



Concept Paper

Online Reading Course via the KYVU for Adults Who Cannot Read

The Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU), in partnership with the Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), is collaborating with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) in order to create an online reading course for adults in the beginning stages of reading. This web-based course would address the needs of an adult who has been determined eligible for adult basic education (ABE) and whose reading scores are at the very lowest levels. The ABE instructor would refer this product to the adult who otherwise would need to wait for the program to bring in a reading specialist. By offering a web-based, self-paced alternative, the ABE instructor could more quickly begin the ABE Learner Plan -- and more likely retain this most needy adult learner in a program.

Since the intricacies of teaching literacy involves regular and personalized interaction between instructor and student, this proposed course would serve as a self-empowering tool for the least able adult who wants to pursue higher levels of literacy – any time, any place. It should rely on audio-visual stimuli and, being built on sound principles of reading pedagogy, could serve as a form of individual assessment of learning. Utilizing the high-touch, high-tech services of the Kentucky Virtual University, the learner can take advantage of the synchronous audio support systems (e.g., telephone or webTalk) that would be built around the instructional components. Incorporation of assistive technologies (such as voice-recognition software) can assure multiple avenues of communication for the adult learner at a distance and enable both a facilitator/learner interaction as well as learner-to-learner group experiences. Thus, the course could be offered in a regular ABE program as a supplement to customized instruction or it could be incorporated into a related adult-centered activity sponsored and facilitated by a non-DAEL provider such as a church or civic organization.

The success of the online reading course for those adults who cannot read hinges on its high quality of design as well as implementation. With the support and guidance of the CCLD and the University of Kentucky's Endowed Chair in Special Education Technology, Ted Hasselbring, the development of the course could be assured of the highest standards in literacy pedagogy and research. In addition, with the collaboration of the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy (KIFL) and its Director, Cindy Read, this course could be implemented in various literacy venues.

The creation of the course would be undertaken in the following stages:

1. Contract with Subject Matter Expert (SME) for adult learning and/or literacy to develop course objectives and basic design, including assessment criteria to highlight future research potential. (2 months)
 - Disseminate concept paper to potential candidates on national level identified by DAEL and Dr. Hasselbring.
 - Create screening committee from CCLD, DAEL, KIFL, and KYVU to identify best candidate for course development.
2. Construct and carry out a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) for a vendor to serve as instructional designer with high-tech software technology that could be implemented on several different types of hardware appliances. (same 2 months as above)
 - Consult with screening committee and SME to write RFP and disseminate to prestigious software companies on national level.
 - Evaluate and choose top candidate (with screening committee and SME).
3. Create online reading course for adult non-readers. (12 months)
 - Identify (with DAEL, CCLD, KIFL, and KYVU) alpha and beta testing groups
 - Organize and assess tests of product and instructor guide
 - Finalize product standards (pedagogical and technological)
 - Roll over development product in to production level learning platform (KYVU)
4. Market online reading course for adult non-readers. (on-going after production)
 - Incorporate product in to DAEL's professional development institute(s)
 - Disseminate information/testimonials about product to national audience
 - Encourage use of product in national/international conference presentations
 - Disseminate information/testimonials about product to global audience

Websites for Project Partners

Collaborative Center for Literacy Development - <http://www.kentuckyliteracy.org/>

Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy - <http://adulthood.state.ky.us/>

Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy - <http://www.famlit.org>

Kentucky Virtual University - <http://www.kyv.u.org>