Implementing Adult Education Literacy Interventions

Implications from the Research

Implementing adult literacy interventions is a complex process that includes several areas for consideration. Adult educators are often unfamiliar with evidence-based literacy strategies, and adult students often have great needs in literacy instruction and intervention. Adult education students need extensive support due to their life circumstances (newcomers, lack of prior academic success, need credentials for job/career advancement). Positive outcomes for adult education students may lead to improved outcomes such as secondary and postsecondary credential attainment, employment, income, and family literacy. This issue is addressed in _Adult Education Literacy Instruction: A Review of the Research_ (Kruidenier, MacArthur, & Wrigley, 2010).

There are six areas that leaders and educators could consider when planning or reviewing implementation of literacy interventions for their students. These areas include:

1 The development and use of data profiles

Collect and share student performance data upon program entry and tracking student progress over time.

2 Instructional methods and materials

Select evidence-based instructional materials, implement materials as designed, and employ evidence-based instructional delivery models for adult students. Examples of evidence-based instructional methods and materials include: multimedia technology (p. 24), direct instruction in comprehension strategies (p. 104), and using workplace oriented materials (p. 101).

3 Instructional time

Ensure that schedules – course duration, length, and accessibility – are conducive to adult education students. Examples of evidence-based recommendations for instructional time include: focus on intensity and duration (p. 102), spending 70% or more of classroom time on literacy practice (p. 103).

4 Teacher preparation and training

Ensure that adult educators are well trained and prepared for instruction and that ongoing professional development and coaching is offered. Examples of evidence-based recommendations for teacher preparation include: use of experienced, full-time teachers (p. 110), providing teachers with aides in the classroom (p. 97).

5 Communication

Ensure that communication channels between program staff, faculty, students, and families are open and ongoing.

6 Instructional environment and processes

Ensure that the instructional environment is conducive for adult education students and that processes are in place that support student engagement and productivity. Examples of evidence-based recommendations for instructional environment include: learner-centered classes (p. 100), community building (p. 125), and differentiated teaching environments (p. 125).

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Kruidenier, J. R., MacArthur, C. A., & Wrigley, H. S. (2010). _Adult education literacy instruction: A review of the research_. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.