

## **Books for Emergent and Non-Reading Adults Models from Ireland and England**

**Open Door Series** published by New Island Press (Ireland), series ed. Patricia Scanlan  
<http://www.newisland.ie/opendoor/index.shtml>

A few years ago (1998) writer Patricia Scanlan outlined an idea for an adult literacy series with a difference. Written by some of her many friends in Irish writing, the series would be radically different to the material that literacy students had been traditionally presented with. Traditional literacy texts, until Open Door, were often simmered down versions of well-known or popular texts. What was needed, Patricia felt, were original stories that lived up to the true meaning of novella or novel, written with creative yet clear editorial guidelines.

Each Open Door title has a well discernible plot or story line. While being limited to 10,000 words, the characters are well developed, but there are not be too many of them; the style and language is always simple, with short sentences and more full stops than commas. Open Door authors are advised to avoid sentences with multiple clauses, to keep vocabulary simple, using common and straightforward words, but to allow the occasional challenging word (where useful). Short chapters are preferred, as this creates the feel and structure of a 'regular' novel, while allowing teacher and student easy points of reference.

Open Door stories relate to the physical and social environment of the reader, and they share common, topical themes, from family to sport, human dilemmas to relationships. The focus, for all the authors, is on accessible, stand-alone stories that give the literacy reader, as much as anybody else, the experience of having taken possession of the tale, not by hearing, or watching, but through the medium of the written word.

To date 30 Open Door titles have been published by some of Ireland's best known and best selling authors such as Maeve Binchy, Roddy Doyle, Marian Keyes and Nick Hornby.

**Quick Reads Series** (England) published by – Ebury Press, Sphere, Pan Books, Penguin, Orion, Transworld, Corgi, Vemillion, HarperCollins, Random House, Bantam

<http://www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/user/index.php>

Quick Reads was launched by Prime Minister Tony Blair on World Book Day 2006 to provide fast-paced, bite-sized books by bestselling writers for emergent readers, anyone who had lost the reading habit or simply wanted a short, fast read. The aim of Quick Reads is to reach out to the millions of adults in the UK with reading difficulties and the one third of the British population that never picks up a book. Following the success of the 24 Quick Reads titles in 2006, 8 more titles written by bestselling authors and celebrities were released in March 2007.

Unlike the Open Door series in Ireland, the Quick Reads series is a collaboration between authors, publishers, book retailers, libraries, the education sector, and other partners and supporters. The project is tied to World Book Day celebrations (March 1<sup>st</sup>) and has an extensive cross-sector marketing campaign.

## **Canadian ‘Reach a Reader’ Project**

### **Canadian Library Association**

In the fall of 2006 CLA received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat (now the National Office of Literacy and Learning) to research and develop a plan to publish a series of original books by well-known Canadian authors written at an easy to read level. Brenda Livingston (Toronto Public Library – on leave 2006/7) was hired to coordinate the project tentatively named “Reach a Reader”..

Two organizations have agreed to partner and take the project forward:

### **ABC Canada Literacy Foundation**

ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation is a national charity committed to promoting literacy to the general public and to the private sector. They are a partnership of business, labour, educators and government. They focus on public awareness programs, the development and execution of national literacy awareness campaigns (i.e. Family Literacy Day); provide promotional support to local literacy groups (i.e. Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournaments); and conduct research to further the development of a fully literate Canadian population.

<http://www.abc-canada.org/>

### **Grass Roots Press**

Grass Roots Press is a division of Literacy Services of Canada Ltd. The parent company specializes in adult literacy research, while Grass Roots Press publishes and distributes adult literacy resources. Dr. Pat Campbell, the President of Literacy Services of Canada Ltd, has over 20 years experience in the field of adult literacy as a reading specialist program coordinator, researcher, teacher, facilitator, curriculum developer, author and editor. Dr. Pat Campbell was the winner of the 2006 Canada Post Community Literacy Award in the Educator category. Grass Roots Press has been publishing and distributing adult literacy materials to over 3500 individuals and organizations across North American since 1997.

<http://www.literacyservices.com/>