

PD Connection

LINKING PRACTITIONERS AND RESOURCES



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Welcome

Welcome to the third year of publication of PD Connections. The focus of this newsletter is on using research to assist you in making instructional choices.

Research is an encompassing term that means different things to different people. The end product, however, is to have educators know in advance what teaching and learning strategies are more likely to be successful and at the same time discount fads and personal bias.

Think of research as a method of establishing probability – “If I do this in this setting I am more likely to get the same results each time I do it” - the better the research, the better the probability. When you use research-based practices in your instruction you have a greater probability of achieving success with your adult learners.

Explore the articles by practitioners in this edition of PD Connections, take some time to make a choice on page 2. See pages 5 and 6 for comments from Dorothy Researcher to adult educators in Kentucky.

*Toni-Ann Mills, KAELI
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Jefferson County Educator Dives into the Research Pool

*by Diane Graybill, JCPS Adult Education
cdsgraybill@bellsouth.net*



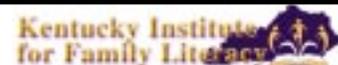
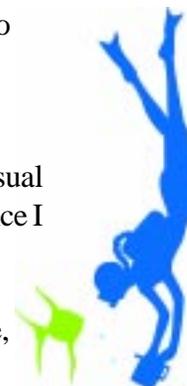
When I was approached about participating in a research project involving Adult Reading/Decoding, I felt honored and eager to sign on. I have worked with lower level adult readers in an ABE/GED program for 10 years and know firsthand the frustrations and struggles they face in decoding unfamiliar words. I would hear them say, “If I could just figure out how to say (sound out) that word, I probably would know it.”

While the bulk of my time was spent teaching vocabulary and comprehension strategies, over the years I came to believe my focus should also be on decoding and basic phonics instruction. Through a brief introduction to the Wilson Program, I saw how I needed to address the most basic level, phonemic awareness, and build from there. So when the Adult Decoding Study was presented, I welcomed the

opportunity to participate and have formal evidence that supported the casual anecdotal evidence I had seen in my classes.

In my experience, once instructors enthusiastically explain to the students how their participation will help them and others, students respond with like enthusiasm. My class is very adventuresome and willing to try anything.

continued on page 2



Research Pool

continued from page 1

We approach the project as, “What luck! Look what we get to do!” Sometimes the project involves a monetary incentive for the students. Of course, students are free to discontinue their participation at any time.

Taking part in a research project has professional and personal benefits for the instructors. Professionally, there is free training that enhances programs and teachers’ skills. Training comes complete with free materials, usually ready to use, so there is minimal preparation time involved. The study may also involve minor adjustments in the class schedule and add an instructional component. I have found researchers to be very positive and professional in their site visits and data collection. Personally for the instructors, there may be financial reimbursement for time spent documenting results or anecdotal evidence.

For this particular study, my program was selected to be the control group, so we are operating as usual with a trained staff member performing pre- and post-testing.

The students and I look forward to learning the results of the Adult Decoding Study and are proud of the part we played. Each research project varies in its scope and mission, but all are vital to the success of adult education. My experience has been very positive, and I highly recommend participation.

Wilson Language Training

www.wilsonlanguage.com

1 800 899 8454



Who Would You Choose?

Research First - the key to

successful distance education

by Erika Larson,

Distance Learning Coordinator,

KYAE, Erika.Larson@ky.gov

One of the most challenging aspects of distance education is recruitment. Successful virtual students may not be the ones walking into your center every day. Students in your center may benefit from computer-based education but they represent only part of your potential enrollment.

To help you think about recruitment, I offer you a puzzle. The following paragraphs describe potential distance learners. These people have learned about your center and inquired about virtual education. Which one seems like the best candidate for virtual learning using PLATO, WIN or LiteracyLink®?



Roy Harris left a message on your answering machine. He completed a math test during the orientation process for his new job. He needs to master several concepts before he can attend training. He works days and has asked whether you could help him gain the skills needed to retain the job.



Mrs. Nowatski is retired and has learned about computers from her grandson. The center received her contact information from community education because she wants to continue learning using her computer. Although she doesn't have a high school diploma, she likes to communicate using e-mail and feels fairly comfortable with technology.



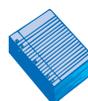
Jim Evans dropped out of high school because it was boring. His mother has told him repeatedly to obtain his GED and after two years he finally agrees with her. He has come to your center and wants to prepare for the GED tests as soon as possible. Jim worked with computers while in school and has access to one at the library.

Make your choice and then turn to page 4 to read the solutions.



International Literacy Day has been celebrated every September since 1965, when it was first established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). To get ideas on how to plan for the day go to:

http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/literacy_day/ild_local.html





Making Sense - Using Research to Guide Instruction

by Susan Watson, Powell County Adult Literacy, swatson@powell.k12.ky.us

The Powell County Adult Education Program (PCAEP) became involved in the “Making Sense of Decoding and Spelling” curriculum through an invitation from Judy Alamprese of Abt Associates, Washington, D.C. We were visited by a representative of Abt Associates in the spring of 2004. The visitor, Fumiyo Tao, was impressed with the reading class set-up and the number of students involved. After her visit we received notice that we were accepted to be a part of the research group and had been randomly selected as an experimental group for the research. I went to the University of Delaware in early September 2004 for training on using the curriculum.

“Making Sense of Decoding and Spelling” approaches the teaching of reading comprehension and spelling through phonics and spelling rules. In the PCAEP, the “Making Sense” curriculum is integrated into our reading group time. I present the “Making Sense” lesson and then continue with our regular reading instruction. This allows for the curriculum to be a supplement to our reading instruction.

Thus far, the “Making Sense” curriculum has been very effective with the students, and they have discussed how useful it has been to them. After completing the first twenty lessons one student reported that she finds herself looking for words she doesn’t know so that she can decode them with the tools this curriculum has given her.

Read an article on *A Slow Conversion to Reading Groups* by Susan Watson in



<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=737>



Collecting “Data” on Your New KYAE Registrant

by Randolph Hollingsworth, KYVU, dolph@kyvu.org

You get the auto-email from eRMA indicating you have a new student who registered via KYVAE.org. What do you do now? You can add the username into your Orientation group in ANGEL and send the student another e-mail inviting him or her to login and take your Welcome survey. You have designed your Orientation group so that the survey is the first thing the newcomer sees after clicking on the “Continue” button on the Welcome page – all the rest of your group’s orientation content is hidden or locked until the newcomer takes the survey. The survey could have some basic questions about technology skills, learning goals and past successes you can build on. When the newcomer submits the survey, an

auto-email is sent to you indicating completion – and the newcomer is redirected into the orientation content along with the rest of your KYVAE registrants. Based on the information from the Welcome survey and the choice of KYVAE “course” by the registrant, you place the newcomer into a team where they can communicate regularly via a team-centered ANGEL chat room, discussion forum or folder of additional curriculum content or resources.

Want to know how to build this? Take the “Get to Know ANGEL” tutorial, print out the Instructor Reference Manual in the Help area of the KY eLearning Portal, and persistently ask questions of the KYVAE Computer Help Desk (24/7) at 1-866-606-1725.



<http://www.kyvae.org/help.asp>

Coming Soon!
Summer Edition of *PD Connections*
Planning High Quality Professional Development

Who Would You Choose?

continued from page 2

You were provided a very limited background on these potential distance learners. Sometimes all you receive is a message from eRMA indicating that someone enrolled in PLATO, WIN or LiteracyLink®. The next step involves asking questions about that person's goals, ability to self-motivate, academic skills and knowledge of computers. Some students need to further develop their computer skills before attempting virtual education. Who was your choice for the potential distance education student? Was it Roy Harris? You might have chosen him because he has a specific goal and motivation to learn math quickly. He also works during the day and distance learning may be more convenient for him.

However, his employer also has goals. This company hired someone who needs to learn a limited curriculum and train for the job as soon as possible. His employer may be more accommodating in terms of Roy's schedule than you would imagine. You also don't know if he works well independently or is a good time manager. Roy may not admit if he is struggling to learn on his own. Then his employer calls to learn when he will be ready for training. What would you tell them?

If you thought Mrs. Nowatski was not a good candidate for distance learning, you may want to reconsider. While the stereotypical older person may not embrace technology there are intellectually curious people that do. You know that she has received some computer coaching and enjoys using email. She has access to a computer, some basic skills and is able to utilize the Internet.

You could follow-up with Mrs. Nowatski using a standard orientation message. The response would provide you information on her level of education and interests. Her grandson could help if she needs assistance starting a lesson in PLATO. Someone learning for personal interest is not likely to maintain a schedule at your center. You would function as an educational coach staying in contact via email to let her know you are available when needed.

On the surface, Jim Evans seems like a good candidate. He has computer skills, access is not a problem and he appears motivated to complete his GED. You may still decide to give him virtual assignments after learning more about him. The key is collecting enough information to reach that conclusion. Jim's attitude about school and the effort required to convince him of the importance of education are a few red flags. Jim appears to be a resigned learner rather than a motivated one. He might view computers as fun but their novelty wears out quickly. Without more knowledge of Jim's real goals, it is difficult to assess whether he would succeed in a self-directed learning environment.

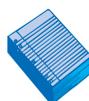
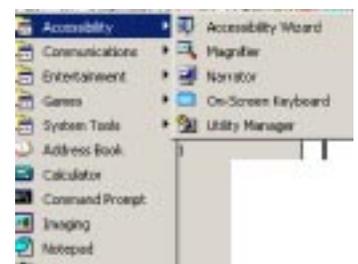
In conclusion, recruitment of distance learners is not an easy task. I asked you to weigh a few factors and reach a conclusion. In reality, these decisions should be made carefully after making the effort to learn about each student. Spending the time up-front should limit how many students just float off into cyberspace.

Tech Tip

*Go to
Start
Programs
Accessories*



*Then go to
Accessibility
Magnifier
Now you can make the
screen images larger for
any students experiencing
visual difficulties or use
the magnifier to draw
attention to particular
words or phrases.*



Dear Dorothy Researcher *(with apologies to Dorothy Dix*)*

Recently a group of adult educators in Kentucky were asked to comment on their use of research-based practices to inform their teaching strategies. Below are their responses with comments by Dorothy Researcher.

Dear Dorothy Researcher,
I have used the book “Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Reading” primarily by gleaning ideas for my own instruction from Chapter 3: “List of Emerging Principles, Trends, Ideas, and Comments.” The ideas themselves were useful and provided a jumping-off point for my own teaching strategies.

Signed, Eager Educator

Dear Eager,
John Kruidenier’s book does provide interesting insights into what research has to say about teaching reading to adults. Any reader wanting a PDF copy of the book, can access it at

http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/adult_ed_02.pdf.

Dorothy

Dear Dorothy Researcher,
I have a copy of the book *Readers and Writers with a Difference* (I was in KAELI II). I use the strategies and techniques I learned through KAELI to work with my students on their reading and writing skills. I also use the book *Strategies That Work* which is written with K-12 students in mind. It has many creative ways to teach out of the box!

Signed, KAELI II

Dear KAELI,
Educators can benefit from research when books with strategies for teaching and learning are based on quality research. Readers might like to refer to the definition of quality research on page 9.

Dorothy

Dear Dorothy Researcher,
I am amazed to receive this email at this time. I was actually looking through the book at this moment. I have a copy of the book “Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Reading” and have used it in the following manner. I use the book when preparing AE lessons for my family literacy program. I look at the questions posed and read the trends to get ideas for strategies to use in teaching reading skills to my adult learners.

Signed, Amazed

Dear Amazed,
Some further work has come out of this book and other materials from the Partnership for Reading. The article by Susan McShane on page 6 demonstrates the application of reading principles in the teaching of comprehension. Enjoy the book and the article.

Dorothy

Dear Dorothy Researcher,
I do not use literary research when developing my teaching and learning strategies because I simply do not have time to develop strategies. My teaching is “catch as catch can” due to students’ wavering attendance. I do use some reading prompts and strategies learned in KAELI as a matter of course in all my reading instruction.

Signed, Catchy

Dear Catchy,
I appreciate the difficulties with irregular attendance. Look for information on learner retention and persistence. - see <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/features/comings05012003.html>

Dorothy



**“One Day
I Will
Make It”**

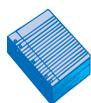
**A Study
of Adult
Student
Persistence
in
Library
Literacy
Programs**

**Kristin E.
Porter
Sondra
Cuban
John P.
Comings
with
Valerie
Chase
January
2005**

<http://www.mtrc.org/publications/401/full.pdf>

continued on page 6

*for information on Dorothy Dix visit <http://library.apsu.edu/dix/dix.htm>



Dear Dorothy Researcher (cont'd)

Dear Dorothy Researcher,
On the one hand I want to say “YES” I use a number of research based principles, and on the other hand I need to be honest. Research is sometimes great, and it often tells us what we thought we already knew. For example, I just read a research report done with low level readers and web pages. The breaking news was that low level readers read one word at a time without scanning for the key words like high level readers. This makes it important for advertisers who want to reach the 40% of readers who are not high level to design web pages with less distractions. Good readers pick and choose what they need. This was high priced research that told us low level readers are distracted. I hope most of us were already aware of that but it could be valuable advice for web page designers.

It is difficult to find web pages that are easy for my adult students to navigate. I may have read something similar in the past and decided that it was a good idea to copy and paste key passages from web pages onto PowerPoint slides and then have the reader read the same words but with less distractions. On the other hand I may have used logical thinking to develop this process. Yes, I use literary research to develop teaching and learning strategies but I don't think I have used the book you mentioned. Most of my latest strategies have come from books relating to whole language. The overall goal is to move students from reading word by word with many stumbles to get them to see the whole story and use many context clues.

*Signed,
Thoughtful PP*

Dear Thoughtful
Keep researching and reviewing - your students will reap the benefits!
Dorothy



Reading Comprehension: Self-Monitoring Strategies

by Susan McShane, Reading Initiative Specialist,
smcshane@famlit.org

What is reading comprehension? The answer to this question may appear to be simple and obvious because we're good readers and for us, the process of comprehension has become more or less automatic. But in fact, comprehension requires considerable work from the reader.

Because this work is “invisible” to others, adult learners may not be aware of the kinds of strategies good readers use. Research supports instruction of specific strategies that readers can apply intentionally to monitor their understanding and repair “comprehension breakdowns.”

Monitoring strategies are intended to develop meta-cognitive abilities in readers; that is, to help them think about their own thinking. You might try one or more of the following techniques. Most are broadly applicable to any kind of continuous text and various reading purposes.

Thinking aloud. One way to teach adults how good readers monitor their understanding is to show them how you do it. In other words, this technique is both a strategy for readers and an instructional approach you can use with other comprehension strategies as well.

Example:

Teacher reads aloud (*in italics*) and thinks aloud (in brackets).

There were three main causes for etc. [OK, I'll be looking for 3 causes.]

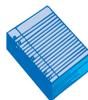
First and most important etc. [That's number 1.]
(Reading on)

There was also etc. [Is that number 2?]
(Reading on)

More on this, that and the other, etc. [Wait a minute. I didn't get the third cause. I guess I had better read it again.]
(Rereading)

This etc. was also important. [I wonder if this is it. It seems pretty different from the other two. I think that's it. I'll read on and see if I get any other clues. Maybe the writer has more to say about the three causes later on.]

continued on page 7



Reading Comprehension: Self-Monitoring Strategies

continued from page 6

After you demonstrate your thinking processes you can ask the learners to practice thinking aloud, too, to make them more conscious of their understanding and their thinking processes.

Restating. You can teach learners to stop periodically (after each section, for example) and try to restate what's been read in their own words. You can help them develop the habit of asking themselves *who, what, when, where, and why* questions after each section or page. If they can't answer these questions, they know to stop and reread.

Making notes. Another way to keep readers actively engaged with the content is to have them make notes as they read. You can teach a simple code that allows the reader to make quick responses to the text. If writing in a book is not an option, learners can use small adhesive notes. The INSERT system is one example of such a code (Vaughn & Estes, 1986).

Interactive Notation System for Effective Reading and Thinking (INSERT)	
=	I agree
X	I thought differently
+	New information
!	WOW
?	I don't get it
*	I know this is important

To learn more about research-based comprehension strategies, consult the report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) and the book, *Research-based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction* (Kruidenier, 2002).

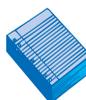
References

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups.* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Also available on-line: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp.report.htm>

Kruidenier, J. (2002). *Research-based principles for adult basic education reading instruction.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Vaughn, J. L. & Estes. (1986). *Reading and reasoning beyond the primary grades.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

This article has been adapted from Susan McShane's original article in Reading Comprehension Instruction for Adults: A Sampling of the Research. *Connecting the World of Family Literacy*, Vol. III, Issue 4, page 6-7 & 19.





Proficiency and Performance in Adult ESL Assessments

by Maurice White, ESL Professional Development Specialist,
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With the content of several adult ESL presentations at the recent Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference as an indicator, ESL instruction is moving toward content standards. Appropriate assessments for adult English language learners (ELL) must be aligned with these standards. More importantly, for all stakeholders in adult education, valid and reliable tests also have to meet the rigorous requirements of the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS).

Therefore, adult educators need to make informed choices about these assessments with five key issues in mind:

1. Correlating student results with the six (6) NRS ESL level indicators
2. Placing students in appropriate instructional levels
3. Measuring ongoing student progress
4. Demonstrating learner gains in order to justify continued funding
5. Verifying program effectiveness.

Programs use a variety of assessment instruments (both formal and informal) and procedures because of these different purposes. However, in language testing terms, the NRS focus is on proficiency. Assessment frameworks have to look not only at what students know about the language, but at what they can do with it in everyday life; keeping in mind the evolving importance and direct relationship of content standards.

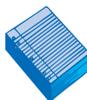
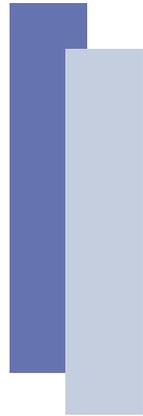
The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) defines language proficiency as “language performance in terms of the ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations” (Kenyon, D & Van Duzer, C, 2003). There is a direct link between instruction and assessment. For adult ESL, performance assessment reflects current thought about second language acquisition. Learners acquire language as they use it in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks.

Since a standardized assessment procedure must be used to measure level gains, most states currently use BEST Oral Interview, BEST Literacy, BEST Plus, CASAS, or A-LAS Oral. The BEST series (the BEST Plus has print and computer-adapted versions) and the A-LAS are performance-based, individual face-to-face interviews. Here in Kentucky, and remembering that many counties rely on more than one assessment, the number of counties using the current, state-approved assessments are A-LAS (6), BEST Plus (5), CASAS (2), BEST Literacy (20), BEST Oral (39), and *ESLOA (10).

*will no longer be an approved assessment after 6/05.

Reference:

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2003, November). Valid, Reliable, and Appropriate Assessments for Adult English Language Learners



Definition - Quality Research Study

<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/explore/criteria.html>

A quality research study is one that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers, and across multiple measurements and observations, and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparatively rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Scientifically Based Reading Research:

The term 'scientifically based reading research'

- a. means the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties
- b. and includes research that -
 - i. employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment.
 - ii. involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
 - iii. relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

Calendar of Events...

The complete PD Calendar at www.kyvae.org has information about many opportunities including:

June

8th Newspapers in Education (NIE)
Marshall County Adult Education

August

3rd Creating a High Performing Learning Culture, Hazard Community and Technical College

9th Orientation to Program Management, Part One, Hampton Inn, Frankfort

10-11th Family Literacy Implementation Training, Louisville

29-30th Orientation to Program Management, Part Two and Three
Hampton Inn, Frankfort

September

8-9th Orientation to Reading & Writing
Hampton Inn, Frankfort

19-21st KAACE/KYAE Adult Education Conference
Mariott Downtown, Louisville

30th CASAS ESL
Ahrens ALC, Louisville

 Hot Sites  http://www.nifl.gov/	 http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/	 National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy  http://www.ncsall.net/
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