

Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research

Background

Literacy is a foundation for further learning, educational attainment, and skill development; thus, sound adult literacy programs and policies can contribute to the enhancement of both individual economic opportunity and national competitiveness. A fundamental challenge for providers is how to deliver appropriate programs to such diverse populations. Available evidence-based knowledge—from the multidisciplinary perspective of education, cognitive and behavioral science, neuroscience and other disciplines—offers a strong foundation for understanding the main factors that affect adult literacy learning to inform curriculum and instruction for adult education practitioners and service providers.

Overview

The Committee on Learning Sciences of the National Academies of Science, through a contract awarded by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), convened an expert committee to study adult and adolescent literacy research. The findings report and derivative products synthesizes research on literacy, draws implications for instruction in adult reading programs, and recommends a more systemic approach to research, practice, and policy in those areas. The report addresses factors that affect literacy development in adolescence and adulthood in general; implications for strengthening instruction, including the use of technologies to assist with multiple aspects of teaching, assessment, and accommodations; use of evidence-based practices and professional development; improving learner persistence through the use of technologies, social service support, and incentives; and, improved coordination of program improvement, evaluation, and research. Two booklets, *Developing Reading and Writing* and *Supporting Learning and Motivation*, present practitioner-friendly excerpts suitable for use in professional development activities. The project period was from September 2008 to September 2012.

Outcomes and Products:

- Committee report and derivative products are all available as free PDF files
 - Full Report: [Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research](#).
 - [Archive of public convening](#) of policy makers and researchers.
 - Three [report briefs](#) covering the research, policy, and report highlights.
 - Practitioner-friendly booklets:
 - [Developing Reading and Writing](#)
 - [Supporting Learning and Motivation](#)

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