

Supporting Teacher Quality across Content Areas in Adult Education

Background

The Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education is committed to investing in rigorous research on adult learning, and helping adult educators learn about, understand, and put into practice the findings from scientifically-based research. Ultimately, continuous improvement in teaching hinges on the availability of high quality professional development opportunities linked to research. Improving the quality of instruction in adult education programs involves continually strengthening the knowledge, skills, and abilities of instructors, administrators, and other adult education staff. There is an evolving and significant evidence-base to draw upon, in designing, delivering and assessing instructional activities for adolescent and adult learners with diverse backgrounds and needs. Such activities include diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and formative assessment. Available evidence suggests that these instructional activities are applicable to reading, writing, math, and English language instruction.

Overview

The American Institutes for Research, through a contract awarded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), will assist OVAE in its efforts to enhance State and local adult education providers' capacity, to understand and apply evidence-based instructional practices that promote student learning. This national activity seeks to improve teacher quality by providing technical assistance to State and local adult educators to help them understand and implement quality instructional practices, such as diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, UDL, and differentiated instruction, in the content area of writing for Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. The project period runs from September 2009 to September 2012.

The twelve states participating states include: California, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Project Milestones

- Online TEAL courses, October 2010 – June 2011.
- National Institute with cohort of States, August 2011.
- Ongoing technical assistance to support implementation, Fall 2011–2012.

Outcomes and Products

- Fact Sheets on evidence-based instructional practices and resources.
- Professional development materials that support evidence-based quality instruction in adult education.

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