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Tutor Resource of the Month

Culture, Health and Literacy: A Guide to Health Education Materials for Adults with Limited English Literacy Skills is available in our Lending Library and is particularly helpful for ESOL teachers.

Quote Corner:



Literacy is...the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”
-Kofi Annan

Accurate health information now easier to find

According to a recent study, emergency room patients understand only 59% of the information given to them. Almost half can't understand the instructions on medication bottles. Furthermore, many patients who seek out health information on the web are led to inaccurate or misleading websites.

To help remedy this lack of knowledge and information, the Kris Kelly Health Information Center was established in Eureka, California. The center's mission

is to help patients find and evaluate the information necessary to make informed decisions about their health care. The center also provides a place for questions to be asked regarding medication and treatments.

Their website, <http://www.kkhic.org/resources.html>, offers a large listing of Internet sites that offer accurate and reliable health information, including many government resources.

Language, culture play important role in health care

The Health Research and Educational Trust, with its partners, has developed a toolkit for collecting race, ethnicity, and primary language information in health care organizations. It is designed to help hospitals, health systems, community health centers, health plans, and other potential users understand the importance of accurate data collection, assessing organizational capacity to do so, and implementing a framework designed specifically for obtaining information from patients/enrollees. Information about race, ethnicity, and primary (preferred) language must be

collected efficiently, effectively, and respectfully. The toolkit is available at <http://www.hretdisparities.org/>.

In December, the National Center for Education Statistics released the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. The NCES reports on a variety of factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, and level of educational attainment. The NCES press release and reports can be found at this website: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/naal>

Bringing understanding to students about health-related issues

To teach your students how to find and understand information related to their health, it is useful to keep these tips in mind:

- Incorporate health topics into your curriculum, encourage learners to choose a health topic of personal interest.
- Connect health information to the individual learner's personal life. This will improve context and comprehension skills.
- Use health pamphlets and websites in your curriculum.
- Use interactive teaching so that the learner has the opportunity to do, write, say or show something in response to the lesson. This greatly increases interest and recall of information.

• Assess the suitability of health materials used in teaching the adult learner – context, cultural considerations, readability and layout are important factors with these materials.

• Use a variety of media to present health information. Books, pamphlets, magazines, videos and audio can be used to share health information.

For more information, see: Doak, CC, Doak, LG & Root, JH (1996). Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills, 2nd Ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company. The Oregon Literacy, Inc. Lending Library has a copy of this and other valuable resources available.

Find health information in many languages

The 24 Languages Project, <http://medstat.med.utah.edu/24languages/>, is a joint venture between the Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Libaray, the Utah Department of Health, the Immunization Action Coalition and numerous

other agencies. It was designed to provide access to important health information in many languages, including Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, Somali, Vietnamese and Laotian. There are both written brochures and audio files.

LitLinks: Find information about health literacy online

El Paso Collaborative Health Literacy Curriculum

<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/docs/elpaso/>

In addition to a series of health lessons, the site provides an instructional model for adult education called The Five Step model.

National Center for Adult Learning and Literacy

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/links.html>

Resource links, curricula, tips for creating and assessing health material for low literate populations, and a section of innovative materials used in teaching.

LINCS Health and Literacy Special Collection

www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs

This collection, created to support the integration

of health into adult basic education and literacy programs, includes teacher/tutor resources, including lesson plans, activities, easy-to-read health information and information on teaching health literacy and fostering collaboration.

Health Literacy Compendium

<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/docs/comp/>

An annotated bibliography of print and Web-based health materials for use with limited-literacy adults.

Medline Plus

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/easytoread/all_easytoread.html

This alphabetized listing of illnesses, symptoms and treatments is in both easy-to-read English and Spanish, making online research understandable.