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## "Alpha Plus": An Innovative Training Program for Reading and Writing Education of Functionally Illiterate Adults

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### Author(s)

Jascha Russeler, Klaus Menkhaus, Annegret Aulbert-Siepelmeier, Ivonne Gerth, Melanie Boltzmann

### ABSTRACT

We describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a reading and writing training program for German functionally illiterate adults. The program "AlphaPlus" consists of the following modules: 1) training of basic perceptual abilities with the BrainBoy<sup>®</sup>/Audio-Trainer AT-3000; 2) training of brain-hemisphere coordination in the processing of spoken and written language ("Lateraltrainer"); 3) training of phoneme discrimination ("Lautdiskriminationstrainer"); 4) training of reading and writing skills with pen and paper-based material; 5) use of the learning portal www.ich-will-lernen.de developed by the German Volkshochschulverband (VHS); 6) social activities such as cooking, shopping etc.; 7) three weeks internship at possible employers. The effectiveness of the training was investigated in two courses of 18 participants each. Reading and spelling abilities of the participants improved significantly. Thus, it can be concluded that the program is effective in teaching reading and spelling to functionally illiterate adults. Further research is needed to evaluate the respective contribution of the different modules to the observed gains in reading and spelling abilities.

### KEYWORDS

Functional Illiteracy, Adults; Reading and Writing; Training Program; Evaluation

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