NCSALL Study Circle: Research-based Adult Reading Instruction

**STUDY CIRCLE OVERVIEW**

The Research-based Adult Reading Instruction Study Circle is one of a series of study circles that the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) has developed in its efforts to connect research and practice in the field of adult basic education and adult literacy. Please visit NCSALL’s Web site at: www.ncsall.net

Welcome to this study circle that is designed to engage ABE, ASE, and ESOL practitioners in discussing theories and concepts related to reading instruction. Questions about what research says about teaching adults how to read are particularly relevant as programs and teachers struggle with choosing the most effective ways to develop adults’ reading skills.

**DURING THIS STUDY CIRCLE, YOU WILL:**

- Think about and share your own perspectives on teaching reading and discuss the research on reading with others
- Then look more in-depth at the reading research, who adult readers are, and how reading research can be applied to reading instruction
- Identify how to assess adults’ reading skills and what adult students should know about the reading process
- Develop an action plan for using what you learn in your own practice

We anticipate that it will take you two to three hours to complete each session. The chats will be held on Thursday each week from 12:30-1:30 pm Eastern.

We also assume that you are comfortable using computers, the Internet, and e-mail. The facilitator is familiar with the technological aspects of the courseware and may be able to help with some questions, but you may need to find someone in your location to help with technology issues.

**STUDY CIRCLE OUTLINE**

Each session (lesson) will start begin on Friday and then end with the group discussion (chat) on Thursday. Completing the activities as outlined below will allow you to participate fully in the group assignments, as well as have time to post so others can read your reflections and ideas and respond to you.

*Please note that the chat times are listed for the Eastern Time zone.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Lessons/Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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| January 26-February 1 | **Overview and Introductions**  
  • Study Circle Outline  
  • Study Circle Overview  
  • Pre-Study Survey  
  • Introductions   | Complete readings by Tuesday  
 Post survey by Tuesday  
 Post introduction by Wednesday |
| Week 1  
 February 2-8 | **Models of Reading**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Models of Reading  
 • Skills-driven Model  
 • Comprehension-driven Model  
 • Integrated Model  
 • Group Discussion  
 • Summary   | Complete readings by Sunday  
 Post by Monday; read by Wednesday  
 Post by Tuesday; read by Wednesday  
 Post by Wednesday; read by chat time  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
| Week 2  
 February 9-15 | **Types of Research**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Types of Research  
 • Ways of Knowing What's Working  
 • Group Discussion  
 • Summary   | Groups assigned by Friday  
 Complete readings and post by Sunday  
 Post individual responses by Monday  
 Post group responses by Wednesday  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
| Week 3  
 February 16-22 | **Components of Reading Instruction**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Terminology and Reference Readings  
 • Introduction to Components of Reading Instruction Readings  
 • Posters on Components of Reading Instruction  
 • Group Discussion  
 • Summary   | Groups assigned by Friday  
 Complete readings by Sunday  
 Start group work by Monday  
 Share posters by Wednesday  
 Respond to posters by chat time  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
| Week 4  
 February 23-March 1 | **Techniques for Teaching Reading**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Techniques for Teaching Reading  
 • Instruction for Different Levels of Readers  
 • Group Discussion  
 • Summary   | Complete readings by Sunday  
 Post your responses by Monday  
 Read & respond to both levels by Wednesday  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
| Week 5  
 March 2-8 | **Reading Profiles**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Reading Profiles  
 • Two Different Views  
 • Group Discussion  
 • Summary   | Complete readings by Sunday  
 Post responses by Tuesday; read by chat time  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
| Week 6  
 March 9-15 | **Literacy Practices**  
 • What We Will Do  
 • Literacy Practices  
 • Road Map to the Guide  
 • Discussion Group  
 • Summary   | Complete readings by Monday  
 Preview guide by chat time  
 Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday |
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<th>Weeks</th>
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<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 March 16-22</td>
<td><strong>Research on Reading Component Skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What We Will Do&lt;br&gt;• Adult Reading Component Study Panel&lt;br&gt;• Research on Reading Component Skills&lt;br&gt;• Assessment Strategies &amp; Reading Profiles&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Group&lt;br&gt;• Summary</td>
<td>View video by Sunday&lt;br&gt;Complete readings and post by Monday&lt;br&gt;Explore the Web site by chat time&lt;br&gt;Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 March 23-29</td>
<td><strong>Resources and Next Steps</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What We Will Do&lt;br&gt;• Teaching Learners What Reading is All About&lt;br&gt;• Next Steps and Your Plan&lt;br&gt;• Group Discussion&lt;br&gt;• Additional Resources&lt;br&gt;• Summary</td>
<td>Complete self-study course by Tuesday&lt;br&gt;E-mail plan by chat time&lt;br&gt;Join chat at 12:30 pm (Eastern) on Thursday</td>
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<td>March 30-April 5</td>
<td><strong>Study Circle Summary</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Summary&lt;br&gt;• Post-Study Survey&lt;br&gt;• Course Evaluation</td>
<td>Complete survey by Thursday&lt;br&gt;Complete evaluation by Thursday</td>
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**WHAT IS A STUDY CIRCLE?**

A study circle is a *small-group discussion* involving deliberation and problem-solving, in which an issue is examined from many perspectives; it is enriched by members’ knowledge and experience, and often informed by expert information and discussion materials; it is aided by an impartial facilitator whose job it is to manage the discussion.

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The study circle is *not* a training that will provide you with handouts or demonstrations on teaching techniques or materials for teaching. This study circle, however, *will cue* you into the areas of reading instruction that research has shown to be important and effective in teaching adults. Hopefully, this research will guide you as you make decisions about how best to teach adults to read.

**THE STUDY CIRCLE IS FOR DISCUSSING:**

- Theories and concepts from the research
- Your context and experiences in relation to the topic
- Your ideas about the implications of the theories and research for your own and other practitioners’ practice and policy
**YOU, AS A PARTICIPANT, ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- Start each lesson early in the week and complete activities according to the syllabus
- Read/view carefully the assigned readings and materials
- Reflect on the readings and materials, then respond to the discussion prompts by posting to the forum area and participating in chats
- Check back into the forum areas at least once a day to read what others have posted
- Respond thoughtfully to others’ postings with positive feedback, helpful suggestions, and clarifying questions
- Participate fully in group activities, contributing your share of the work in a timely manner
- Notify the facilitator about any problems with your participation in the study circle

We want you to have a good experience and enjoy the discussions and activities. Full participation is encouraged and establishing a schedule for reading, reflecting, and posting to the course may help you get the most from the study circle.

**THE FACILITATOR’S ROLE IS TO GUIDE THE PROCESS**

The facilitator will not participate in the discussions and activities. However, you can expect support and encouragement from the facilitator. The facilitator will:

- Read the discussions in the forum areas and respond occasionally
- Answer any specific questions addressed specifically to the facilitator within 36 hours
- Check the forumss and e-mail a couple of times a day; be available by telephone during normal working hours
- Facilitate the group discussions
- Assign participants to groups and check to make sure the group participants are working together
- Follow up with participants to encourage timely completion of activities
**STUDY CIRCLE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the study circle, you will be able to:

- Distinguish the different theories of the reading process and explain what model of reading you use in your own instruction
- Summarize the types of research—quantitative and qualitative
- Identify the components of reading instruction and name specific techniques to teach the components of reading instruction to beginning-level adult readers
- Evaluate reading instruction through the framework of Equipped for the Future
- Analyze who adults are as readers within a skills-based and socio-cultural context
- Summarize and judge what the research says about the effect of contextualized instruction on literacy practices in adults’ everyday lives
- Explain the reasons and identify the tools for assessing and profiling adult readers’ skills
- Use activities for introducing adult learners to the four components of reading instruction
- Propose steps you will take next for teaching reading to adults
- Analyze the supports and constraints you may face as you take steps to change how you teach reading to adults

**COURSEWARE NAVIGATION**

- Take time to learn how to use the communication tools available in the courseware to make your online learning experience successful and enjoyable.
- This study circle includes pages for which you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader, free software for viewing and printing Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. If you do not have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your machine, go to www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html to download it.
- This study circle also includes an activity in which you will use streaming video. You can download the media tools you need from the host Web site at: http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/webcasts/webtools.html
STUDY CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

This study circle uses a number of activities:

- **Forums**: Participants share thoughts on specific questions.
- **Chat rooms**: The course facilitator will guide participants in real-time discussions during each lesson.
- **PDF files**: You will also be directed to access PDF files. Some will be informational sheets to print and keep for your records; others will be worksheets to use for course activities.
- **WIKI**: These are used so participants can work collaboratively on one document.
- **Group e-mail lists**: Participants work together on a group project by e-mailing the others in their group.

COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

To successfully complete the study circle, participants must do the following:

- Complete all assignments on time
- Contribute to small group projects
- Participate in 80% of the chats, contributing responses to each discussion
- Submit a satisfactory plan for next steps

Credit for professional development is arranged through your state system and/or local organization.