

Practical guidelines



Practical tips from the wealth model approach in adult literacy and numeracy tuition¹

This worksheet is based on implementing a wealth model approach to adult literacy and numeracy tuition as set out in the **Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work** (NALA, 2012).

The wealth model approach

The wealth model is the simple idea that adult learners bring many different experiences and strengths into the class with them. A good tutor will use these experiences and strengths as a resource. They will respect the learner for what they have already done and achieved in their lives to date and regard their experience as a very good starting point for meeting new challenges.

Learning about a learner's experiences and knowledge helps to show where their strengths, goals and interests lie. Knowing their goals and interests means that the tutor can make tasks relevant and useful. This moves adult education away from 'merely useful knowledge' to giving and getting 'really useful knowledge' – the knowledge that learners need to change their lives for the better.

The wealth model in practice

Transformative learning is a way of making it possible for learners to take action and develop new perspectives on themselves, their families and wider society. Slowly, the tutors build evidence of the learner's ability. This ability is evident in the learner's portfolios and their increasing confidence. These contradict negative self-belief, and replace it with a positive and realistic one.

1 To accompany the report 'The wealth model in adult literacy: transformative learning in action'

At the start of the course, ask yourself:

Do I discuss with the learner or group, using words and terms that are familiar to them and using plain English, the following?

- What the course is about
- What they can get out of it
- The milestones of the course
- That ground rules will help everybody learn

Do I ask them?

- What their goal is, and match it to what the course offers
- What their concerns might be
- What activities they might like
- What their expectations are
- What kind of experience or knowledge they may already have of the subject

Do I explain?

- The ways in which this is not going to be like their experience of school
- That there are different learning styles and explain what they are
- That most learners have spikey profiles
- That there is no such thing as a stupid question

When it comes to assessment and certification do I tell them?

- That certification is optional, but make them aware what other learners say about it

During the course ask yourself, do I?

- Illustrate what something means in a way that the learner understands it
- Relate the new concept to something the learner is already familiar with
- Develop material that is relevant and appropriate to the group
- Use informal opportunities to get to know more about the learner
- Use opportunities to get the group working together and doing peer learning
- Help learners revise their goals when necessary
- Treat the questions of the learners with respect
- Get a sense of the life circumstances of the learner and what is possible for them and what might be risky for them
- Keep a space safe for the learners to take on new challenges
- Encourage and support the learner, especially when they may have lost sight of their potential and ability
- Create a good, relaxed learning environment that enables people to look forward to coming
- Help learners engage with resources that are in the organisation, or that are available locally
- Attend and note instances of where learners are applying relevant skills and knowledge in their lives

After the course ask yourself, do I?

- Evaluate by asking the learners what worked best for them
- Ask the group to identify what could or should be done differently in a way that no learner feels put on the spot
- Reflect on what worked well and what I would change

My own professional development

- Am I confident about my boundary management and referring learners to the adult literacy organiser, adult education guidance counsellor and others when necessary?
- Do my lessons enable learners to 'have a go'?
- Do I have a mentor in my workplace, and do I mentor others in turn?
- Do I model being a learner or might I have become too distant from those kinds of struggles?

My three top tips:

1.

2.

3.



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NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
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