Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy in Historical Perspective

Professional Wisdom in Workplace Literacy and Functional Context Education

**Functional Context Education**
- Harriet A. Jacobs Teaches Adult Literacy Using the Bible
- Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy In World War I
- Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy In World War II
- Septima Poinsette Clark and the Citizenship Schools

**Workplace Literacy**
- George Washington and Workplace Literacy at Valley Forge
- Susie King Taylor in the Civil War
- . Cora Wilson Stewart & Literacy for Home Mothers
- Literacy for Home Mothers

1777 1860 1915 1917 1930 1943 1960
In 1911 Cora Wilson Stewart, Superintendent of Schools in Rowan County, Kentucky, got teachers to volunteer to teach the illiterate parents of school children. Because of dangers in the hills and hollows, adults could only come to school on nights when the moon was out. This led to the schools becoming known as the Moonlight Schools of Kentucky. Stewart introduced the first newspaper for adult literacy learners, she coined the theme “Each One Teach One” and wrote the first series of books for country learners. She was the first adult literacy educator to address a major political party when she spoke at the Democratic Party convention in 1920.
Stewart was the first to produce reading materials especially for adults learning to read in the context of country living.

All of her materials integrated the teaching of literacy with the teaching of important knowledge content in farming, healthy living, civics, home economics, financial management, parenting and other functional contexts.

As Stewart (1922) stated, "...each lesson accomplished a double purpose, the primary one of teaching the pupil to read, and at the same time that of imparting instruction in the things that vitally affected him (sic) in his daily life" (p. 71).

This use of functional context education helped adults learn to read “real life” materials and transfer their new learning to contexts outside the classroom.

Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Overview of theories and methods in the teaching and learning of workplace literacy.

Principles of Teaching: Functional Context Education:
Make instruction relevant to the life contexts of the adult learners. Build new knowledge on old knowledge.

The Country Life Readers by Cora Wilson Stewart
1915                          1916                              1917
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Overview of theories and methods in the teaching and learning of workplace literacy.


Country Life Readers First Book

Community Development

Compare……..
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Country Life Readers First Book

Community Development

......and Contrast

ugly yes dirty paint
lazy needs shift less weeds

“This place is dirty and ugly.
The house needs paint.
The yard is full of weeds.
A lazy, shiftless family lives here.”
“Yes, but how do you know that?”
“I know it from the house.
Lazy, shiftless people live in dirty, ugly homes.”

Lazy, shiftless people live in dirty, ugly homes.
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Country Life Readers
First Book

Sustainable Development

Soil Conservation On The Farm
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Overview of theories and methods in the teaching and learning of workplace literacy.


Country Life Readers First Book
Sustainable Development
Soil Conservation On The Farm

stop  gul lies  sow  brush
fill  pas ture  could  steal

“Run and tell the farmer that the brook is stealing his soil.”
“The farmer knows it.”
“Then why does he not come and stop it?”
“The farmer is too lazy and shiftless. With care he could keep his soil. He could sow this hill in grass and use it as a pasture. He could plant trees here. He could fill these gullies, with brush. There are many ways to stop the brook from stealing soil. No brook shall steal my soil.”
No brook shall steal my soil.
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Overview of theories and methods in the teaching and learning of workplace literacy.


fly
filth
bring
table
dead
slops
sick
been

Here you are, Mr. Fly.
I know where you have been.
You have been in all kinds of places.
You have been to the pig pen and to the cattle pen.
You have been to the slops from the sick man.
You have been feeding on a dead dog.
Now you have come to bring the filth from all of these things to my table.

Country Life Readers
First Book

Health Literacy
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Overview of theories and methods in the teaching and learning of workplace literacy.

Principles of Teaching: Functional Context Education:
Make instruction relevant to the life contexts of the adult learners. Build new knowledge on old knowledge.

Country Life Readers
First Book

Health Literacy

spoil put butter meat cooked drop kill dinner soup bread

I know what you will do with this filth.
You will drop it into my soup.
You will put it in the baby’s milk.
You will put it on my bread.
You will put it on my butter.
You will drop it on the meat that I have cooked for dinner.
If I let you live, you will spoil our food.
And if we eat it, we may all be sick.
What shall I do?
I will kill you, Mr. Fly.
I will kill you, Mr. Fly.
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

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CWS Country Life Readers and Moonlight School classrooms followed Functional Context Education principles that research has confirmed as useful for adult literacy education and the sustainable development of learners after their program.

First, she builds new knowledge of reading and writing on the prior knowledge that learners bring with them thereby making it easier for adults to learn by relating new learning to old learning.

Second, she integrates the teaching of basic skills or reading and writing with content that relates to the daily life of the adult learners outside the classroom to hold interest and maintain motivation to attend class.

Third, she facilitates transfer of learning from the classroom to the world outside the classroom by developing new knowledge that learners can apply in their daily lives.

Fourth, the latter, in turn, offers the possibility of further learning by adults to extend and sustain the development that they achieved while attending school.
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- 1777
- 1860
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Professional Wisdom in Workplace Literacy and Functional Context Education
Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy in World War I

**Associationism:** Learning involves the automatic formation of connections or "habits" among ideas or thoughts when the ideas are associated together repeatedly. Teaching oriented towards repetition.

**Behaviorism:** Learning involves the changing of behavior through the manipulation of stimulus and response contingencies. Teaching oriented toward providing feedback reinforcing correct responses.

**Constructivism:** Learning involves the use of old knowledge to construct new knowledge from information using active cognitive processes. Teaching oriented toward problem posing and solving.

**World War I  Cora Wilson Stewart**

After teaching the pupil the sentence, drill him on words by pointing out and having him point out each word as many times as it occurs in the lesson, and by other drills.

**Methods of Teaching Reading: Phonics, Whole Language, and Blended Methods**

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**Instructions to Teachers.**

The reading lessons in this book are to be taught by the word and sentence method combined. It is as easy to teach "I go" as it is to teach I "g" "o" "go". The first lesson should be learned at one recitation.

After teaching the pupil the sentence, drill him on words by pointing out and having him point out each word as many times as it occurs in the lesson, and by other drills.

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**Lesson 1.**

I go.
I go to war.
Do you go?
Yes, I go to war.
Yes, we go to war.
Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy in Historical Perspective

J. Duncan Spaeth (1868-1954)

In the first edition of his Camp Reader J. Duncan Spaeth thanked Cora Wilson Stewart for her aid. But he favored a phonics approach and in the revised book he dropped his mention of CWS who favored whole language. He went on to introduce the first teacher’s manual for adult literacy educators focused on a phonetic system of reading. He also provided training in teaching non-English speaking soldiers.
J. Duncan Spaeth
Teaching FCE & Workplace Literacy in World War I

Associationism: Learning involves the automatic formation of connections or "habits" among ideas or thoughts when the ideas are associated together repeatedly. Teaching oriented towards repetition.

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World War I J. Duncan Spaeth

Camp Reader for American Soldiers, 1919
Spaeth discusses the teaching of phonetics (phonics). He explains the four communication processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. He goes on to explain, "All four processes involve the formation of association habits, and the first principle to be emphasized is therefore repetition. Only by constant repetition can associations be fixed."

Methods of Teaching Reading: Phonics, Whole Language, and Blended Methods

LEsson 12
this gun hold
no keep clean

1. This is a gun.
2. I can see the gun.
3. It is a good gun.
4. Look at it.
5. It is my gun.
6. I hold my gun in my hand.
7. This gun is not clean. I will clean it.
8. No good soldier forgets to clean his gun.
9. I will keep my gun clean.
10. A good soldier keeps his gun clean.

A good soldier—a clean gun.

Sound Drill

Writing 22-22: it is not a gun, no gun.
Spaeth followed the same Functional Context Education approach as used by Cora Wilson Stewart. But he always included a sound drill to teach phonics.
Two Notable Adult Literacy Teachers During World War I

At Camp Upton, NY Captain Garry C. Meyers developed course of instruction for illiterate and non-English speaking recruits.

He thought the military teaching of adults should "stimulate sentiment in favor of better educational opportunities for coming generations." This was an early interest in the intergenerational transfer of literacy that today underpins many family literacy programs.

Course of instruction at Camp Upton divided into six levels from low to high.

Each level used special materials prepared using illustrations, cartoons, caricatures, and stories. The goal was to make materials with a diversity of activities to meet the various interests of the recruits.

Caroline Clark Myers was first women hired to teach illiterates and non-English speaking recruits in World War I.

Captain Garry Meyers and Mrs. Caroline Clark Meyers both taught literacy and English language at Camp Upton, New York.
Two Notable Adult Literacy Teachers of World War I

Became Two Notable Publishers of a Major Magazine for Children

At age 60 the Meyers started Highlights for Children

Magazine focuses on meeting the interests of readers

Uses a variety of activities, stories, cartoons, illustrations, methods to meet these interests.

Stimulates the intergenerational transfer of literacy and motivation for learning with parents, grandparents, and others reading with children.

Caroline and Garry Myers, together founded Highlights for Children in 1946.

The first issue of Highlights for Children.

Teaching Workplace ESL & Literacy in World War I
Integrating literacy instruction with parenting instruction in the Mother’s First Book:

- Baby care and health
- Parents in the schools
- Family Health
- Healthy cooking and eating
The first reading lesson should be made interesting by conversation, in which the pupil is led by the teacher’s questions and suggestions to speak the sentence before she sees it in print. Then when it is presented, the teacher may say, “Here are the words in print that you have just spoken—‘See my baby.’” The sentence then comes to the pupil with new interest. She should read the sentence with the naturalness of expression used in talking. At first, she should read it under the teacher’s guidance, taking the teacher’s word for it that it reads—“See my baby.” Later, after each sentence has been read in this manner, each one having been first used in conversation, she should be drilled on recognizing and naming the words until she knows each of them by sight. Then the actual reading begins. She should
Integrating literacy instruction with parenting instruction in the Mother’s First Book:

Baby care and health
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1777 1860 1915 1917 1930 1943 1960
During World War II the armed services faced the need to utilize hundreds of thousands of men who were illiterate or poorly literate. Paul Witty specialized in understanding the process of learning to read and in developing methods for helping students who were having difficulties in learning to read. With this background, he was called upon to serve as an education officer in the War Department.
Witty was strongly influenced by the work of William S. Gray.
Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy In World War II

William S. Gray
The “Father” of Dick and Jane
Fictitious children with whom children reading the books could identify.

Fun with Dick and Jane
Paul Witty created the fictitious soldier Private Pete who is a student in an Army literacy program. Like Dick and Jane with children, literacy students in the Army literacy programs were supposed to be able to identify with Private Pete who was also a literacy student.
Soldier literacy students viewed and discussed the filmstrip with no words, then with one word, and then words in sentences using a “word” (whole language) approach like that used in the Dick and Jane readers.

As with Cora Wilson Stewart, Witty used a functional context approach to literacy instruction and showed soldiers in real life settings like they experienced on Army posts.
Merging Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy in World War II

**Associationism:** Learning involves the automatic formation of connections or "habits" among ideas or thoughts when the ideas are associated together repeatedly. Teaching oriented towards repetition.

**Behaviorism:** Learning involves the changing of behavior through the manipulation of stimulus and response contingencies. Teaching oriented toward providing feedback.

**1943 World War II Paul Witty**

Literacy programs for illiterate, poorly literate, and non-English speaking recruits in the Army.

Followed the associationist principle of repetition, repetition, repetition to form associations among sight words and their underlying meanings.

Also aware of behaviorism and its understanding of learning as stimulus-response contingencies. In a 1939 textbook entitled Reading and the Educative Process, Witty and his co-author, David Kopel, state, "Perhaps the unique characteristic of modern education is its recognition and application of the principle that the results of instruction should affect and influence behavior." (p. iv).

In designing the ArmyReader, Witty developed pre-unit and post-unit tests to measure the student's change in reading behavior. This approach to the application of behavioral principles to the design of instruction was to find a much larger educational application in later years with the introduction and widespread use of programmed instruction.
A newspaper entitled “Our War” was developed and included the first use of a comic strip in adult literacy education featuring Private Pete and his sidekick Daffy.
Another innovation in adult literacy education was the development of a “photo novel” using real people to ply the roles of Private Pete and his sidekick Daffy. This was used in a program for soldiers getting discharged from the Army who missed literacy training on entry into the Army or whose skills had deteriorated from little use in the war. The book used the same systems approach as with the Army Reader.
Illiterate and Non-English Speaking Soldiers Fighting for Freedom in World War II Learn to Read and Write

Writing in the July 1943 issue of “Our War”, a newspaper for the literacy students of World War II, a student wrote:

“This is my first letter in English. I have learned to read and write so that I can help protect or country.” Private Porfirio C. Gutierrez

A mother of a soldier wrote to the Army [in original spellings and punctuation]:

“dear sir: I thank you all for Learning My child to read and wright I don’t Know how to thank you all Because My child did no know nothing it is really high apprishated Because I did not have the time to send him to school I did not have no husband I raised him from a Baby By my self and that is all my help and I thank you and I thank you when you wrote me and siad My Boy did that I was so glad I did not Know what to do and I realy appreshated it.” Very truly yours, M--- W---
Praise for the Army’s Literacy Teachers

A soldier who was grateful for learning to read and write in the Army's literacy program wrote this poem:

SOLDIER AND TEACHER

These men are soldiers, too
Fighting the selfsame cause
Men who did not go to school
They reason not, nor pause.

These men who come from every state
From farm and mill and mining camp,
Somewhat illiterate, somewhat shy,
Are learning now of writer’s cramp.

For there are other jobs in war
Besides the fighting and foray;
Like teaching school to soldier lads
Who will return to home someday.

They question not the how or why
But stanchly (sic) take the task assigned
This is their country, this their land,
Teacher and soldier, with but one mind.

---

Teachers in the World War II Special Training Units for Adult Literacy Instruction

April 1944: 5,291
- Officers: 641
- Enlisted: 4,557
- Civilian: 87

African-American: 1,271
- Officers: 7
- Enlisted: 1,259
- Civilians: 5
Desi Arnaz, a Cuban musician who became internationally famous in movies and as the real life and TV husband, Ricky Ricardo, of Lucille Ball in the TV series, I Love Lucy, was drafted in May of 1943.

But he suffered a torn knee cartilage, so he was assigned as a "limited service" soldier to one of the Special Training Units where illiterate enlisted men were sent upon entry into the Army.

In this camp, Desi Arnaz joined with thousands of other teachers in the camps for illiterates and worked as an adult educator teaching illiterate soldiers how to read and write.
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy in Historical Perspective

Relationships of the World War II Adult Literacy Programs to Some Contemporary Concerns in Adult Education

Transitioning/Bridging Adults From Adult Basic Education to Post-Secondary Education or Job/Career Opportunities

Integrating/Contextualizing Language, Literacy, Numeracy with Vocational Education

Using Technology to Differentiate Instruction to Meet Student Learning Needs

The World War II Program Emphasized RELEVANCE & MOTIVATION

The Program:

Transitioned soldiers from civilian to military life with its job training and performance requirements

Integrated/contextualized literacy instruction with military life contexts and situations

Used audio-visual technology and textual materials and systems instruction to address learning rates and modalities of soldier learners
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Professional Wisdom in Workplace Literacy and Functional Context Education
Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987)  
“Queen Mother of the Civil Rights Movement”

1935 – Learned “kinesthetic method” by working with Wil Lou Gray in Columbia, South Carolina teaching illiterate African-American soldiers at Fort Jackson to read and write their names and other Army information.

1955-56 – Taught workshops at the Highlander Folk School attended by Rosa Parks.

I am almost very important and very weak to one of the giants of freedom. Civil rights have light so much for the often ways that are not very effective. I very work that there is a greater chance. Mrs. Septima Panetta Clark

Septima Poinsette Clark and Functional Context Education in the Citizenship Schools
Septima Poinsette Clark and Functional Context Education in the Citizenship Schools

1957 - January 7 Opened citizenship school on Johns Island for African-American adult illiterates; used “kinesthetic method” to teach them to write their names, read South Carolina election laws to qualify for registering to vote, do other functional tasks.

1961 - Left Highlander to work with Dr. Martin Luther King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference developing citizenship schools and in 4 years trained 10,000 teachers and registered nearly 700,000 African-Americans to vote in the South.

Citizenship School Johns Island
South Carolina
Clark followed the whole language approach in teaching reading, but like the other pioneers of adult literacy, she followed a functional context education approach using materials relevant to the goals of the learners.

Brown-Nagin (1999) reported that, "The most critical elements of the citizenship program were the curricula Clark used and the type of teachers she chose to lead the citizenship effort. In regard to curricula, the guiding principle was that it was to be functional: It was to be determined by what students wanted to know and what pragmatism dictated they needed to know about the civic system.

...[adult learners] would prepare for citizenship and voting using curricula logically related to their needs. They learned to read using state and federal constitutions, codes of law, sample ballots, and other legal documents as 'texts.' ...at each step, the students were asked to participate in the process, through demonstrative classes, role-playing and small group sessions where they formulated their own plans and educational programs... citizenship school instructors taught practical matters such as how to: make purchases from mail order catalogues; utilize bank accounts; compute income tax; utilize social security and disability benefits; and take care of the many other affairs involved in functional adulthood" (p. 94).
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Professional Wisdom from 1777 to the 1960s reveals that:

Adult Literacy Education can be successfully delivered in workplaces. (Revolutionary & Civil Wars, World Wars I & II)

Adult Literacy Education can be contextualized, integrated with, or embedded in content relevant to the lives of and contexts in which adults function. (Harriet Jacobs, Susie Taylor, Cora Wilson Stewart, Septima Poinsette Clark)
Functional Context Education and Workplace Literacy

Schedule

Coming Up Next:

10:30-10:45 Break

Part 2. 10:45-12:00 Scientific research on FCE and workplace literacy leading to the National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP) in the United States.

12:00-12:30pm Lunch

Part 3. 12:30-02:00 Workplace literacy and workforce development research and programs following the NWLP

02:00-02:15 Break

Part 4. 02:15-03:30 Contemporary projects on contextualizing and integrating program design and engaging employers and employees.