

Literacy services

Destination Information in a very practical way

Many people think of a literacy service in a public library as being about helping people learn to read.

But people with low literacy levels have the same need for information as anyone else. Like everyone else, they need information on medical problems, legal support, help with getting their driver's licence, getting jobs, hobbies, and parenting, to name a few.

So why not take a look at what your library has as a source of information for this group. Do you have videos, tapes, books with a lot of visuals, junior non-fiction books, magazines or community information? You probably do. The next step is to promote what you have to this audience.

The biggest barrier for people with low literacy levels using libraries isn't their inability to read, it's fear. The library is probably the last place they'd look, after all it's full of books!

The most effective way to reach people with low literacy is to promote your services through local literacy providers and welfare support groups. Here's a few ideas on how to do this:

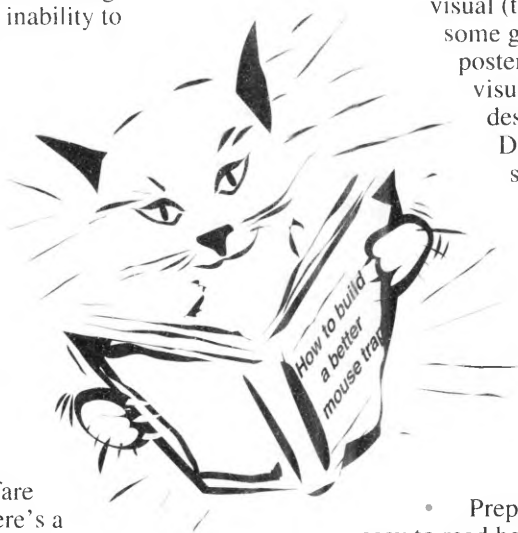
- Visit these groups
- Prepare a handout for these groups
- Put up a display highlighting non-book sources of information
- Organise tours or sessions at the library focusing on your library as a source of information for living
- Suggest to tutors that they ask

students to think of a subject they'd like some information on before they come on a library visit and base the visit around these questions. Interest in a subject increases literacy levels so let students get their

The biggest barrier for people with low literacy levels using libraries isn't their inability to read, it's fear.

own level of difficulty when selecting material

- Emphasise that there's staff to help them find what they want. Point out that people can ring the library for information
- Don't insist that everyone use the catalogue
- Make your Dewey system visual (there are some great posters which visually describe the Dewey system)

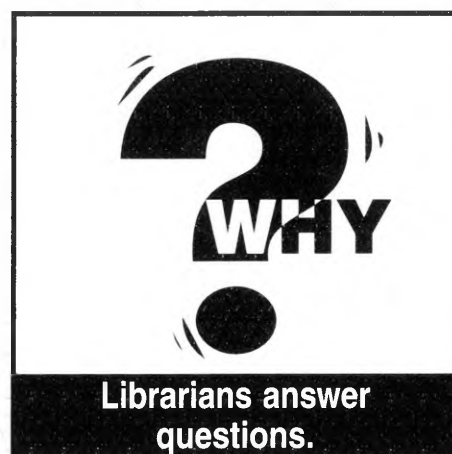


- Prepare an easy to read handout explaining the Dewey System.

And remember – this isn't a high statistics area. If someone has never used a library and is afraid of them, and they come away from your tour feeling confident and that it's a place they'd feel happy to come back to, you've done well. Good luck.

Sue Scott

ALIA Literacy Section NSW Group



SOUTHERN
SCENE

47-49 Kingsway Kingsgrove Phone (02) 502 4400 Fax (02) 502 4656

- Library Posters
- Children's information books
- Cherrytree regular print
- Gunsmoke Western print
- Black Dagger regular print
- Children's Audio
- Sterling Audio
- Chivers Audio large print
- Galaxy Children's cover large print
- Mills & Boon (Hard cover) large print
- Paragon (Soft cover) large print
- Windsor (Hard cover) large print
- large print
- Camden (Soft cover) large print
- Chivers (Hard cover) large print

**SPECIALISTS IN
LARGE PRINT
BOOKS AND
AUDIO BOOKS**