CSAL

> **Mission Statement:** *CSAL is committed to understanding the reading-related characteristics that are critical to helping adult learners reach their reading goals and to developing instructional approaches that are tailored to adult learners' needs and interests.*

The **Center for the Study of Adult Literacy (CSAL)** is a Research & Development (R&D) Center funded through a cooperative agreement (R305C120001) with the **National Center of Education Research (NCER)** in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education. This 5-year project started in September 2012 with the goal of conducting research to improve reading development for adults reading at the 3rd to 8th grade levels.

Sample of Center Activities

Explore the underlying cognitive and motivational factors that help or impede adult students reading at the 3rd to 8th grade level: Using a wide array of reading, motivation, and cognitive assessments, CSAL will explore the underlying characteristics of adult students and will collect evidence about the appropriateness of assessments for this population.

Create a repository of age-appropriate reading materials: CSAL is collecting authentic reading materials, many of which are in the public domain or are open source.

Develop a reading intervention that is tailored to the needs of adult learners: CSAL is developing a multiple component blended reading program that can be implemented by adult education teachers for individual or classroom instruction.

Conduct a pilot test of the intervention to determine its promise: During its final years, CSAL will conduct a pilot study with adults in authentic adult education settings in both Georgia and Toronto. These pilot studies will test the intervention's promise and feasibility of use.

Participating Researchers and Institutions

CSAL is staffed by researchers with expertise in adult and child literacy, education technology, and educational measurement and is further supported by the participation of adult education students and practitioners at all stages.

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Daphne Greenberg, Georgia State University

Co-Principal Investigators:
Dr. Maureen Lovett, University of Toronto
Dr. Art Graesser, University of Memphis
Dr. Jan Frijters, Brock University
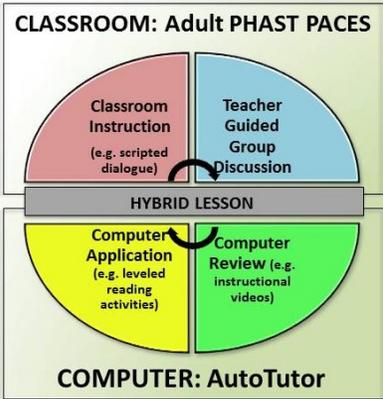Dr. Lee Branum-Martin, Georgia State University

Why have an adult literacy R&D center?

Many of the assessments used to evaluate the skills of adults reading at low levels are not developed for them.

Similarly, many curricula and reading materials these students encounter are not designed to address their specific needs or interests.

Features of the Curriculum

CSAL is adapting and refining a curriculum first developed for and evaluated with adolescents reading at the same level as the target adult students. The current curriculum uses a hybrid model. In this approach, teachers lead small group instruction and discussions, and students get supplemental, online reading practice using an interactive, animated reading tutor.

Guiding Principles

1. Make instruction relevant to students' goals
2. Design and use materials of interest to them
3. Address gaps in foundational skills, strategies, and knowledge
4. Structure learning tasks to generate motivation, engagement, and persistence
5. Celebrate tangible successes and help learners acquire effective strategies they can use on their own

CLASSROOM: Adult PHAST PACES — Classroom Instruction (e.g. scripted dialogue), Teacher Guided Group Discussion, HYBRID LESSON, Computer Application (e.g. leveled reading activities), Computer Review (e.g. instructional videos), COMPUTER: AutoTutor

Examples of Skills Addressed

Phonological decoding
Vocabulary
Morphology
Comprehension
Text and genre awareness

Features of AutoTutor

AutoTutor is an interactive, online program that allows students to practice comprehension. As part of the hybrid lesson plan, AutoTutor allows students to work at their own pace, repeat material, and learn additional skills (e.g., getting accustomed to the keyboard). The system also captures data on student use, thus allowing for customized feedback on progress for student and teachers.

Features:
◊ Simple interface
◊ Trialogs: human student interacting with conversational agents (tutor and student)
◊ Multimedia presentations
◊ Student input: clicks, yes/no, multiple choice, typed natural language
◊ Adaptive to student performance

Functions of Conversational Agents
◊ Help when initiated by the user
◊ Navigational guide
◊ Modeling action, thought, and social interaction
◊ Adaptive, intelligent conversational dialog
◊ Many roles: peer, tutor, mentor

AutoTutor includes videos to help students develop computer literacy and reading skills.
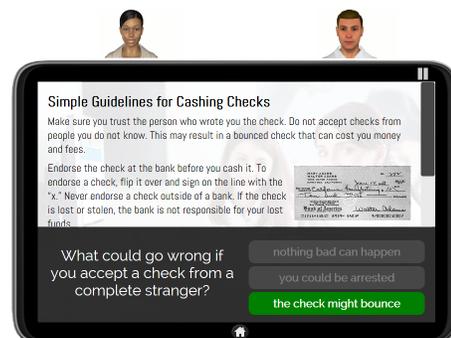
AutoTutor uses examples from real-world experiences to help students develop reading comprehension.

On the Web

CSAL Website: http://csal.gsu.edu/

IES/NCER Project Abstract: http://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1343

YouTube Videos: CSAL posts examples of AutoTutor lessons on YouTube, as they are being refined. Below, there are several videos depicting the user experience in the interface. Included in this sample are an introduction to the system, a tutorial on how to use the keyboard, and clips of interactions in lessons that are currently under development.

Orientation Video & Keyboard Tutorial http://youtu.be/TCsnQzo89XI
Lesson 11: Review Quiz http://youtu.be/rtO20VpFAFg
Lesson 14: Visual Hover Cues and Drag and Drop http://youtu.be/uo50Ks73v7E
Lesson 15: Modeling Video and Answer Animation http://youtu.be/8Vxc3JiNGq4

"Do We Care About Us?": Dr. Daphne Greenberg talks about the importance of adult literacy in her TedX Peachtree talk: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGad2PKUhbE see also http://tedxpeachtree.com/2013-speaker-spotlight-daphne-greenberg/

Funder Information

Related IES Projects