

Improving Reading Instruction for Adults Preparing for the GED and Transitioning to Postsecondary Education

Background

The call for a better skilled workforce in the U.S., and the role of education in developing that workforce, has promoted new efforts to guide adult basic education (ABE) participants beyond their attainment of a General Educational Development (GED), to next steps in postsecondary education and training. As ABE programs consider approaches to preparing GED-level learners for further education, issues have arisen about the adequacy of current GED reading instruction in preparing adults for further education. Among these issues is the extent to which GED reading instruction prepares GED recipients to meet the reading and learning demands of entry-level postsecondary courses.

Overview

In light of emerging efforts to guide GED learners to further education and training, the National Institute for Literacy and U.S. Department of Education funded Abt Associates Inc. to conduct a study to gather foundational information. This study will inform reading instruction for GED learners, so that they will be prepared to meet the demands of postsecondary courses. The study involves:

- Preparation of a report that describes: a) the reading demands of entry-level, postsecondary courses; b) the current reading requirements for the GED, expected changes in GED reading requirements, and State ABE reading standards that are guiding ABE/GED instruction; c) approaches used in teaching reading to prepare learners for the GED, including emerging efforts to enhance GED-preparation reading instruction; and, d) gaps between postsecondary reading demands and current GED reading instructional practices, and possible steps that can be taken to address these gaps.
- Site visits to ABE and postsecondary programs to document two types of promising practices: a) GED reading instruction that is enhanced and can assist learners to succeed in entry-level postsecondary courses; and, b) practices in postsecondary programs that facilitate learners' transition from ABE to postsecondary education through enhanced instruction.
- Preparation of a final report that includes: a) the information from the gaps analysis between GED reading requirements and postsecondary reading demands; b) descriptions of the promising practices from the data collected during the site visits; c) a cross-case analysis of the similarities and differences in strategies across the practices; and, d) a course outline of the reading content and methods that would address the reading demands of entry-level postsecondary courses.

Outcomes and Products

- Final report, October 2012.

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