



LearnersMot

Motivating adult learners

Lesson 1

About literacy / illiteracy today and functionally illiterate learners

Why literacy? Its developmental importance

- Employers have to trust *all* workers that they are able to develop together with their service oriented companies and little division of work.
- Cognitive, cultural, communication skills of *all employees* are needed
- Low educated and low skilled workers can be illiterate/functionally illiterate.

LITERACY, MANY DEFINITIONS

- ✓ The *concept of literacy* = complex and dynamic and unstable.
- ✓ The process of *acquiring **basic**, cognitive, reading, writing cultural, communication and numeracy **skills**.*
- ✓ *The English 'literate' used to mean 'being familiar with literature and well educated'.*



I fonti di Elsa Morante: Credit; Edizioni Ca' Foscari

Today the word **literacy** is being misused!

Literacy comprises also **new basic and key competencies**

- to manage work on their own
- to improve productivity
- to achieve organisational targets [...]

Illiteracy in the English language means the opposite of literacy.

In 1970, the French Association ATD Quart Monde introduced the neologisms *functional literacy and functional illiteracy* (fr. l  trisme fonctionnel, ill  trisme fonctionnel)

- ✓ **Analphabetism** (of those who have not been schooled) *is not* functional illiteracy.
- ✓ Functional illiteracy is typical of *some* natives and migrants who had been to school, had completed compulsory schooling, but their knowledge and skills are forgotten or insufficient for modern society.

“Their writing, reading, numerical, cognitive and cultural skills are not developed enough for independent functioning in society” (Hebar, 2009)

UNESCO excludes from its definition

- ✓ ‘computer literacy’,
- ✓ ‘media literacy’,
- ✓ ‘health literacy’,
- ✓ ‘eco-literacy’
- ✓ ‘emotional literacy’

OECD report: *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* defined literacy as:

A particular skill, namely the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.'

Literacy and basic knowledge/skills cannot be clearly separated from each other

Literacy is a process

True or false

1. Literacy and functional literacy are considered to be the same phenomenon in industrialised societies.



2. Functional illiteracy refers to writing, reading, numeracy and much more.



3. Media literacy, emotional literacy, and eco-literacy are included in UNESCO's definition of functional literacy.



4. Functional illiteracy hinders personal, company, and social development.





**PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE SITUATIONS
LEADING TO FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY.**

**LOW-EDUCATED WORKERS WHO ARE
FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE AND THEIR
CHARACTERISTICS**

Total discomfort concerning language:

- ✓ reading difficulties originate from oral language
-illiteracy is reflected in oral *and* written language.
- ✓ capacities decrease due to *repetitive manual work* and
their *long absence from training*.

Characteristics of persons in situation of functional illiteracy

They ask naïve questions

They hide their situation from everybody

They are dependent ...

Their linguistic ability, *thinking in an abstract way in professional, social, cultural and personal life is impaired*

They have difficulties with the effective use of oral language: *They rarely use time expressions. No discourse markers to clarify the logic connections between clauses.*

Characteristics of persons in situation of functional illiteracy

Getting out of the familiar context is quite an adventure;

They do not master the linguistic function of intention, "What *and how we say something depends on what the interlocutor knows*" argues Piaget, (1966 3e ed. p. 63).

They mostly learn by imitation and hate writing.



Low level of
education and short
schooling are
dependent on *the
situation of the
family.*

True or false?

1. Functionally illiterate workers appreciate positive changes.
2. They are not at ease with socialised language.
3. Their colleagues at work mostly like them.
4. They easily explain what they have on mind.

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How to develop skills of understanding, organizing a text?

Close reading, organisers: who, what, why , when, what for, conclusion

Telling the story, e.g. *Bear that wasn't*.

Working on a well selected but always the same text to deepen understanding, , communicating

Working in team.