Identifying Profiles Based on Lower-Level and Higher-Level Skills

What was the goal of the study?

The researchers wanted to identify unique profiles of adult learners struggling to read based on their performance on reading and language assessments.

Why was the study conducted?

Creating unique profiles of adult learners struggling to read may help inform instructional practices by categorizing their specific needs into groups that receive targeted instruction.

What did the study find?

The researchers identified four distinct profiles: 1) Globally Impaired Readers (i.e., adult learners who were relatively weak in all reading-related competencies), 2) Globally Better Readers (i.e., adult learners who were relatively strong in all competencies, 3) Weak Decoders (i.e., adult learners who were weak in lower-level competencies and relatively strong in higher-level competencies), and 4) Weak Language Comprehenders (i.e., adult learners who were relatively strong in lower-level competencies and weak in higher-level competencies). The researchers found that there were significant differences across profiles in terms of age and native English speaker status, but not high school completion. With respect to age, older learners were overrepresented in the Weak Decoder group, making it the oldest group on average, followed by Globally Impaired Readers. The other two groups were similar in age. With respect to native English speaker status, native speakers were overrepresented in the two groups with strong higher-level skills: Globally Better Readers and Weak Decoders.

Who participated in the study?

The participants in this study were 542 adult learners.

How was the study conducted?

The researchers used a latent class analyses, which is a statistical method used to group data with similiar traits.

How can people use the results?

The results of this study demonstrate that practitioners may want to consider using adult reader profiles to help inform their instructional practices.

Reference

Talwar, A., Greenberg, D., & Li, H. (2020). Identifying profiles of struggling adult readers: Relative strengths and weaknesses in lower-level and higher-level competencies. Reading and Writing. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10038-0