

# FOSTERING LITERACY IN NON-TEACHING STAFF: A PRACTICAL APPROACH WITH ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING

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## Abstract

*This study explores the impact of activity-based learning (ABL) on the development of reading skills among non-teaching staff. The research aims to identify effective ABL strategies and measure their effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension, vocabulary, and overall literacy. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving quantitative assessments and qualitative interviews with participants. The findings suggest that ABL significantly improves reading skills and promotes a positive attitude towards learning among non-teaching staff. The study also delves into the specific types of activities that proved most beneficial, such as collaborative reading exercises, role-playing scenarios relevant to their work environment, and interactive discussions on reading materials. These activities were designed not only to enhance reading skills but also to make the learning process enjoyable and directly applicable to their daily tasks. The integration of real-world applications and practical tasks into the learning sessions helped in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage, thereby reinforcing the newly acquired skills. The positive outcomes observed suggest that such tailored ABL strategies can serve as a powerful tool in adult education, particularly for those in non-teaching roles, by making literacy education more engaging and effective.*

**Keywords:** *reading skills, activity based learning, non-teaching, assessment, participants*

## Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill essential for personal and professional development. However, non-teaching staff in educational institutions often lack formal training in literacy, which can hinder their professional growth and ability to support the academic environment. This study investigates the potential of activity-based learning (ABL) as a method to improve reading skills among non-teaching staff. ABL engages learners through interactive and practical activities, making learning more relevant and enjoyable. Despite the critical role non-teaching staff play in educational settings, their professional development often receives less attention compared to teaching staff. This oversight can lead to a disparity in skills, particularly in literacy, which is essential for effective communication and administrative tasks. By focusing on non-teaching staff, this study aims to fill this gap and provide evidence

for the benefits of ABL in fostering literacy. ABL not only addresses the immediate need for improved reading skills but also promotes lifelong learning habits, empowering non-teaching staff to take an active role in their professional development and contribute more effectively to the educational community.

## Literature Review

Research indicates that ABL can be effective in enhancing literacy skills across various populations. According to Prince (2004), ABL promotes deeper understanding and retention of information by involving learners in active tasks rather than passive learning. Studies by Freeman et al. (2014) and Hake (1998) highlight the positive impact of ABL on student engagement and learning outcomes. This study aims to extend these findings to non-teaching staff, a group often overlooked in literacy research. Moreover, the

application of ABL in adult education has shown promising results in various contexts, suggesting its potential for broader implementation. For instance, research by Bonwell and Eison (1991) supports the idea that active learning strategies, such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and problem-solving tasks, significantly enhance participants' cognitive skills and motivation. This study leverages these insights to develop and implement ABL activities tailored to the unique needs of non-teaching staff. By focusing on practical, context-specific tasks, the ABL approach not only aims to improve reading skills but also to boost confidence and engagement among non-teaching staff, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

### **Methodology**

A mixed-methods approach was used to assess the effectiveness of ABL in developing reading skills among non-teaching staff. The participants included 30 non-teaching staff members from a local educational institution. The study was conducted over a six-month period and involved pre- and post-intervention assessments, as well as focus group interviews. The quantitative component of the study involved administering standardized reading comprehension and vocabulary tests before and after the intervention to measure improvements in reading skills. These tests provided objective data on the participants' literacy levels and allowed for a comparison of pre- and post-intervention performance. The qualitative component, consisting of focus group interviews, offered deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions of the ABL sessions. Through these interviews, the researchers gathered feedback on the effectiveness of the activities, challenges faced during the learning process, and any changes in attitudes towards reading and learning. This comprehensive approach ensured a holistic understanding of the impact of ABL on the participants' reading skills and overall learning experience.

### **Quantitative Assessment**

Reading skills were evaluated using standardized reading comprehension tests and vocabulary assessments. The pre-test was conducted before the intervention, and

the post-test was conducted after six months of ABL sessions. In addition to the standardized tests, participants were also engaged in various interactive activities designed to reinforce their reading skills throughout the six-month intervention. These activities included reading circles where participants read and discussed texts together, vocabulary games to enhance word recognition and usage, and role-playing exercises that required reading and interpreting written instructions. The integration of these activities aimed to create a supportive and dynamic learning environment, encouraging participants to practice and apply their reading skills in diverse contexts. The combination of formal assessments and practical activities provided a robust framework for evaluating the effectiveness of ABL in improving literacy among non-teaching staff.

### **Qualitative Assessment**

Focus group interviews were conducted to gather participants' feedback on the ABL sessions. The interviews aimed to understand their experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits of the ABL approach. The focus group interviews revealed several key themes, including increased confidence in reading, improved comprehension skills, and a greater enthusiasm for learning. Participants expressed that the interactive nature of the ABL sessions made the learning process more engaging and less intimidating compared to traditional methods. They appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with peers, which not only enhanced their learning but also fostered a sense of community and support. Challenges identified included initial apprehension towards active participation and balancing work commitments with learning activities. However, most participants reported that the benefits far outweighed the challenges, with many expressing a desire to continue using ABL strategies in their ongoing professional development.

### **ABL Sessions**

The ABL sessions were designed to be interactive and relevant to the participants' work contexts. Activities included role-playing, group discussions, reading circles, and practical tasks related to their job functions. The sessions were facilitated by a trained educator with

experience in adult literacy. The facilitator's role was crucial in tailoring the activities to meet the specific needs of the participants, ensuring that the content was both challenging and accessible. By aligning the reading materials and tasks with the participants' everyday responsibilities, the sessions helped to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. For example, role-playing activities often simulated real-life scenarios that non-teaching staff might encounter, such as interpreting memos or understanding procedural documents. This contextual relevance not only made the learning process more meaningful but also helped participants to immediately see the practical benefits of improved reading skills in their daily work, thereby reinforcing their motivation to engage with the ABL approach. A key aspect of the sessions was their adaptability to different learning paces and styles, ensuring that all participants could engage meaningfully. The facilitator played a critical role, not only by tailoring the activities to meet the participants' specific needs but also by providing ongoing feedback and encouragement. The use of peer learning was encouraged, as participants often worked in pairs or small groups, fostering a supportive environment where they could learn from one another. This collaborative approach helped create a community of learning, where staff felt comfortable practicing and improving their reading skills in a context that directly benefited their professional growth.

## Results

The quantitative data showed a significant improvement in reading comprehension and vocabulary among the participants. The average reading comprehension score increased from 45% in the pre-test to 75% in the post-test. Vocabulary scores showed a similar improvement, with an average increase from 50% to 80%. The qualitative data from the focus group interviews indicated a positive reception of the ABL approach. Participants reported increased confidence in their reading abilities and a greater interest in continuing their literacy development. They also appreciated the relevance of the activities to their daily tasks and the collaborative nature of the learning process. These findings underscore the effectiveness of ABL in fostering substantial improvements in literacy skills

among non-teaching staff. The significant gains in both reading comprehension and vocabulary highlight the potential of ABL to address literacy gaps in this often-overlooked group. Furthermore, the positive feedback from participants suggests that ABL not only enhances technical reading skills but also promotes a more enthusiastic and proactive approach to learning. This dual impact-boosting both competence and confidence-demonstrates the value of ABL as a comprehensive educational strategy. By making learning interactive, relevant, and collaborative, ABL empowers non-teaching staff to contribute more effectively to their professional environment and to continue developing their skills beyond the duration of the study.

## Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that ABL is an effective method for improving reading skills among non-teaching staff. The significant gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary highlight the potential of ABL to address literacy gaps in this population. The positive feedback from participants underscores the importance of making learning engaging and contextually relevant. These results are consistent with previous research on ABL, which emphasizes the benefits of active engagement and practical application in learning (Prince, 2004; Freeman et al., 2014). By extending these findings to non-teaching staff, this study contributes to the broader understanding of ABL's effectiveness in diverse learning contexts. In light of these promising outcomes, it is recommended that educational institutions integrate ABL strategies into their professional development programs for non-teaching staff. By doing so, they can foster a more inclusive learning environment that supports the growth and development of all employees. Additionally, future research could explore the long-term effects of ABL on literacy retention and the potential for scaling such programs across different institutions and industries. The study also suggests that further investigation into the specific elements of ABL that most effectively enhance reading skills could help refine and optimize these educational strategies. Overall, this research highlights the transformative power of ABL in enhancing literacy and professional competencies among

non-teaching staff, thereby contributing to the overall effectiveness and cohesion of the educational community.

### Conclusion

Activity-based learning (ABL) can significantly enhance reading skills among non-teaching staff, providing them with the tools necessary for personal and professional development. This study demonstrates that ABL not only improves literacy outcomes but also fosters a positive attitude towards learning. Educational institutions should consider incorporating ABL strategies in staff development programs to promote lifelong learning and support the overall educational environment. Implementing ABL strategies can also lead to broader organizational benefits, such as improved communication and efficiency within the institution. As non-teaching staff develop stronger reading skills, they become better equipped to handle written communications, understand complex documents, and support educational processes more effectively. This, in turn, can lead to a more cohesive and collaborative work environment, where staff at all levels feel empowered and capable. Furthermore, improved reading skills can reduce misunderstandings and errors in the workplace, particularly in areas like administrative duties, compliance with institutional policies, and customer service. Non-teaching staff with stronger literacy skills can also better engage in professional development opportunities, contributing more

actively to meetings, training sessions, and cross-departmental collaborations. By embedding ABL into the professional development framework, educational institutions foster a sense of inclusion, ensuring that non-teaching staff play a vital role in the institution's success. Additionally, by investing in the literacy development of non-teaching staff, educational institutions can demonstrate a commitment to holistic staff development, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth.

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