The OLRC *News*

Teaching or Workbooks?   ABLE Students Speak Their Mind

By: Dianna Baycich, PhD

"This is the first one (ABLE program) I've been at more than one or two days."

Curious about why this Ohio ABLE student decided to stay in her current program? Here's what she said:

"I like the teacher. I like how they teach, you know, they're really good on going over things and teaching you where the other couple times I tried, they just handed you stuff and said, 'Here, go over this. If you have a question, ask.'"

This student was not alone in her preference for a classroom where group instruction and real teaching was happening. I recently spoke with several other Ohio ABLE students who participate in four different programs. They all expressed similar opinions. These students had previously been in ABLE classrooms where students worked individually in workbooks or packets, and

they didn't stay long. The following quotes are just some of the comments these students made about previous and current ABLE classrooms.

"The other teachers were more or less having you to come up and ask questions and I needed more visual. I'm the type of person, I'm visual, and I just need to keep seeing it."

This student was expressing her frustration at not having her learning needs accommodated in a classroom where students worked individually in workbooks. Another student commented on the classroom arrangement in the program he had attended previously:

"It was kind of weird because there was cubicles that was there, you know. I didn't go there but a couple weeks, and I quit going."

Now that these students are in classrooms where group instruction takes place, they are more satisfied. The student who "needed more visual" made this comment about her current teacher,

"She puts it on the blackboard and goes over different ways of doing the math and that's what's helping me the most."

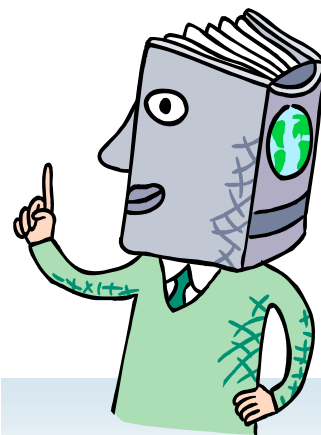The student whose quote opened this article also says,

"And here they actually show you and explain it to you, and it makes it so much easier."

Another student talked about an activity he found helpful and why,

"Probably the thing on the board because you do it as a whole group instead of one person."

The "thing on the board" this student mentions is a daily activity that the students work on when they get to class. This activity includes sentences to correct, a math problem, vocabulary, a question about a current event, and a map question. About midway through the class, the teacher goes to the board and the entire class participates in answering and discussing the questions.

cont.

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cont.

Another student in this class also commented on the board work activity:

> "The board work is a real big thing. The board work is awesome. Anybody can come in there and sit down and do the board work. It's always challenging and hits on all the subjects. Makes it a lot, *very* interesting. He's not just sittin' up there grading papers."

Not only do the students like the group instruction that takes place in their current classrooms, but they feel they are making better progress. The following two quotes are from two more of the students I spoke with, each from a different program.

> "She involves the classroom and that helps me. If I didn't see something the other person would maybe."

> "And then I found out about this program. And started this one. I think this one's got a lot better results."

Our students are telling us the kinds of classrooms they learn best in and why. Are we listening? More important, **will we act**?

11th Annual Ohio Writers' Conference

With winter soon subsiding and May 9th quickly approaching, it is time once again for the Ohio Literacy Resource Center to celebrate the outstanding writing accomplishments of the adults who participate in Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) programs throughout the state of Ohio.

Annually, since 1998, the OLRC has been inviting these students to annually submit their original writings of all genres to be reviewed; if accepted, their submission is published in a softbound book, *Beginnings*, and they are invited to the day-long Ohio Writers' Conference in Columbus, along with their teacher and one guest. The conference begins at 9:00 a.m. with registration and a continental breakfast, which is followed by the traditional reading of "Home-Fried Tales" by fourth-generation storyteller Lynnette Ford. There will also be an interactive session, lunch, awards ceremony, and a *Beginnings* author reading.

This year, the OLRC is also honored to feature award-winning author, J. Patrick Lewis, as the keynote speaker. Lewis writes full-time, reviews children's books for the *New York Times*, makes more than 40 school visits a year, keynotes at literature conferences, and presents teachers' workshops on introducing poetry in the classroom. He has had seven short stories and more than 90 poems published in literary journals. He has also worked with 14 different publishers to publish 57 children's picture books.

**Ohio Writers' Conference
May 9, 2008
Columbus, Ohio**

Nancy's Number Notes

"If I know the average (mean), but I'm missing one of the items used to determine that average, how can I figure out the missing data without using guess and check?"

Let me use an example to explain this question. If you want or have a test average of 90 and you had or know five scores —92, 95, 87, and 97—what must the sixth score be? While guess and check will work, an easier way is to use what you already know about averages. If your test average is 90, then the points for all six tests must be 6 times 90 or 540. Since you have already accounted for 459 points with the five known tests, then the final score must be 540 minus 459, which is 81. Try it with other averages and see how easy it is to figure out!

Have a math question? Ask Nancy at nmarkus@literacy.kent.edu.

10 Ideas for Vocabulary Reinforcement

Nancy Padak

Students will learn new words more easily with multiple exposures. The ideas outlined below don't teach new words, but they do offer engaging and active ways for students to practice the words. The idea for these activities is reinforcement– and fun!

Word Riddles: Give pairs of students a list of words being learned. Each pair's job is to devise riddles for other students to solve. Example:
> **photograph**
> 1. I have three syllables.
> 2. I have two word parts.
> 3. One means "light."
> 4. The other means something written or drawn.
> 5. I am a picture of something else. What am I?

Finding Words: Ask students to be on the lookout for words to be learned in other contexts (either print or oral). Provide bulletin board space for students to list these "found" words and where they were found.

Scattergories: Make a matrix with
- prefixes or suffixes along one dimension and roots along the other.

Roots	In-/im-	-ible/-able	-er/-or
Port			
Vis			
Flam			

- vocabulary words along one dimension and some element of them (e.g.; science word, social studies word; characters in a book to whom the words may apply; parts of speech) along the other.

Students can either check in the box if an aspect belongs with a word or write a word in the box that uses the two elements on the matrix.

List-Group-Label or Word Webs: Provide a key concept. Ask students to brainstorm related words. Write these on the chalkboard or chart paper. Then ask small groups to work with the words by:
- listing related terms and providing labels for them.
- developing a graphic, such as a web, that shows how the words are related.

Sketch to Stretch: Provide words written on slips of paper. Distribute these to students. Ask them to sketch something that reveals the word meaning. Then they share these with others who try to guess what they have drawn.

War: Provide words written on cards. Play the card game "war" with them. Each player turns up a card. The person whose card a) comes first in alphabetical order, b) has more letters, or c) has more syllables wins the round, as long as s/he can say both words and their meanings. If the words are similar, players draw again, and the same rules apply. The player who wins this "war" takes all the cards. A player who gets all his/ her partner's cards wins the game.

Concentration: Make double sets of word cards (or put the word and its definition on separate cards). Put all face down on a table. Players take turns trying to make matches. The player with the most cards wins the game.

WORDO: Make 4 X 4 game cards. Select at least 15 vocabulary words. Play the game like bingo. Students can use dry beans or pennies or slips of paper as markers. Each player selects a "free" space and then writes the vocabulary words in other spaces. Teacher calls out definitions or other clues; students mark their cards with responses. Winner is first person to have a line of words (across, down, or diagonal).

Word Charades: Teacher makes slips of paper with words containing targeted word part. Students make teams. In turn, students select a word, act it out. Team members guess.

Crossword Puzzles/ Word Searches: Both are easy to make using puzzlemaker.com. If you have Internet access in the classroom, ask students to develop these for others to use.

References
Blachowicz, C., & Fisher, P. (2002). *Teaching vocabulary in all classrooms* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rasinski, T., & Padak, N. (2001). *From phonics to fluency.* New York: Longman.

Rasinski, T., & Padak, N. (2004). *Effective reading strategies: Teaching children who find reading difficult* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

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Resources and Reviews

Comings, J., Garner, B., & Smith, C. (Eds.) (2007). *Review of adult learning and literacy: Connecting research, policy, and practice.* Vol 7. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates..

Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, a publication of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), provides insight into the practices of adult education and literacy programs. The *Review* focuses on several different aspects of these programs, including government involvement, improvement of student persistence rates, and adult education programs in different countries. The *Review* also includes chapters on the benefits of using technology in adult education, individualized group instruction, health literacy, and efficient methods of program improvement, including AIDDE (analyze, identify, develop, document, and evaluate) and the Baldridge Criteria for Performance Excellence. This work is a good resource for those in the field who need to know how to give adult learners the edge that they require to succeed.

Compton, D. L., Dickinson, D., Jimenez, R., Kim, Y., Leander, K., Risko, V., & Wells Rowe, D. (Eds.) (2007). *56th yearbook of the National Reading Conference.* Oak Creek, WI: National Reading Conference, Inc..

The *56th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference* is a compilation of research covering a variety of education-related topics. The essays in the *Yearbook* cover the following topics: Adolescent Literacies, Assessment, Content Literacy, Critical Perspectives, Analyzing Art in Language Arts Research, Drama/Dramatic Play and Language Arts, Early Literacy Learners, English Language Learners, English Language Variation, Literacy Instruction, Multimodal Literacies, Policy and Practice, Reading Processes, Research Directions, Teacher Preparation and Professional Development, Technology and New Literacies, Vocabulary, and Writing.

The authors of the studies, as well as the editors of the *Yearbook,* come from educational institutions across the country. The book provides a directory in which the featured essays are organized by the subjects they cover, making them easy to find.

Elias, J., & Merriam, S. (2005). *Philosophical foundations of adult education* (3rd ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

The Third Edition of *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* introduces seven ideas about how to approach adult education. The historical aspects of each of these ideas are discussed as well. The following approaches are covered in this edition: liberal, progressive, behaviorist, humanistic, radical and critical, analytic, and postmodern. The Third Edition contains updated versions of the first six approaches, based on changes in education and our culture since both the 1980 and the 1995 editions. It also contains an entirely new chapter on postmodernism, which analyzes each of the previous six chapters. *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* provides a thoughtful look into seven different approaches to adult education.

Kramer, M.A., & Rogers, R. (2008). *Adult education teachers: Designing critical literacy practices.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Adult Education Teachers: Designing Critical Literacy Practices provides insight into the practices of several adult education teachers within critical frameworks. Multiple cases of adult education teachers are provided, allowing the reader to fully appreciate the efforts and successes of these educators. These cases are preceded by the context in which the situations described take place. A range of topics is covered in the cases, including Reflexive Teaching, Literacy Education as Activism, Recognizing and Valuing Multiple Literacies, and Disrupting Cultural Models of Edu-

cation. The use of real adult education teachers is especially effective because it presents a realistic view of their practices, instead of an idealized one.

Pannucci, L., & Walmsley, S. (2007): Supporting learning-disabled adults in literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 50,* 540-546.

Lynette Pannucci and Sean Walmsley were interested in learning about how best to support adults with learning disabilities. They examined the learning difficulties and descriptions of successful educational practices for two groups of adults with learning disabilities: 23 adults in an Even Start family literacy program in upstate New York and 10 adults who had overcome their learning difficulties to have successful careers (e.g., law, education, business).

Nearly all (95% or more) these adults had several significant learning difficulties:
- lack of organizational ability
- frustration with information overload
- writing difficulties
- auditory processing difficulties
- inability to comprehend inferential meanings (e.g., sarcasm, irony)

Many (60% or more) also showed:
- intolerance for new learning situations
- difficulty adding new information to long-term memory
- similar expressive and receptive vocabularies
- difficulty reading facial cues
- strong visual memory
- strong kinesthetic abilities (i.e., good with their hands)
- "modality" overload (e.g., difficulty dealing with text that is too wordy)

Resources and Reviews

Interviews with the 10 successful adults with learning disabilities and a review of research-based suggestions led the authors to several "best practices":

- Connect learning to the adult's interests, prior knowledge, and purpose for learning.
- Set up expectations that the adult will learn.
- Scaffold teaching.
- Know the learner's modality strengths and weaknesses.
- Teach mnemonic devices.
- Teach metacognitive strategies.
- Commit the time necessary to achieve success.
- Use technology to support or even replace other forms of learning.
- Provide immediate, continuous, and substantive feedback.
- Use problem-based learning as a primary teaching tool.

- Help students establish effective organizational strategies.

These instructional guidelines are useful beyond Even Start. Indeed, they are most likely useful beyond work with adults who have learning disabilities. The authors conclude

...with sufficient determination and motivation, an adult with quite severe learning problems can succeed in the world, even in professions or occupations that demand high levels of literacy and professional knowledge.... Adults who struggle with learning need to know what is possible when they set their minds to it. (p. 546)

Reading Today, June/July 2007, p. 37

The International Reading Association's Family Literacy Committee has identified four criteria or guidelines that are pre-

sent in productive and effective family literacy or family support programs:

- Programs must be culturally responsive; they must address diversity in ways that capitalize on parents' and children's cultures.
- Programs must be built upon a strengths perspective. That is, all families and all family members must be viewed with respect.
- Partnerships foster family literacy/ family support programs.
- School-based (or school-preparation) programs should focus on providing parents with the knowledge and skills they need for effective school communication as well as home learning.

Eureka! Your Students Can Find It Here!

Are your students interested in reading short stories about love, animals, or adults who need to make choices about their lives? How about novels discussing teen parenthood, a mail-order bride, child abuse, life during the Great Depression, or adjusting to the death of a family member? Would they be interested in historical novels about African American experiences during the 1800s or 1900s?

If so, then we have some resources for you! The OLRC Reading Group has developed complete instructional suggestions for more than a dozen books your students are sure to enjoy. All of the books and their accompanying lessons have been field-tested in ABLE classrooms. To find the lessons, go to:

> http://literacy.kent.edu
> Select Eureka!
> Click anywhere on Archimedes to enter the site
> Select Trade Books
> Select Teaching Ideas
> Find a great book!

All these titles can be read independently by students at or above Level 4; however, you will find lots of ways to use the titles successfully with students who are less able readers as well. You can use the Teaching Ideas as they are or adapt them to meet your particular teaching situation. There are lots of suggestions to choose from.

http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka

Attention Directors - Adult Ed Online Technology PD Survey

Jody Angelone & Tim Ponder

"To improve the quality of classroom instruction, classroom teachers need to be knowledgeable about ways that technology can be used to improve student achievement. The Technology Integration Self Assessment allows teachers to measure their skills in 12 areas and get a customized professional development plan to improve their skills. " *AdultEd Online*

John Fleischman, our keynote speaker at last Fall's ABLE Directors' meeting, spoke of the availability of online surveys to assess technology knowledge of ABLE administrators and teachers. Ohio has the opportunity to utilize those surveys. Reports will be generated for each individual, along with a personalized PD plan, and for the program as a whole.   Beyond that, Ohio has been given the opportunity to access the cumulative results statewide and by region.

These results will not reveal individual names, but rather an overall picture of the skills and priorities of Ohio practitioners to use in future planning and development, which include:

- The importance of technology in enhancing teaching and learning
- The opportunity for teachers, administrators, the RCN and the state as a whole to gauge technology skills, priorities and needs
- The opportunity for practitioners in Ohio to self-assess technology skills and their ability to teach these skills
- The opportunity for practitioners to create a personalized PD plan
- The opportunity for administrators to view results to help them gauge need and priorities for PD
- The opportunity for the RCN and ODE to view cumulative results to help in technology PD planning
- The opportunity to look at and "try out" another type of professional development model

How? By following the directions outlined below, you will be able to access the survey effortlessly.

1. Begin by navigating to: http://www.adultedonline.org/

2. Click on the link under Tech Savvy that says: "Administrators start here," as shown below:

3. Fill out the Profile to create an account

4. It is recommended that you take the survey portion yourself before sending it to your teachers

5. Proceed to the link at the top which says: "Invite Teachers"

6. A form will be presented to invite five teachers at a time. Be sure to check the Technology Integration box on the form to be sure the teachers receive the correct survey.

7. Teachers will also need to set up an account, and that account will allow them to start, stop and return to the survey and PD planning whenever they would like (they do not have to complete everything at once).

Welcome, Jane Jones

8. Once you have your account set up, you can return at any time to invite additional teachers, check on the progress of those you have invited, and review the results for your program. (Note: Teachers can ask that their results not be shared, so please let them know the value of making this available to you)

If you need further assistance you can contact your regional resource center or Tim Ponder at the Ohio Literacy Resource Center, tponder@literacy.kent.edu, 865-637-7074.

Benefits for the Administrator:

♦ **Check any time to see which teachers have completed the assessment**

♦ **See a summary of progress**

♦ **View details of individual progress**

♦ **Review assessment results of teachers who have given permission**

♦ **Review results for your entire organization**

♦ **Find professional development resources to improve your teachers' skills**

Language and Learning: How Parents can Support Children

We know that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. We also know that a great deal of learning is supported through language. And we know that parents are encouraged to read to and play with their children from birth. Intuitively, these issues seem related. In a recent study, Britto, Brooks-Gunn, and Griffin (2006) sought to understand this relationship. Specifically, they recorded and analyzed teaching behaviors while parents and children read books and completed puzzles. They wanted to know what parents did and how parents' language might be related to children's vocabulary development and school readiness.

More than 100 parents and preschool children participated in the study. Mothers were all young (under 20), undereducated (no high school diplomas or GEDs), poor, and African-American. Each mother read the same book to her child, along with instructions: "All readers have their own way of reading books...So feel comfortable doing it your own way" (Britto, et al., 2006, p. 73). Mothers and children also completed two puzzles, one easy for the child and the second a bit more challenging. Mothers' directions in this case were to give "whatever help you think he/she needs to do it himself/herself" (p. 73).

Sessions were videotaped, and mothers' verbal and nonverbal behaviors were analyzed. For story reading, about 2/3 of the mothers were classified as "story readers'; their rendition of the story stayed close to its text. The remaining 1/3 were classified "story tellers"; they labeled objects, talked with children about issues related to but beyond the test, etc., in addition to reading the text. For puzzles, about 35% of the mothers were classified as "Low Support/Low Teaching," as they neither encouraged nor provided assistance or direct teaching for their children. About 45% of the mothers were classified as "Support/Low Teaching," and the remaining 24% were classified "Support/Teaching."

Children's expressive and receptive vocabulary and school readiness were assessed using standardized instruments. Researchers then looked for associations between mothers' patterns of interaction and children's vocabulary and school readiness. They found that both vocabulary and school readiness were linked with mothers' verbal guidance and language use:

> Children's vocabulary appears to be associated with a more interactive maternal book-reading pattern (encouraging the child to participate in the activity, asking more questions, and extending children's knowledge beyond the pages of the book) and with a teaching pattern that combines both support and instruction...[such as] guided assistance, flexibility in giving instruction to match the child's need, and clear verbal clues that the child understands, while at the same time providing information to help the child learn and solve the task. (p. 81)

The results of this study offer several implications for family literacy professionals, here framed as questions to support conversation about these issues in staff meetings:

- Do you know why parents choose the reading and teaching strategies they do? If not, how could you find out?
- Does your work with parents' read-aloud include attention to how (and why) to elaborate while reading to children?
- Do you provide a variety of learning situations for parents and children? Do you work with parents to help them learn how (and why) to support their children's learning?

Reference: Britto, P., Brooks-Gunn, j., & Griffin, T. (2006). Maternal reading and teaching patterns: Associations with school readiness in low-income African-American families. *Reading Research Quarterly, 41,* 68-89.

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read and write with your little one!

Literacy Tips for Children
7-8 Years Old

How Families Can Help:

- Ask open-ended questions, such as "What do you think? Why?" to help your child become a good problem-solver.

- Make reading and writing something that happens everyday in your home. Let your child see you reading and writing. Encourage your child to read and write during free time.

- Read to your child every day, even after your child learns to read.

- Play word games, such as thinking of different words to describe the same thing, 20 Questions, or I Spy.

- Support your child's writing. Have writing materials, such as paper, markers, or note books.

- Read what your child writes. Tell your child she or he is a good writer.
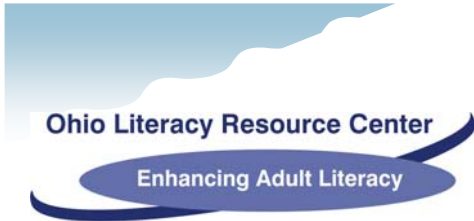
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__ *Supporting learning-disabled adults in literacy*

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