

Research Topic in Adult Basic Education (ABE): Job Attaining and Job Retaining Skills

Importance of this Research

Literacy Action Network (LAN) conducted Focus Groups with ABE professionals statewide. There is a critical need for research in ABE. The Professional Issues Committee has identified a number of research topics to be pursued by university students. Additional topics are available at the LAN website:

<http://www.literacyactionnetwork.org/>

You are encouraged to use the LAN Professional Issues Committee as a resource and share results to help improve the ABE field. Potential formats for sharing results include posting links to research on the LAN website, attending a Professional Issues Committee meeting or presenting at the annual ABE Summer Institute conference.

Research Topic:

What types of skills should be taught in ABE that lead to attaining and retaining a job?

Sample research questions:

- How essential are soft skills to successful employment?
- What are the common characteristics and or skills are employers looking for in an employee?
- How can “work ethic” be successfully taught to or instilled in an adult learner?

Background:

Defining the Issue

Many ABE learners are enrolled in ELL, Pre- GED or GED programs in order to get a job or a better paying job. Often learners come with little knowledge about the “culture of work”. What skills should be taught in classrooms that help an ABE learner attain and retain employment?

Defining the Terms

ABE = Adult Basic Education; a state and federally funded program through the Department of Education to serve adults wanting to earn their GED, learn English, gain basic literacy skills, and prepare for the world of work or post-secondary education. ABE programs can be found throughout Minnesota in schools, correctional facilities and nonprofit organizations.

ESL = English as a Second Language (English Language Learning or ELL). ESL classes teach English to immigrants, refugees, and other nonnative English speakers.

American-Born Learners = A population of adults who are born in the United States yet need basic literacy instruction. Many have dropped out of school and had difficult formal learning

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experiences. This population is also more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed or under-employed, and have learning disabilities.

Soft Skills = Communication, etiquette, appropriate attire, professionalism, interpersonal interaction, etc.

Target Learner Population

The studies would target ABE learners attending ESL (ELL), Basic Skills, GED, Transitions to Work, or any other ABE class.

Resources/ contacts:

Brad Hasskamp, Adult Basic Education Policy and Operations Specialist
Minnesota Department of Education
brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us
(651) 582-8594

Adult Basic Education Web Site
<http://mnabe.themlc.org>

Literacy Action Network Web Site
<http://www.literacyactionnetwork.org/>