond to it and this is something that both Terry and Stacy talked about, I'd like to bring it up. It is from Jenet at the Vigo County Public Library, and she writes, Terry and Stacy discussed gaming as a way of showing that libraries are fun. I've been to several workshops discussing how even noneducational games can increase literacy skills. Have any of you engaged in this type of programming and if so how?

Jim Rettig: I personally have a very limited gaming experience during National Gaming Day last November. A bunch of very patient children taught me how to play Guitar Hero and I didn't last long. Gaming though does have very important role in teaching critical thinking skills. To play some of these video games you have to learn a complex set of rules, understand an environment in which those play out, and it also teaches collaboration. You may be playing with somebody in Japan when you're sitting in Kentucky or some place in the US.

Furthermore, gaming just I think has this aura that it's not really educational. Well, let me ask this, if you're on an airplane do you want the pilot to be learning how to fly that plane then, or do you want that pilot to spend a lot of time on a flight simulator, which is a great big complex important game?

Dale Lipschultz: I can provide maybe a good resource I think. I suggest that you check out the gaming toolkit that was just posted. It is The Librarian's Guide to Gaming, an online toolkit for building gaming at your library and you can find it at librarygamingtoolkit.org. And there are tons of resources of information about not only using educational games, but gaming as recreation. To me it's a really fine line. There is learning going on when you play board games, when you play social games and certainly when you play electronic games. So, I would certainly plug all of that at this point.

A question from Joy at the Washington County Public Library. Hi there. Any very effective ways to increase attendance at programs. I have an ESL class that never has more than two students. What about recruitment, and what do we have to say about that, we know there is a need out there, how do you reach into communities and reach the students?

Sandra Newell: I guess the real challenge is to get that first family hooked. And then they will bring their husbands and wives and relatives and grandchildren and whatever and then you can really have a mix. It's - but it's -- as far as with English language learners, I've actually found it easier to reach that group. You need to hold the sessions at a convenient time.

I know a lot of libraries in Florida actually do conversational groups that are not like it's not enrollment, so you don't necessarily have to go week after week after week and because of that they get good attendance. I mean there are going to be times when depending on your community if it's -- they are working in the fields that they are not going to be in your class if they are working 12 hour days. But there maybe other times when they are more available and you may need to hold more sessions. So I've been -- from what I've heard and from my personal experience that these small groups sessions really actually do quite well to bring people in.

Mark Pumphrey: I used to be a local program director and I am too surprised that English as a Second Language classes are not really heavily attended and need some recruitment and retention efforts. But word of mouth is by far the most popular recruitment and retention tool I think among adult education anyway. I would try some things like appeal to families get the family as a unit involved in education.

I would go the route of flexibility. Look at the service hours that you are providing services, look at the services that you are providing. Second language foreign borne adults and their families tend to need some additional support services besides just language acquisition. These are people who typically are coming to this country and they are working, and working more than one or two jobs often. And when I say that, I am

talking about the family unit. There can be half a dozen different work schedules in that family unit. So, look at that –

Talk to community providers, look at other service providers, talk to other people in your community and find out what they know about the second language population and then reach out to your community and faith based organizations because those often times in a community are the first providers of service to immigrants.

Dinah O'Brian: I will jump in as far as trust is a huge issue and one thing that libraries bring to this we don't ask whether you're a serious resident of the United States, I mean in the sense that we are free. A lot of people who come from other countries have no idea what libraries are all about. So there is that starting point education piece that you need to do with building trust, the word of mouth and then the free there. But that is one aspect that libraries bring.

Dale Lipschultz: Thank you. Jim, I do - I found that question for you that I was looking for. It's from Curtis at the South Carolina State Library and he asks, what are libraries and/or literacy coalitions doing with social networks and Web 2.0 applications to promote literacy and reading?

James Rettig: I really don't have the information to answer that question well. But, don't you know Dale? Your office would be involved, wouldn't it?

Dale Lipschultz: Well, I think I wanted you to talk about sort of from the broader ALA perspective how we are using 2.0 to really reach -- and social networks to really reach across platforms and then I will jump in.

James Rettig: Well, ALA just launched its online communities and there is a community for every one of our thousand plus committee's boards task forces et cetera. But the really exciting thing about the online communities is members get to create their own communities. So you can create a community that addresses these issues and network with other ALA members and share ideas that way. This is brand new. Give it a try. Shape it the way you want to serve your needs.

Dale Lipschultz: Well, I think and sort of building on that one of the things that we've been doing not particularly addressing the needs of adult learners, but certainly reaching our own communities is using the social networking sites, using Facebook, using some of the other pieces to really get the word out and to connect with people in a very different way. And I think that is making a tremendous change in what we're doing and how we're reaching people.

I am going to read what I think is probably the final comment in sort of the Q&A part, because it builds on what we're talking about, what we're saying. And this is from Alexandra, who is a student at USC, which I'm assuming is the University of Southern California. As a current student pursuing my masters in library science, this webcast has been so inspiring. I especially enjoyed seeing all of the collaboration taking place across

the country to reach a common goal of literacy. In terms of programming, and here is her general question, do you feel that we need to turn our focus more to the technological side for all ages of patrons in order to help them succeed in navigating the rapidly changing environment?

Mark Pumphrey: Well, there is a tremendous literacy challenge in this country. I don't think there has ever been a time when the United States hasn't been challenged with literacy that with their rapid technology growth and explosion that we've got, it just seems to be exaggerated a lot.

I think the technology definitely is a key tool for the future of reaching many of the people that we have to reach. We have been I think as a literacy field been trying to do work in -- with web portals, putting curriculum online. I know that about half of the states are engaged in some sort of distance learning technologies.

The problem is just tremendous. The figures range around 44 million people in this country -- or 44%, I am sorry, not 44 million, about 93 million people in this country are functioning below or at the basic literacy skill level. And the problem gets larger and larger as we see more and more new Americans coming into this country needing language skills.

There is no reason to think that the brick-and-mortar system can meet the needs. We're seeing articles in newspapers today in The Washington Post and The New York Times about a million teachers leaving the profession through retirement in the next few years. We have got to figure out different ways of meeting the needs of people who need to get language skills and who need to upgrade their literacy skills. And for people just like you and me and all of these panel members, who could be displaced workers in the near future, and need to upgrade our skills. I think it's not appropriate for us to think that if we lost our jobs that we would want to go back to a classroom and sit in a classroom nine until noon everyday trying to get new skills. We'd want to get online and do it when it's convenient for us. We have all other obligations also.

Dale Lipschultz: And really, sorry to say this, but we are close to the end of our time here. And we've received many fabulous questions and lots that we didn't answer. But we've agreed and we've decided to really respond to all of the questions that we've received offline or off the air. And we have your questions, we have your e-mails and we will get back to you very very soon on these and make sure they're answered by the appropriate person or people.

First of all, I want to thank this esteemed panel for participating in this and being able to answer questions on the fly that I had the benefit of seeing before I posed to you. Sandy, thank you very much for doing this, for participating and for all your support. And Jim, thank you for your willingness to be a part of this and to contribute your time and talk about libraries and literacy. It's a very powerful statement you're making.

Jim Rettig: My pleasure. It's an important issue to libraries and to the people we serve.

Dale Lipschultz: Thank you. And Dan thanks very much to you and to the National Institute for Literacy for making this possible and for working hard to get this collaboration working and to have this event take place.

I just want to -- before we sign off and I know I have about two minutes -- I'll really very briefly summarize what I think we learned today. Some of you may have learned different things and have taken different messages away. But here is what I learned. I learned that we're all part of a very fragile ecosystem. And if we don't do our part and work together, the ecosystem isn't going to last. I learnt that libraries are first responders and that libraries are always ready when a crisis emerges, whether it's a hurricane or a financial crisis, or a literacy crisis. I know that libraries must recognize and plan services for non-readers. I also know and feel passionately that libraries must claim literacy.

Here's what we are going to do. We are going to provide you with tools and resources to help you make literacy part of what you are doing in your library. There is the literacy readiness inventory that's on BuildLiteracy.org. You can use this in your community and at your library. There's the advocacy toolkit that helps you not only advocate, but tell your story. And there's a blog on [BuildLiteracy](http://BuildLiteracy.org) too where you can have discussions, talk with each other and talk with all of us.

Finally, you can use the resources that are on the National Institute for Literacy's Web site, www.nifl.gov. We look forward to your questions, your comments and just thoughts. Thank you very much.