

Annual Report of Activities

International Research Network (IRN) on the Topic of Basic and Language Education for Adults with Low Literacy Skills

Submitted by the conveners:

Bar-Kochva, Irit. German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) - Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

Greenberg, Daphne. Adult Literacy Research Center, Georgia State University

1. Purpose

The network was established with the goal of gathering and reflecting on research from around the world that addresses the following two general research questions:

What are the needs of adults with low literacy skills?

How could literacy skills be improved in adulthood?

The main expected outcome of our IRN will be the publication of a research synthesis of studies that address these two questions. Other planned activities will also address these questions (further collaborative publications, workshops, lectures and symposia).

2. Time frame

The IRN started in September 2023 and will run until April 2026.

3. Activities of the IRN between September 2023 and April 2024

3.1. Update of milestones

The IRN milestones provided in the proposal have been updated to reflect the start date and are shown below:



3.2. Network expansion

The network began with eight members. Unfortunately, one of the members who was a co-applicant left the network due to workload (Dr. Doria Daniels). However, we were able to expand the network and it now includes 24 researchers. In the response to our proposal, we were asked to include early career researchers. We now have three PhD students and three postdocs from the US, Germany, and Brazil. Other members are researchers at various stages of their careers, including a good representation of senior researchers in the field of adult education. Once the research questions and program for the research synthesis are concretized and agreed (expected in June 2024), we plan to approach additional researchers

from countries not yet represented in the network based on a targeted search according to research expertise.

The current network:

Name	Affiliation	Country
Alamprese, Judith	Abt Associates	USA
Bar-Kochva, Irit	German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) - Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning	Germany
Belzer, Alisa	Rutgers, Graduate School of Education	USA
Butscheidt, Moritz (PhD student)	German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) - Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning	Germany
Catherine Byrne	Technological University Dublin	Ireland
Cherewka, Alexis (PhD student)	World Education	USA
Clymer, Carol	Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Penn State University	USA
Durgunoğlu, Aydin Yucesan	University of Minnesota Duluth	USA Turkey
Fettermann, Joyce Vieira (Postdoc student)	State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro.	Brazil
Gal, Iddo	University of Haifa	Israel
Gerken, Laura (PhD student)	German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) - Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning	Germany
Greenberg, Daphne	Adult Literacy Research Center, Georgia State University	USA
Hoogland, Kees	HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht	The Netherlands
Jones, Lise Øen	Department of Psychosocial Science Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen	Norway
Kane, Phil	University of Auckland	New Zealand
Kobrin, Jennifer	Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee Knoxville, USA	USA
Mania, Ewelina (Postdoc student)	German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) - Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning	Germany
McHolme, Lindsay (Postdoc student)	Adult Literacy Research Center, Georgia State University	USA
Palomar, Javier Diez	University of Barcelona	Spain
Pickard, Amy	Faculty, Indiana University School of Education, Adult Education Program	USA
Prins, Esther	Lifelong Learning & Adult Education, Penn State; Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy	USA
Reder, Stephen	Portland State University	USA
Tighe, Elizabeth L.	Adult Literacy Research Center, Georgia State University	USA
Yasukawa, Keiko	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney	Australia

3.3. Kick-off meeting and regular meetings

Following the expansion of the network, a kick-off meeting was held on December 8th, 2023 (online, see picture below). The kick-off meeting included an introduction of the members of the IRN, and a reminder of its purpose. In addition, participants were divided into three working groups according to their research focus (1. skills, 2. interventions and programs, and 3. policy) to discuss initial directions for the final research synthesis. The results of the group work were discussed in the larger group. It was decided to further refine the research questions and work program in separate meetings of each group. These are being held on a regular basis (every two to three weeks). On June 20th 2024, we plan to have an online meeting of all members in which the work products of the three groups will be presented and reflected upon. We hope to be able to decide on the scope and format of the research synthesis at this meeting.



3.4. Work on a Special Issue on the Topic of Basic and Language Education for Adults with Low Literacy Skills in Journal for Research on Adult Education.

The first round of manuscript reviews for the Special Issue has been completed. The Special Issue is expected to be published in August 2024.

3.5. Submission of a Symposium abstract to the WERA Focal Meeting 2024

Members of the network have submitted an abstract entitled "Topics in the Study of Interventions and Programs for Adults with Low Literacy Skills" for the invitational symposium to be held at the WERA Focal Meeting in Manchester in September 2024. The symposium will include four presentations by network members from the USA, the Netherlands, and Germany. One of the presenters is a PhD student. The conveners of the network will serve as chair and discussant.