

Comparing Definitions

Low Literacy

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Definition

An *explanation*, a statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, etc.

A *statement* that describes what something is

A clear or perfect *example* of a person or thing

(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

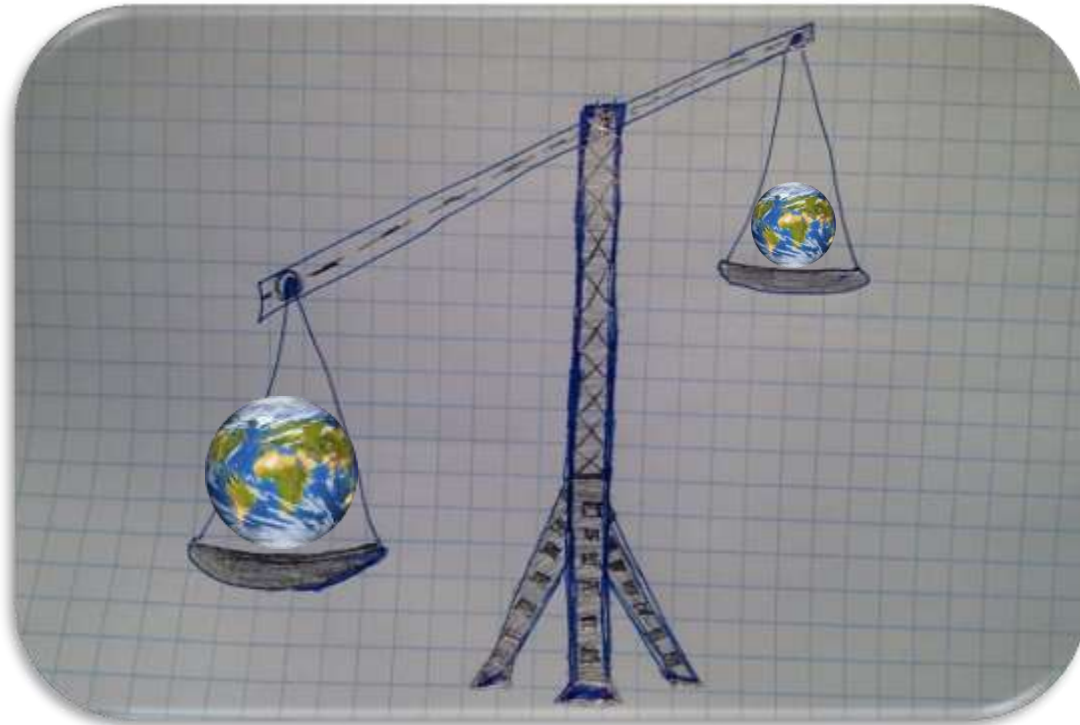
Comparison

The act *of suggesting* that two or more things are similar or in the same category

The act of looking at things to see how they are *similar or different*

(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

Similar and Different



Meaning

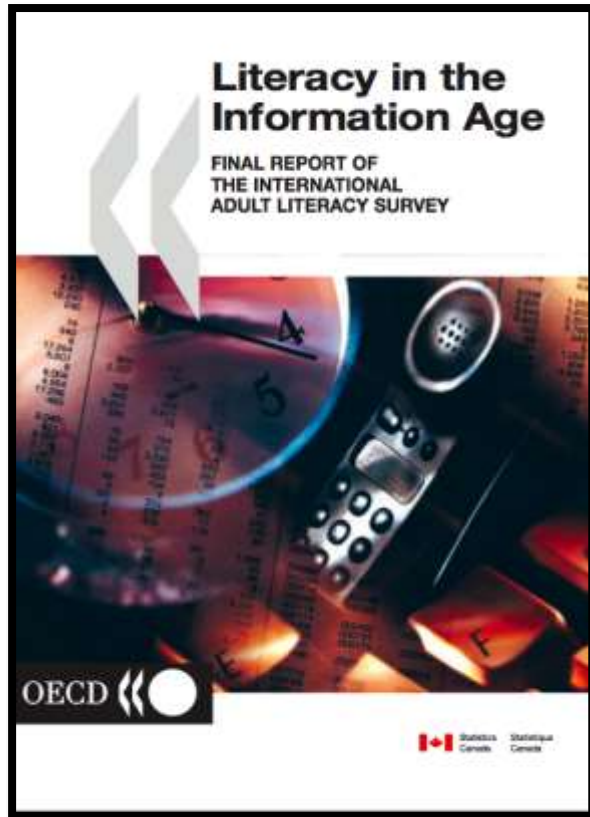
The *idea* that is represented by a word, phrase, etc.

The *idea* that a person wants to express by using words, sounds, etc.

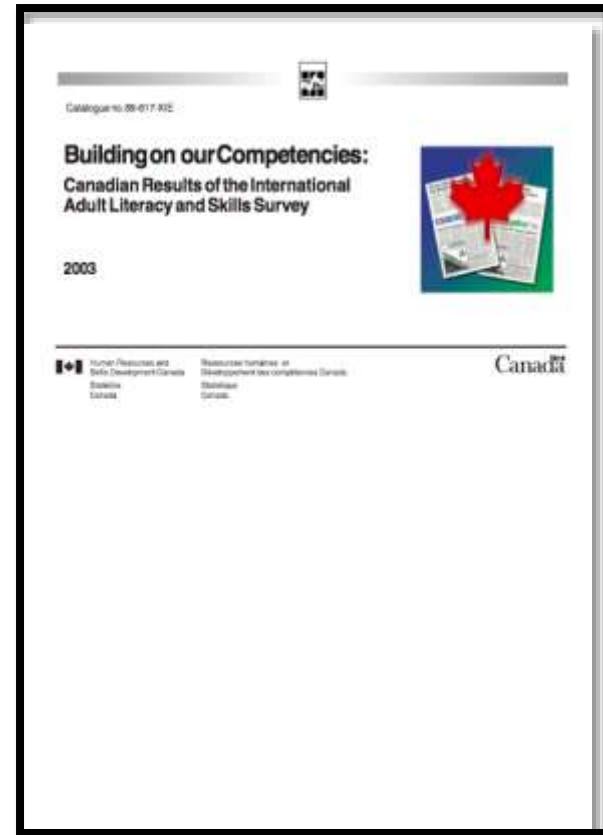
(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

What sources do you go to to describe what literacy means?

International Adult Literacy Survey



IALS



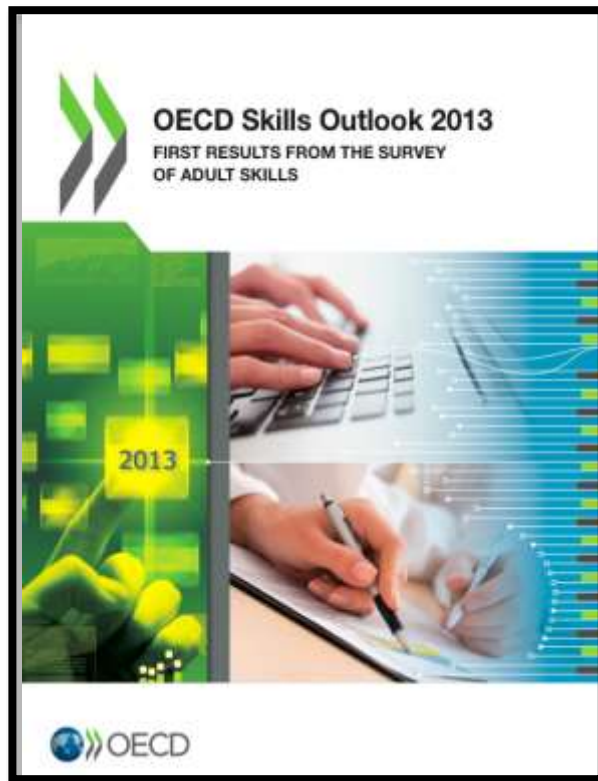
IALSS
(ALL)

Literacy

is a person's ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work, and in the community in order to reach one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential.

(OECD & Statistics Canada, IALS, 1996)

Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies



Literacy

is defined as the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with *written texts* to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

(OECD: PIAAC,

2013)

Literacy

encompasses a range of skills from the decoding of written words and sentences to the comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of complex texts

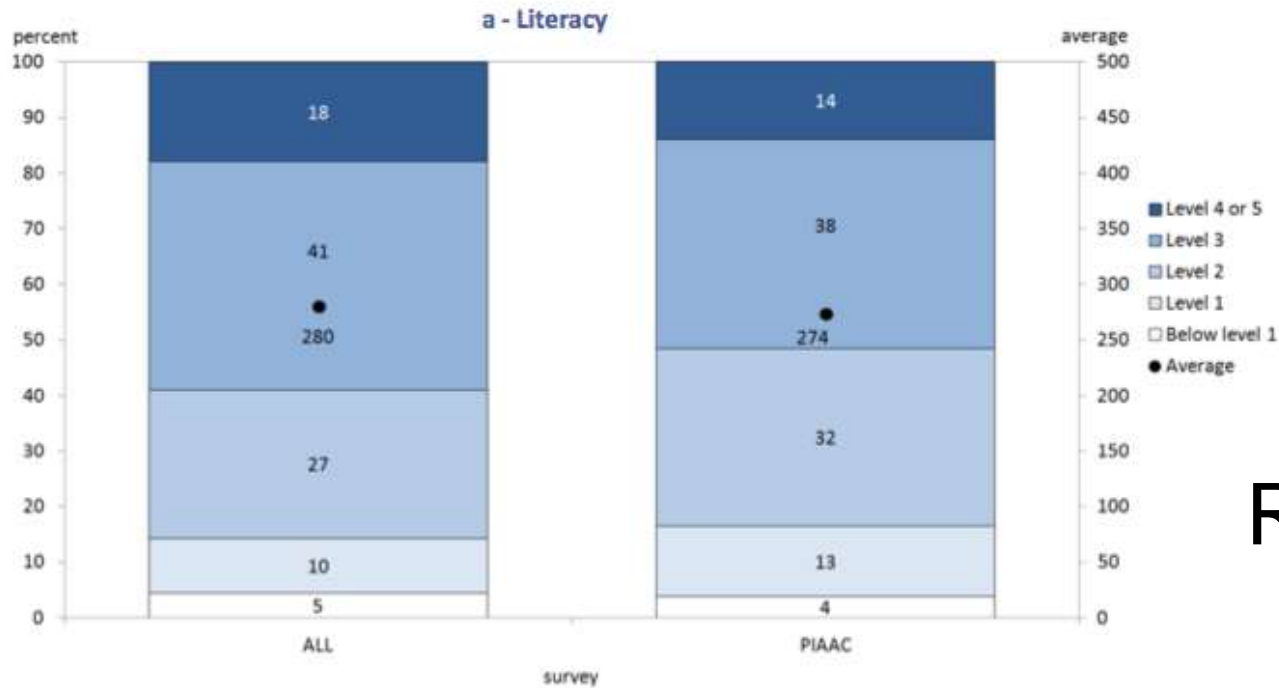
It does not, however,
involve the production of text (writing)

(OECD,PIAAC, 2013)

IALS / PIAAC Measurement Framework

Chart 4.1

Averages and proficiency levels of population aged 16 to 65 in ALL and PIAAC, Canada, 2003 and 2012



Reading
Theory

Psychometrics

Large scale assessments

Once the IALS has arrived in the performance indicators it is a short step from this to worksheets and teacher discourse of the classroom, completing the reorganization of learner identity

(Hamilton, 2001, p. 2-3)

Research Focus

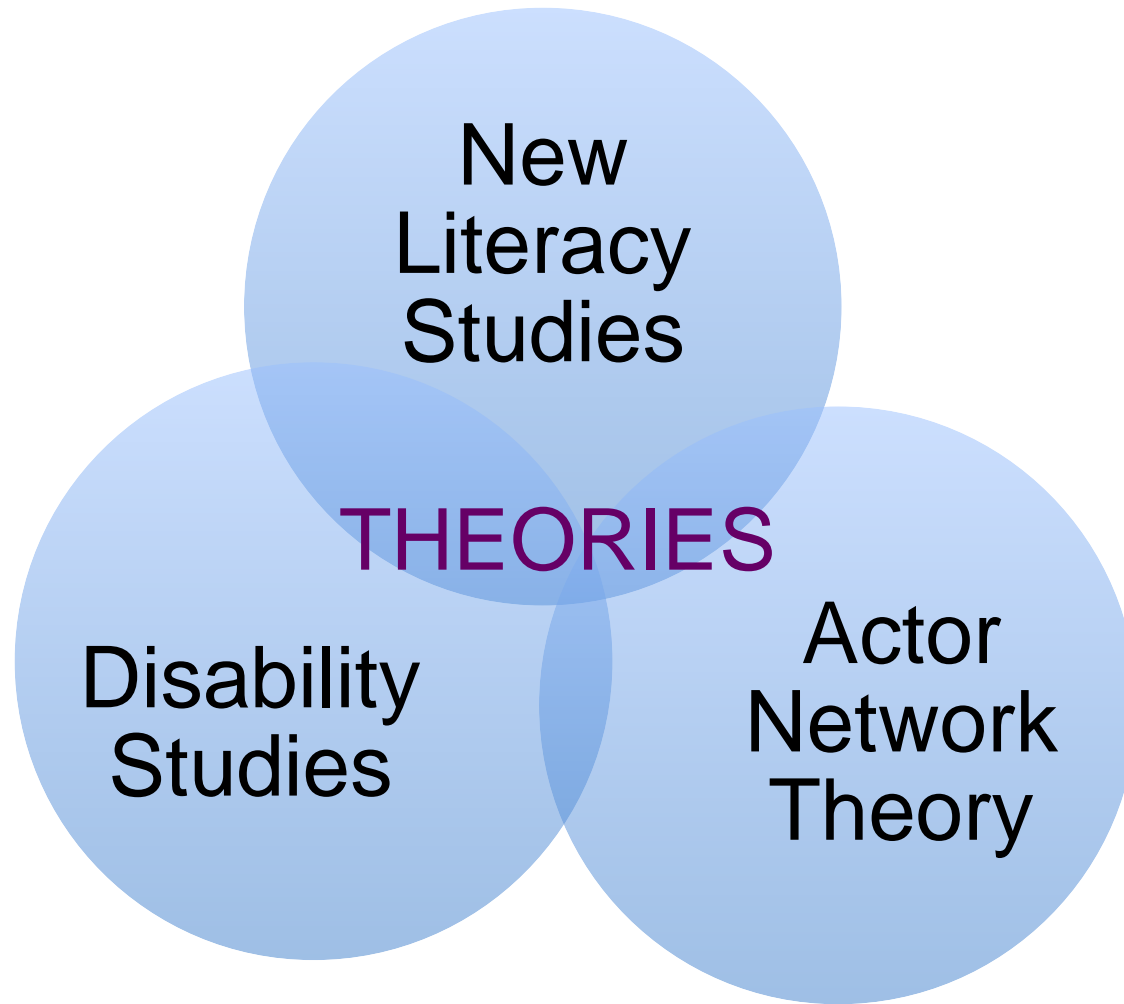
What is the language (words and phrases) that is used in IALS and PIAAC to describe low literacy?

How do people in adult literacy programs describe themselves as learners?

Power relations between people in adult literacy programs and government and organizations that use, and invest in IALS and PIAAC?

Methodology

- Critical review of reports and documents
 - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
 - Statistics Canada, OLES, provincial governments
 - Organizations
- Focus group interviews
 - 13 learners in adult literacy and upgrading programs at Bow Valley College
 - 3 focus groups, met 2 – 3 times



Power Language Relations

Statistics Canada and OECD

- Reading the Future: A portrait of Literacy in Canada, 1996
- Literacy in the information age: Final report of the international adult literacy survey, 2000
- Building on our competencies: Canadian results of the international adult literacy and skills survey, 2005
- Measuring Adult Literacy and Life Skills: New frameworks for assessment, 2005
- Learning Literacy in Canada: Evidence from the international survey of reading skills, 2008
- Literacy for Life: Further results from the adult literacy and life skills survey, 2011
- OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills, 2013

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

- Report on the CMEC forum on adult literacy, 2006

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, ESDC

- OLES Insight Newsletter, 2011

Canadian Council on Learning

- Reading the Future: Planning to meet Canada's future literacy needs, 2008

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (MCL)

- State of the Literacy and Essential Skills Field, 2012
- Fact Sheet: Learning Disabilities, 2012
- Fact Sheet: Literacy and health, 2002

ABC Canada Literacy Foundation

- IALSS: Findings regarding the literacy proficiency of Canadians, 2005

Focus Groups

- Talked about literacy, their experiences in learning in and out of school
- Read and responded to quotes from:
 - OECD PIAAC report, 2013
 - Statistics Canada IALS report, 1996
 - Council of Ministers of Education Canada report on adult literacy, 2006
 - Movement of Canadian Literacy, 2002 fact sheet on health and literacy
 - Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, 2012 report on the state of the LES field

Adult literacy learners live their daily lives
challenged by the detrimental
effects of their low literacy

The enduring effects of their
life experiences include a
lack of self-confidence, social isolation,
poor communication skills,
and lack of knowledge about available
resources

(CMEC, 2006, p. 8)

I feel confident
in
my own world
because
I'm very quiet
even though
I can
be quite shy
I still ask
a lot
of
questions

She didn't want to learn how to
read, she just wanted to learn
how to sign her name

I do not
think that I
am illiterate,
but I don't know
after listening
to these [quotes],
I am wondering
if in fact
I may be

*The average document literacy score
of those aged 16 to 65
who reported being in poor health is
267*

(OECD & Statistics Canada, 2000 p. 92)

People with lower literacy skills
are more likely to work and live
in unsafe or dangerous environments
and suffer the consequences

Less literate people often wait longer
to seek medical help so health
problems reach a crisis state

(MCL, 2002, P. 2)

What does

LEVEL 1 mean? 3 4 / 5

Self-perception can negatively impact recruitment and retention efforts if adults feel their current skill levels are adequate

(CCL, 2008, p 28)

Unfortunately, many adults with low literacy skills believe they have good or average literacy skills and have no way to judge the adequacy of their skills, a fact that can cause them to under-invest in training (CLLN, 2012, p. 7)

I wanted to come back because

I knew I was smart

I was an honor roll student in junior
high

I still never really went to high school

I just quit at grade 10

No, I never noticed
I was illiterate,
or stuff like that
until
I went to a test

*When the public hears about the
“problem of adult literacy,”
they often imagine that
this means there are
large numbers of
adults who are
almost complete
non-readers,
similar to
people
in poor and developing countries*

(Statistics Canada, 2008 p. 46)

A growing,
highly educated,
immigrant population
will place stress on the
labour market because they
lack the English language skills,
Literacy and Essential Skills,
Canadian work experience
and/or
knowledge of workplace culture
necessary to participate fully

(CLLN, 2012, p. 48)

*At the [lower] end
of the proficiency scale,
a larger proportion of the
Aboriginal population (24%)
is at Level 1 or below compared
to the non-Aboriginal population
(16%)*

(Statistics Canada, PIAAC, 2013, p.43)

An estimated 30-80%
of students in literacy
programs have learning
disabilities. Most adult literacy
programs are not adequately
funded to deal with learning
disabilities, and adults with learning
disorders are disproportionately
represented in the prison and welfare systems

(CLLN, fact sheet, 2012)

In all countries, some adults were unable to complete the background questionnaire as they were unable to speak or read the language of the assessment, have difficulty reading or writing, or have learning or mental disability

(OECD, PIAAC, 2013, p. 79)

Missing Category

(OECD, PIAAC, 2013)

I am an adult who has figured out the school system works and realized that in order to succeed I need to play the game

The game being the current institutional system that filters out people into different social categories

Individuals

with lower proficiency in literacy are more likely than those with better literacy skills to report poor health, to believe that they have little impact on political processes, and not to participate in associative or volunteer activities. In most countries, they are also less likely to trust others

(OECD, PIAAC, 2013, p. 3)

you know

I might take a test

and not be the most literate person

but I can read at a pretty good level

I vote

I have pretty good health

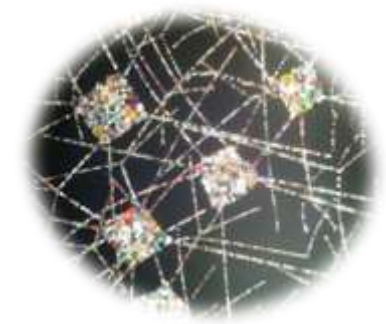
I don't volunteer too much

but I trust people

I'm writing better again

I

learning is like a puzzle
you learn one concept
and then
from what you've learned,
you get ideas



bring in another piece into your life
and then another piece
and then another piece

Class and ethnicity primarily determined
social position – not literacy or education by
themselves. (Graff, 20DATE 1, p. 76) FIX!!

Something about
historical – cultural
context