



LearnersMot

*How to Trigger Primary Motivation for Learning
in Low-Educated Adults Using ICT Tools*

DEEP IN

**WHAT AN ADULT EDUCATOR NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT
LITERACY AND
LITERACY PROGRAMMES
FOR LOW-EDUCATED
AND LOW-SKILLED
ADULTS**



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Deep In. What an adult educator needs to know about literacy and literacy programmes for low educated and low skilled adults - A handbook produced by **LearnersMot** project partners.

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ADULTS

*Those who cannot acquire basic literacy
skills have fewer opportunities in every area of life*

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is one of the results of the Erasmus+ project "**LearnersMot: How to Trigger Primary Motivation for Learning in Low-Educated Adults Using ICT Tools.**"

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The Handbook addresses adult educators involved in literacy programmes for low-educated and low-skilled employed adults. The focus here is on “employed” which means that literacy programmes devised by adult educators for each group of learners will be simultaneously focused on the needs of employees, employers, companies and the wider society.¹ Over the last decades, there have been numerous major social changes (digitalisation, automation, robotisation, globalisation) that have to be reflected in literacy programmes. In such circumstances, no wonder, that this course we are offering to adult educators is both online and face-to-face.

More specifically this Handbook was written by all project partners thinking about the needs of low-educated and low-skilled older workers, company decision makers and, above all, adult educators preparing for a literacy intervention within a company where all needs are taken into account.

In today's economy, companies keep adapting to changes. Professions and strict division of work are ever less present. Today most workers have to perform a variety of tasks alone or in a team, since the old hierarchy of jobs and tasks has been vanishing. Moreover, companies are increasingly more service- and customer-oriented, which requires both workers and decision makers to demonstrate a high level of flexibility and adaptability to changes. Should they not be able to adapt, their job and company would be at risk. Literacy programmes are there to help to prevent the marginalisation of individual workers and the company.

¹ Promoting adult learning in the workplace. European Commission, June 2018

In such a situation, it is impossible to rely only on the most educated workers. On the contrary, decision makers have to trust *all* workers, including those who are the most vulnerable, the low-educated and low-skilled ones. They have to be confident that these workers can improve and have potentials that have not been addressed yet and can be developed through education and training.

Addressing low-educated and low-skilled workers, adult educators (mentors) have a complex task to accomplish to *animate* them to enrol in the programme, motivate them, triggering their intrinsic, primary motivation for learning, help them overcome their aversion to learning and changing, maintain them in education, persuading them that *education is about acquiring social power and a way to construct their future*. To this end, they devise and deliver literacy programmes taking into account low-educated and low-skilled workers' (latent) partial, unstructured knowledge and their core characteristics as individuals and workers who are functionally illiterate.

Literacy programmes for low-educated and low-skilled workers and adults who are functionally illiterate are important, since on the one hand, the performance of the enterprise needs to be developed, and on the other hand, the trust of the workers needs to be increased to allow the company to do better economically.

Adult educators (mentors) know that today's society requires writing, communicating, abstract thinking and that these are precisely the competencies illiterate low-educated and low-skilled workers lack. In addition, adult educators know that writing is closely related to speaking and understanding both written and oral texts. Writing is most useful for constructing one's social inclusion; therefore, adult educators' efforts are devoted to supporting the acquisition of writing skills.

This online Handbook was prepared in the LearnersMot project, co-funded by the European Union, as part of the ERASMUS + programme, in the hope that it can help you, adult educators, when you are invited to prepare and deliver literacy programmes for

low-educated and low-skilled workers. You might have already found out that *this learning audience is different and requires specific understanding and care*.

Following the creation of a literacy programme for illiterate workers, it is not enough to *animate* them to enrol. Besides, the *animation* of low-educated and low-skilled workers should also target their immediate environment, their co-workers, managers, medical doctors, nurses, librarians, social workers etc.

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Preventing and alleviating workers' functional illiteracy is a common issue, the burden of which has to be shared in a spirit of solidarity. Namely, we are aware that *the more the company ethos is based on solidarity and humanity, the better the enterprise does economically*.

The Handbook is divided into two parts: Part 1 is devoted to acquiring general knowledge about functional literacy of low-educated and low-skilled workers, more specifically addressing the individual and social (collective) reasons leading to functional illiteracy in low-educated and low-skilled workers, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) that often result in functional illiteracy, and language abilities, etc.

Part 2 of this Handbook is devoted to *animating* and motivating low-educated learners. It presents methods and techniques that can be used to support communication: close reading, speaking, understanding texts and communicating in everyday life, preferably at work, although the skills acquired are transferable to all areas of social life.

PART 1

MODULE 1. DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF (FUNCTIONAL) LITERACY AND (FUNCTIONAL) ILLITERACY



Low-educated and low-skilled workers are considered as *a vulnerable group of employees*. Why vulnerable? They are vulnerable because they are *illiterate* or functionally illiterate, the term illiterate being used in English and the term functionally illiterate being used in French. In this Module, concepts that are relevant to the understanding of functionally illiterate workers and their definitions will be discussed.

THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL:

The module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: What is literacy versus illiteracy? What is functional literacy versus functional illiteracy

UNIT 2: Definitions of literacy and illiteracy

UNIT 1: What is literacy versus illiteracy? What is functional literacy versus functional illiteracy

Literacy seems to be easily understandable, though the *concept of literacy* is both complex and dynamic and has been changing over the centuries. Therefore, *there is not just one definition of literacy*, nor is literacy seen as a simple *process of acquiring basic, cognitive and cultural skills, and using them* in ways that contribute to

- (1) socio-economic development,
- (2) developing the capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change.

Originally, in English, the word 'literate' meant 'to be familiar with literature' or, more generally, 'to be well educated'. Since the late nineteenth century, this adjective has

gradually come to refer to *the ability to read and write texts. At the same time, it also means being 'knowledgeable or educated in a particular field or fields'*. Researchers have been devoting considerable attention to defining literacy, and their work has had direct implications for approaches to practice.

Today, *literacy* is not just based on mastering reading, writing, numeracy, etc. It also comprises new basic and key competencies enabling workers to manage their work on their own and take on responsibilities for improving productivity and achieving organisational targets [...] More in-depth knowledge is needed for handling information, making decisions, etc. Communication and problem-solving abilities, as well independent learning, are necessary. (Carnevale, 1990, in Ivančič, In *Andragoška spoznanja*, p. 12)

Illiteracy in the English language means the opposite of literacy.

In 1970, the French Association ATD Quart Monde purposively introduced the neologisms *functional literacy and functional illiteracy* (fr. lettrisme fonctionnel, illetrisme fonctionnel) wanting to make a clear distinction between *analphabetism* and *functional illiteracy*. *Analphabetism* was typical mostly of migrants who had not been to school, while *functional illiteracy* was typical of some natives and migrants who had been to school, had completed compulsory primary or secondary schooling, but what they had learned had been quickly forgotten, and was insufficient for them to function well in modern society.

"Their writing, reading, numerical, cognitive and cultural skills are not developed enough for independent functioning in society" (Hebar, 2009)

Functional illiteracy is often dependent on the number of years spent in school and the orientation of schooling. Today, in our globalised and digitalised world, one starts being functionally literate if one meets some basic requirements: to have completed at least secondary general education school, shall we say grammar school, which caters for the development of abstract thinking and is focused on writing abstract texts. Namely, in the 21st century, vocational secondary education is not enough. Those who finish vocational schooling cannot become functionally literate to meet the needs of today's

society. On the contrary, their literacy and numeracy skills are too low, and therefore their functioning in a social environment is hindered. Why is it so? Because they are not, or they think they are not, knowledgeable enough, as they are not able to read and write sufficiently.

UNIT 2: Definitions of literacy and illiteracy

“[...] literacy is crucial to the acquisition [...] of essential life skills” that enable adults “to address the challenges they can face in life and represents an essential step for effective participation in societies and economies of the twenty-first century” (United Nations, 2002)

“Literacy is beneficial for individuals, families, communities, and nations. The improvement in literacy levels has a beneficial effect on individual persons (e.g., self-esteem, trusting others, abstract thinking, etc.), at the political (i.e., democratic values), cultural (i.e. cultural openness), social (i.e., children’s health), and economic (e.g., individual income) levels” (UNESCO, 2006).

While calling for an understanding of *literacy based on its ‘pluralities’*, UNESCO nonetheless excludes such skills as ‘computer literacy’, ‘media literacy’, ‘health literacy’, ‘eco-literacy’ and ‘emotional literacy’ from this definition (UNESCO, 2004)

In the industrialised world, there is a greater emphasis on the type of literacy skills relevant to the global economy. For example, in 1997, *the OECD report: Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* defined literacy as:

‘A particular skill, namely the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.’

According to the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD), *literacy* is defined as follows:

“The ability to understand, evaluate, use, and engage with written texts to participate in society, achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential (OECD, 2013, p. 59).”

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Literacy and basic knowledge/skills cannot be clearly separated from each other. Even though the term “literacy” is a part of basic knowledge, it is a precondition as well as an outcome of basic knowledge.

“Literacy may refer to the ability to read and write, but also to application-oriented basic knowledge that develops during the whole lifetime, not only during school years”. (Nickel, 2007).

However, despite improvements *in formal literacy (acquired in school)*, many people still have problems understanding formal texts. This is a problem because, in today’s society, *functional literacy* plays a significant role. It appears in every aspect of daily life, e.g., opening bank accounts, reading ingredients of food products, understanding medication or technical instructions, signing contracts, etc. (Cree et al., 2012). Moreover, “functioning in society without literacy becomes more difficult. Those who cannot acquire basic literacy skills have fewer opportunities in every area of life” (Cree et al., 2012). Functional illiteracy leads to fewer educational and employment opportunities and is an obstacle to living a successful life.

In 1949, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) set the generalised functionality of literacy. The acquisition of reading and writing was regarded as a basic right: people should be enabled to become functionally literate in their own culture (Bhola, 1995).

The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* focuses on information-processing competencies

This definition points to the multiplicity of skills that constitute literacy in advanced industrialised countries.



Some international NGOs have adopted an understanding of literacy that differs radically from those discussed above. In fact, the vast majority of educational NGOs that prioritise educational issues tend to neglect adult education and literacy. Among the few NGOs that emphasise adult literacy, the majority focus on reading and writing skills, fewer on functional literacy and a minority on 'transformative' interpretations.

Literacy is no longer seen as a simple skill or competency but as a process.

For a deeper understanding of functional illiteracy that goes beyond definitions, one should refer to **Paolo Freire's** work **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**. Freire provides a deep social, political and economic analysis of the processes that affect people's knowledge and beliefs (forming their 'awareness' of their situation). (EFA Global Monitoring Report Team; Archer and Cottingham (1996)). So, functional illiteracy is also a mental disposition. One starts considering oneself as unable to understand, learn or do and gradually becomes functionally illiterate.

To summarise: By functionally illiterate, we refer to those low-educated and low-skilled workers who spent the compulsory years in education but could not acquire or have forgotten basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. Due to both their schooling and life situations, they could not acquire the necessary communicative, cognitive and cultural skills. Having these skills impaired, affects their effective functioning in everyday life and at work.

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

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Which statements are true and which are false?

1. Literacy and functional literacy are considered to be the same phenomenon in industrialised societies.

TRUE FALSE

2. Functional illiteracy refers to writing, reading, numeracy and much more.

TRUE FALSE

3. Media literacy, emotional literacy, and eco-literacy are included in UNESCO's definition of functional literacy.

TRUE FALSE

4. Functional illiteracy hinders personal, company, and social development.

TRUE FALSE

MODULE 2. PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE SITUATIONS LEADING TO FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY. LOW-EDUCATED WORKERS WHO ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

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Adult educators and decision makers in companies cannot possibly imagine the scope of illiteracy around them, nor have they an idea of how illiteracy may be harmful. Therefore, it is essential to discuss the characteristics of functionally illiterate low-educated workers.

THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

The module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: Who is illiterate? Characteristics of illiterate learners

UNIT 2: The linguistic ability of low-educated/ low-skilled workers

UNIT 1: Who is illiterate? Characteristics of illiterate learners

Is it possible to imagine an employee who is not able to read safety instructions, write a short note to his work colleagues, or count the number of items produced in eight hours? Can you imagine that there are workers who leave work much later than all the others because they do not know how to “to read” the time? Is it possible to imagine a worker who has to fill in a form and who carries in his wallet a model that was prepared for him by his father, a model containing his name, surname, date of birth, address? (Benoit Hess, 1997, p.1).

Functional illiteracy is the condition of those who for diverse reasons throughout their life have experienced difficult individual and collective (family, social, political) situations. They have deficient skills in the fields of reading, understanding, writing,

communicating, abstract thinking, understanding sequence, space and time, and orienting themselves. As a result of that, they are *functionally illiterate*.

According to the definition provided by Groupe permanent de lutte contre l'illettrisme (GPLI), those who are illiterate do not write sufficiently well to cope with the minimum requirements imposed on them by their professional, social, cultural and personal life" (GPLI, 1997) in spite of having been in school until the age of 16.

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Difficulties illiterate people experience are not limited only to written texts and language. They show their total discomfort concerning language: reading difficulties originate from their oral language as illiteracy is reflected in both oral and written language. "The two deficiencies go together and consolidate each other".

Most of the time, low-educated and low-skilled workers experience difficulties both at work and in their social life, but of course, being low-educated and low-skilled does not necessarily mean being functionally illiterate. In this Handbook, we are referring to those who are functionally illiterate or at risk of becoming so. Namely, a certain percentage of workers have seen their capacities decreased due to repetitive manual work and their long absence from training. They have lost competencies they gained in the past. In the current economic circumstances, a great number of people have precarious work. They may work 12 hours a day or more, and they may be searching for a new job at the same time. In such circumstances, there will be even more individuals who are functionally illiterate.

There was a need for a workable standard definition of illiteracy to distinguish between functionally literate and illiterate and various levels of functional literacy in between. This demand was met at the General Conference of UNESCO in 1978.

A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also

for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development.

Those who are functionally illiterate went to school, but for some reason, they have forgotten what they learned, and today they are not capable of writing a text as short as twelve lines. Functionally illiterate workers can be economically sufficient, though they remain entirely dependent on others from whom they learn by imitation (the primary and less demanding way of learning) and on whom they rely for help in everyday activities. Moreover, they have developed a broad scope of strategies to hide their situation (they pretend having lost their glasses, they pay their co-workers to explain to them what the boss wants, they do not show up the day inventories are checked because they cannot count, they are invisible, they avoid conflicts etc.)

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Why is it so? Because these workers have been looked down at throughout their life, overlooked or despised by their families, teachers, and other children who mocked them; therefore, they make an effort to not be identified and discovered, they want to be in the shadow and look as normal as possible. Adults who are functionally illiterate *ask naïve questions, the type of questions* they used to ask long before they entered school and in school where their relationship with knowledge was established. Through individual interviews, adult educators discover the students' background and history.

Today they are dependent in many ways either on their parents (if they are young) or on their partners (husband or wife), work colleagues or the manager to whom they ask many questions before they can be sure that the job will be done correctly. They ask their colleagues to withdraw money for them, pretending that they have lost their glasses, they ask them to fill in official forms, they ask managers to verify what they have written. They have difficulties getting their driving license and they have difficulties shopping. They have difficulties reading maps, counting and managing numerical proportions. They mostly learn by imitation and hate writing.

The members of their team like them since they are always ready to help, etc. They would not change departments; they would rather quit their jobs. Functionally illiterate individuals are resistant to change.

Low-educated and low-skilled workers are mainly adults who have forgotten what they once learned, younger adults who are typically dropouts who could not root their knowledge and individuals with a migrant background.

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Low level of education and short schooling are dependent on *the situation of the family*, who could not offer their child a stable base for advancing. If the family is from a migrant background, parents could not help their children with school assignments. *Alcoholism* in families may have led to functional illiteracy. If children were sick for a long time, or if children were disabled, they could have been deprived of the *emotional support* they needed to progress in school. Generally speaking, health problems worsen when there is not enough emotional support from parents, and they can last into adulthood. Experiencing a lack of trust from significant adults (mother, father, teacher, priest) could have been another step towards functional illiteracy in adulthood.

In companies, the quality of the work done is not that important, nor are the workers' competencies. What seems to be more important is their ability to work in a team, to be available for the client, their ability to project themselves into the future, their personal growth, etc. This situation is difficult for those who have always been excluded. "Social qualification" may be acquired in the environment where one has lived. If an individual does not come from a supportive cultural background, this may lead to lasting *social disqualification*.

The life of functionally illiterate people has been marked by disdain, underestimation, degradation, and lack of respect. Nationals who are functionally illiterate and need to learn reading and writing (which is normal for migrants) are ashamed of their condition. Low-educated nationals remain at the edge of everything and are afraid of change. Illiterate workers tend to *avoid conflicts* as not to be defeated. They have a tendency to

never say no, which in the end is a handicap. They are always available. They do not want to be any different. *These workers keep losing their autonomy.* At home, they are assisted by their relatives, and at work, their colleagues protect them, so again they do not learn. They have a tendency to repeat everything, and *they treasure routine.* They do what they have always done and are resistant to changes, which is difficult when a company has to change. They have acquired their knowledge partially, here and there, and their knowledge is not structured.

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Today workers have to be flexible, to report a lot, and to have better communication skills, and therefore low-educated workers are not in a good position. They are fragile. They experience a sort of “social autism”. Having a relationship with others is an opportunity, but for some workers, it can be difficult.

UNIT 2: The linguistic ability of low-educated/ low-skilled workers

Linguistic ability is the ability to think in an abstract way. This faculty is impaired in individuals who are functionally illiterate and do not have access to abstract thinking whether in their oral or in their written language.

It should be remembered that they cannot manage writing sufficiently to meet the minimal writing requirements in their professional, social, cultural and personal life. They also have difficulties with effective use of oral language. Functional illiteracy is an impairment. Language is about abstraction. They rarely use time expressions. There are practically no discourse markers in their language to clarify the logic connections between clauses. Adults meet many interlocutors, therefore, they have to learn not to speak or write as if everything was clear to everybody. Getting out of the familiar context where words are barely needed to be understood, is quite an adventure for those who are illiterate. As children, most probably, they did not benefit from having privileged relationships with adults, and this impaired them for life, as they did not develop logic thinking patterns leading to abstraction.

Language is not only an ability, but it is also a function; the function of intention operating between two speakers. Illiterate individuals do not manage this linguistic function in oral language (problems begin in oral language). Illiterate adults do not have representations of this linguistic function, and they do not have adequate representations of the interlocutor either. Illiterate adults often think that the interlocutor knows what they think. Sometimes they even think that the interlocutor can decipher their inner thoughts. Therefore, illiterates develop a language where many things are implicit (meant, but not expressed), and it is up to the interlocutor to decode the meaning of the message. They do not ask themselves: “What does my interlocutor know about a certain event I am going to talk about”. Illiterate individuals have difficulties stepping out of their own context. They are less able to explain themselves in order to penetrate the context of the interlocutor, to adjust the two contexts to each other. Finally, incomprehension stems from a lack of explanation.

To summarise, functionally illiterate individuals use oral language implicitly, resulting from insufficient command of their mother tongue. According to Jacobson’s theory, language is used to produce something to reach out to somebody (Jacobson, 19630 and communication has a clear function: to impact the other, to change his behaviour, his doings or his thinking. (Piaget, 1966, 3 ed., p. 63)

“What and how we say something depends on what the interlocutor knows” argues Piaget, (1966 3e ed. p. 63). Piaget distinguishes two types of language: egocentric language and socialised language. Socialised language comprises the functions of differentiation and reciprocity. Between oral and written language exist circular links enriching both types of language. Writing can become a model for oral production. But oral language has to be managed first. Illiterate adults should know that language is produced to reach the other. They should learn that the other person does not know what we want to say, does not know a lot about our message, our experience, ideas, story, and that the speaker should provide the interlocutor with means to grasp the meaning of the message. (Bantolia, 1996, p. 139)

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

Which statements are true and which are false?

16

1. Functionally illiterate workers appreciate positive changes.

TRUE FALSE

2. They are not at ease with socialised language.

TRUE FALSE

3. Their work colleagues mostly like them.

TRUE FALSE

4. They easily explain what they have on mind.

TRUE FALSE

MODULE 3. DYSLEXIA IN THE WORKPLACE

Dyslexia can often be found in low-educated and low-skilled workers. As long as it is recognised, low-educated and low-skilled workers may do much better at the workplace. Their self-esteem and their self-confidence may increase. They may become motivated to take part in non-formal formats of education and training. However, if dyslexia is not recognised, it may lead to functional illiteracy, unemployment or even prison. To begin with, let us consider some basic questions.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

The module consists of three units as follows:

UNIT 1: What is dyslexia?

UNIT 2: Specific learning difficulties

UNIT 3: How specific learning difficulties affect work. What do they say?

UNIT 1: What is dyslexia?

The school system is stacked against dyslexics because they are “real world” thinkers, who use mainly pictures and concepts instead of mental sentences. They require specialised training to master the basics of the written language. So, what is dyslexia?

All people with dyslexia are different. Their reactions to the external world are surprising, unless we put some effort to understand them. There is no correlation between dyslexia and intelligence, nevertheless, there are some recognised clusters of characteristics that might be present in many of them. They have difficulties reading or spelling, difficulties with a phenomenon which is called **dysgraphia (mechanics of writing: gripping a pen, handwriting, spacing, organising thoughts on paper)**.

Schooling is mostly based on *linear thinking*, proceeding step by step, while individuals with dyslexia *think holistically* and in a *divergent way*. They understand the world around them in a holistic way, while reading and writing are thoroughly linear activities. Since these learners' neurological systems function in a divergent way, they are not adapted to this linearity.

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Learners might guess the right mathematical result instantly, without demonstrating the way they have worked out the result. Consequently, they may be accused of having copied the result from a schoolmate and get a negative mark. This is an injustice, which they simply have to accept and a typical situation that will impact their future education and work. Persons with dyslexia are burdened by the impact of their negative school experiences and so is their attitude towards adult education and training. *It is not easy to attract low-educated workers with dyslexia to education.*

UNIT 2: Specific learning difficulties

It is believed that dyslexia is only a school problem. But this is not the case. The focus should be on the talents of workers with dyslexia rather than on their learning difficulties. Nevertheless, since only difficulties are traditionally approached during schooling and perceived in the workplace, let us examine some specific examples of these first.

In school, many learners with dyslexia remain unidentified, especially if they manage to find their own way of learning soon enough and adapt to linear learning. There are students who write with both hands using the right, but also the left-brain hemisphere.

In mathematics, they jump directly to the result, but they make an effort, and they also write down the procedure in order to meet the teachers' expectations. These children soon develop compensational strategies. They cannot follow a series, they do not understand musical notation, but they have a good ear for music, so they pretend to follow musical scores. Children with dyslexia, if they are not troublemakers, are not

recognised in school. But the feeling of being different and not understood remains late into adulthood.

Many low-educated workers who have not completed their primary education have dyslexia. They may have been a failure in school, but later, if well supported, they may become innovative workers or entrepreneurs and may be successful in other social roles as well. They need knowledge, but they can acquire it in a non-formal way, rather than through training or in school. For low-educated learners, other forms of education can be more useful than the usual ones.

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Dysgraphia

This term refers to problems with writing. People with dysgraphia may change the letters b and d, n and m, etc. They skip letters, make a sequence of graphic mistakes, their handwriting is not neat or legible since their graphic-motor skills, which are a function of the left-brain hemisphere, are weak. Many children and adults with dysgraphia find it easier to draw than to write a story.

Dyspraxia

This is a form of developmental coordination disorder that affects fine and/or gross motor coordination. Persons with dyspraxia do not associate an item with its environment. They leave it where it was last used. But dyspraxia may also lead to losing things, having to constantly search for them, being disorganised in conducting activities, being unfocused in relationships and it may lead to other problems in life. If such persons understood their difficulties, they would more easily develop strategies to help them.

Dyscalculia

People with dyscalculia may have problems with imagining proportions, counting and performing mathematical operations. They may have difficulties with managing time. They are either late or extremely responsible and always come much ahead of time.

UNIT 3: How specific learning difficulties affect work. What do they say?

“I have difficulties estimating measurements in my head. My mother tongue is OK, but I’m terrible at mathematics. I write numbers the wrong way round. I never know if I have to do additions or subtractions and I have to use my fingers for that. My short-term memory is dreadful as well. I hardly remember places, names, faces or numbers. Lately, I have lost my sense of direction, which used to be good. It happened after my adrenal burnout. When I am asked to comply with written instructions, I have no patience, and I do things my own way, not really reading them. I have never had a job longer than a few months. Each time, I was dismissed because they thought I was a slow learner because I could not understand and that made me nervous and embarrassed. I keep asking my colleagues for help. Then they get mad at me. I have left many jobs.”

“Well, I have recently lost a job that I was good at. Very good. I earned my living well, I was enjoying my job, but I lost it because I was slow and wanted to help the customers and I talked to them. The employer didn’t like it.”

“I hate planning meetings. It feels like I had a bomb in my head”.

“I am good at visual things, or I am good at auditive things, but not visual ones”.

“I have difficulties with tests, unfamiliar fonts, reading aloud. I read better texts on some topic than others”. “I have poor handwriting”. “I rely on others for assistance”.

Many people with dyslexia have problems explaining their arguments, so they often create conflicts, making other people nervous and intolerant. Sometimes understanding one's dyslexia is a great help even in later years. When understood, tolerated and supported, people with dyslexia can be extremely innovative.

Adult educators do not have the time nor the authority to have their adult students tested for dyslexia, but they can learn to be attentive to their otherness, their learning style and talents, and their emotional issues. **Each person with dyslexia is different, and their learning strategies are diverse, most of the times surprising.**

It would be interesting to detect and describe more thoroughly these strategies since they are based on divergent thinking, so much less predictable than the linear thinking favoured by our schools.

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

Which statements are true and which are false?

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1. People with dyslexia are often not easy to work with.

TRUE

FALSE

2. People with dyslexia are often innovative.

TRUE

FALSE

3. People with dyslexia are not good at problem-solving.

TRUE

FALSE

MODULE 4. APPROACHING ILLITERATE LEARNERS

The education of low-educated and low-skilled workers is different from the education of other target groups of adults. It is about acquiring basic skills and knowledge, but mostly it has transformative value. From non-motivated learners with low self-esteem and confidence, learners may become proud learners and parents who encourage their children to study. Moreover, the aim of the education and training of low-educated and low-skilled workers is to prevent them from being further excluded. This has to be done in public environments and not families.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

The module consists of three units as follows:

UNIT 1: How do low-educated workers learn and what do adult educators want to achieve

UNIT 2: The impact of the learning group on individual low-educated learners

UNIT 3: Collecting life stories

UNIT 1: How do low-educated workers learn and what do adult educators want to achieve

Why educate illiterate and low-educated adults? Why educate young adults who dropped out of school quite early and are more or less socially excluded? Because educators want to prevent their further marginalisation and enable them to achieve more than accidental participation in the world of employment.

Education of low-educated workers is not about overcoming their deficiencies, rather it is about improving their command of what is the basic tool for social construction and empowerment: writing. Insufficient command of reading and writing leads to social and cultural exclusion.

A great number of illiterate adults are pushed to the edge of the world of institutions and the professional world. If they want to be included in these worlds, they have to learn writing, reading and communicating.

Participants in educational programmes always check if their adult educators are interested in the knowledge and skills they have gained in other social roles, as parents, citizens, owners, consumers or employees, and they want to know if their experience will be taken into account.

Adult educators should use documents the participants actually use at work and should include them in the programme. This is how participants can check immediately if what they are doing during the training is useful to them.

If they are to acquire **basic skills like reading, writing, speaking, communicating**, or calculating, they need to use them as often as possible. Knowledge and skills are maintained if they are used every day. It is necessary to start with what is real, what the learners know, and then try to tackle changes the enterprise needs to introduce.

Perception, understanding, problem-solving and learning activities require learners to get involved in abstraction and conceptualisation processes, but low-educated and low-skilled workers stick to just one level: to what is real, tangible and concrete. They have difficulties establishing links between different events and perceiving what is constant. These learners have to learn how to learn.

Adult educators have to assume that we all have capacities to learn, to develop and to modify. Low-educated learners need to re-educate their intelligence, change their thinking processes, become trustful and develop the feeling of being competent.

Therefore, cognitive methods to be used have to:

- mobilise as much as possible the learner's potential, making the learners efficient at solving problems to overcome the feeling of failure,
- develop the learners' logical thinking ability.

Educators should be reminded that intelligence develops through permanent interactions with those who are more knowledgeable.

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Educators should address each learner individually. Motivating learners may be difficult because even if they are relatively young, they think that "the future is already behind them". Therefore, it might be valuable to focus on retirement, when reading, writing and calculating will also be needed. It is necessary to widen the learners' short-term horizons and replace them with a long-term outlook.

Young children may be encouraging illiterate adults who like to find out what their children are learning. They would also like to help their children to learn, and because they cannot do it, they become aware of their illiteracy at the same time.

Adult educators should be attentive to all learners' motives, whether they are expressed or not. With the help of adult educators, learners should move from just obeying to being accountable.

UNIT 2: The impact of the learning group on individual low-educated learners

Groups are stimulating for individual learners. When a group is small, with 6-12 participants, individualised work is possible, as well as learning in subgroups and the whole group.

To illustrate this point, let me present the following example:

At the end of a literacy training programme, one of the learning groups of low-educated and low-skilled workers collectively produced, as a group, the following article:

We meet each Thursday. We get information on our entire factory. We learn to read, write and count. We learn what we did not learn when we were children. We are a group, and there is somebody to help us. We are not alone.

At first, I was afraid. Now I am happy to have joined this group. My boss is interested in what we are doing. Sometimes we do the exercises together.

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I am so proud that I dared to enrol.

I was really bad when I came here.

I was afraid of being different from my social background, of being lonely.

Now people appreciate what I do for them.

The article was published, and signed by the group. In the group, those who are more capable help the others. Members of the group work in pairs, and then the pairs work together. This contributes to a better mental representation of the tasks.

Members learn how to verbalise advice, talk about a task, and listen to each other. They become aware of the process they have to follow to reach a solution. It is necessary for group members to have a similar problem.

Low-educated and low-skilled workers have a different way of learning. They learn by doing. They have to do first and then to think about what they have done. Adult educators cannot expect them to start from general ideas and then understand the practice they undertake. For instance, when learning about diabetic patients, learners are asked to think about what is happening to their neighbour. They observe their neighbour, then they talk about themselves and in the end, they move over to generalising.

Remember! The potential of each group member is much higher than adult educators may expect!

UNIT 3: Collecting life stories

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The interviewer has to be discreet as to what he has been entrusted with. He may discover the typical traits of low-educated workers' life stories.

Typically, the stories of functionally illiterate workers go like this: today's low-educated and low-skilled workers had to quit school very early. They had many brothers and sisters, or they were sick for a long time in their childhood and could not be taken care of properly. For some reason, teachers had a tendency to overlook them.

The schooling of illiterate workers who are aged 30-40 had been irregular and chaotic. Many have bad memories of their schooling and of school as an institution. They used to be ashamed of being excluded for being unable, and these memories can resurface again at the beginning of the educational programme. Adult educators should be aware of this fact when developing the educational programme. Games can be very helpful at this stage, since participants do not feel exposed and do not need to reveal their identity.

It is important to make it possible for the participants in the educational programme to express themselves, to talk about their experiences, difficulties, disappointments and hopes.

It is important that they are listened to and heard, considered and respected. If people do not feel confident, they will not trust others and will not want to say personal things.

- Make sure that data are used carefully and discreetly.
- Positive points have to be highlighted in the evaluation.
- Talk about the teamwork and mutual help that will take place.
- Adult educators should be able to present their own weaknesses. (Bantolia, p.247)

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

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Which statements are true or and which are false?

1. Low-educated workers should not learn in groups.

TRUE FALSE

2. Low-educated adults are afraid of finding out what their children are learning.

TRUE FALSE

3. The schooling of illiterate workers had been irregular and chaotic.

TRUE FALSE

MODULE 5. ANIMATING INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES TO ENROL IN EDUCATION

This module describes strategies for engaging adult learners into education, focusing on how to reach out to potential learners and raise awareness about adult learning.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

This module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: Reaching out to potential learners

UNIT 2: Raising awareness about the importance of adult learning

UNIT 1: REACHING OUT TO POTENTIAL LEARNERS

Non-formal education is close to learners, their work and life issues. Much more, anyway, than formal education. Moreover, adult learners mostly learn to attain pragmatic goals. Aware of these facts, educators have to adapt courses and activities to their learner's analysed needs and may need to develop tailor-made measures to attract adults back to learning.

Not only are personalised, tailor-made learning offers crucial, but educators have to pay special attention to the needs of different vulnerable groups of adult learners.

Here we present some advice for adult education providers on how to reach out to groups of vulnerable adults with special needs. Such vulnerable groups of adults also include low-educated and low-skilled workers. What may apply to "mainstream" adult learners might not work for them, resulting in the need for adult educators to build their strategies on a different basis.

1.1 Listen carefully to your learners

Low-educated and low-skilled workers and learners and functionally illiterate individuals **need opportunities to have an active role in their learning environment**. Moreover, they need to feel that they are respected by their colleagues, peers and mentors and that the knowledge they have gained in other social roles, i.e. as parents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, carers, etc. is taken into account. Adult education providers and mentors, and indeed, all staff, have to have a good understanding of their learners' nature and social situation needs, and be devoted to their students. Therefore, listening to students/learners is of extreme importance. The time it requires is never lost.

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Mentors should engage in individual conversation with their potential students, preferably avoiding the topic of schooling. The interview should be held in private, in a comfortable room, with the interviewer and interviewee sitting on armchairs and drinking coffee, tea or juice. Also, the first session of group learning should be devoted to carefully listening to each other. It might be useful to give your students new names, explaining that they will have them just for the group learning time. Names are to be picked up from a pile of name cards. You can also use ice-breaking activities to make the atmosphere more relaxing and friendly, but they have to be somehow connected with the students and the programme.

1.2 Meet your learners in their environment

Low-educated learners will rarely or never come to you. Therefore, you should search out for them. Meet your learners at their home, in parks or in community buildings. These spaces might be rewarding for all the participants as your future learners will **feel more comfortable** and *open to new learning experiences* in settings that are familiar to them. This is especially true for disadvantaged groups, such as low-educated and low-skilled adult learners.

For example, some *Volkshochschulen* in Vienna have developed a project called “*German in the park*” engaging migrants. Since many members of this target group spent a lot of time in parks, education providers selected a public park as the place to provide their German language courses. In this way, learners could see that a language can be *learnt successfully in a relaxed atmosphere*. More about the project:

<https://www.vhs.at/de/b/2018/07/05/deutsch-im-park>

1.3 Detect, analyse, and remove barriers to learning

Adult education providers have to *detect and remove barriers* that might impede the participation of adult learners, especially from disadvantaged groups. Educators and educational managers have to check *the accessibility of their premises and courses*, looking at aspects such as location, timing, settings of the learning offer, etc. Sometimes, even the way courses are communicated can be barriers for the learners. For example, you will not get through to persons with reading difficulties with a written leaflet or website.

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1.4 Create partnerships with employers turning them into student recruitment channels

Establishment of long-term relationships between employers and adult education centres is mutually beneficial as it advances workforce development, promotes investment in training and provides opportunities to have direct access to potential students. To increase the enrolment of adult learners, adult education centres should partner with employers, research employer demands and align their programmes with career goals, design their courses to provide work-relevant skills and facilitate the hiring process through training-based job screens or community-based career boot camps.

Working adults are more likely to enrol if they can complete the registration process without leaving their workplaces. To remove this barrier, representatives of educational centres can visit employer sites to give more information about their programmes to workers and help them register for courses.

1.5 Increase diversity in adult education

Adult education providers have to ensure *diversity in adult education* and include educational managers and educators from disadvantaged groups in their staff. These people will be role models for potential learners. D. Findeisen (2018), Head of the Institute for Research and Development of Education, part of the Slovenian Third Age

University, believes that diversity brings about learning and these learning results in the ability to cope with changes in the globalised world and the ability to communicate, which is one of the essential abilities required nowadays.

1.6 Engage adult learners as mentors

Adult learners acting as mentors will stimulate other adults, especially those socially disadvantaged. This is why it is essential to encourage positive role models and learning examples. Moreover, mentors will be learning themselves and gaining self-confidence.

The Slovenian Third Age University has introduced an approach to each-one-teach-one teaching and learning in pairs. The learning tandems are supported by their institutional structure. The principle is that whatever somebody knows or learns he/she can transmit to others. The roles of mentors and learners alternate, so each of them takes part in the two exchangeable roles.

1.7 Use innovative and empowering methodologies

Adult education providers need *to adapt their methodologies* to the diverse target groups they are working with, especially to learners with specific learning needs.

Adult education providers from different EU countries within the OED Network (Outreach – Empowerment – Diversity) have developed methodology guidelines to provide support to educators working with socially and educationally disadvantaged groups. You can find them here: <http://oed-network.eu/doc/OED-EN.pdf>

1.8 Focus on the benefits for the learners

Deliver a **positive message**, promoting the personal, social, environmental and intergenerational benefits of adult learning. Demonstrate that adult learning is not confined to any particular group of people or form of learning.

The National Adult Literacy Agency in Ireland developed a TV advertising campaign focusing on the benefits of returning to further education. The advertisements

portrayed three individuals – a train driver, a mother, and a hairdresser – who encouraged other adults facing literacy difficulties to enrol in adult education. More information:

www.nala.ie/what-we-do/improve-literacy/advertising-campaigns

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UNIT 2: Raising awareness about the importance of adult learning

Adult education organisations need to work constantly to raise awareness about adult learning and education for personal growth and empowerment. Knowledge means social power and low-educated and low-skilled workers need to gain more social power. Campaigning for adult learning at national, regional and European level can include the production of TV or newspapers ads that motivate adults to learn, organising learner festivals, etc.

2.1 Organise Learner Weeks and Festivals

Local, regional or national learner weeks and festivals help to showcase the work of adult education providers, promote the work of the adult education sector as well as celebrate adult learning.

Do not target adult learners only but ensure that you can also engage multipliers and influencers from the community. For example, you can organise a festival or a summer school, preferably in small localities, to target the whole town/village with your activities, as the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Philosophy Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy and Third Age from Ljubljana, Slovenia, did. Read more about their experience here:

<http://www.learnersmot.eu/practice/12>

2.2 Involve the Learner in Campaigning

The best advocates for adult education are the *learners* themselves. For this reason, in particular, it is essential to use *learners' stories*, which can persuade new learners to

www.learnersmot.eu

LearnersMot: project n. 2017 -1-ES01-1-KA204 -038414

join the learning process, and *role models*, bearing in mind that learners from various communities or celebrities can be great motivators for adult learners.

When organising a campaign, *focus on the positive benefits* for learners and engage national and local policy makers to disseminate positive learning outcomes, which will inspire and motivate new learners.

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2.3 Adapt best practices from other countries

Find out what has been done in other countries and implement ideas or elements of successful campaigns in your country, taking into account the cultural and historical differences. Check the database of best practices on the “*LearnersMot*” project website and find a practice that can be implemented in your own country:

<http://www.learnersmot.eu/pack-for-educators>

2.4 Talk to decision makers

Find the right person – *a decision maker who is influential* and, at the same time, *sensitive to adult learning*. Prepare yourself for a meeting with this person. During the meeting, be clear and brief, providing concrete facts related to the benefits of adult learning. Be ready to define a specific project to be supported or a document to be adopted.

At Slovenian Railways, the first contact established by Logos, an educational provider had a meeting with the Personnel Manager responsible for education. The manager explained that they wanted to train their guards to work on an international train and accompany English-speaking passengers. Additionally, the provider stated that working with such groups was a sensitive task, that the educational programme needed to be designed from scratch, and that potential students had to be motivated. He asked for help and cooperation. The first meeting addressed functional illiteracy. The Personnel Manager was requested to publicise the course, emphasising what a great opportunity was being offered. Educators from Slovenian Railways were also engaged. Potential students were told that another course for the managers had just been finished, so they felt that they were a part of a greater enterprise, which is rarely the case.

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

36

1. Is this statement true or false?

Adult education providers should adjust their courses' content and delivery to integrate learners' needs based on feedback provided by adult learners.

TRUE FALSE

2. Choose the best answer.

Learning occurs...

- a. ...in the classroom
- b. ...at home
- c. ...at the workplace
- d. All of the above

3. Is this statement true or false?

Whilst developing an awareness-raising campaign, adult education providers should only target learners, communicating the individual and social benefits of adult learning to them.

TRUE FALSE

4. Choose the correct answer.

What should **NOT** be done when an adult education provider wants to encourage adults to enrol in education?

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- a. Assume you know what adult learners need
- b. Target adult learners in general
- c. Replicate best practices from other countries or other partners without carrying out research
- d. All of the above.

MODULE 6. TRIGGERING MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING

In this module, we discuss motivation and describe motivating strategies for triggering primary motivation for learning in low-educated and low-skilled workers.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

This module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: Concerning motivation and motivating strategies. Why provide literacy programmes and organised learning?

UNIT 2: Advice for adult educators on how to trigger primary motivation for learning

UNIT 1: Concerning motivation and motivating strategies. Why provide literacy programmes and organised learning?

Providers of education and educators should make sure that people with literacy difficulties can participate fully in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. Meeting the basic psychosocial needs for autonomy, competence and connection provides the primary motivation for learning.

What do learners look for when learning? Some recurrent topics, such as **competence, acceptance, value, interactions between individuals and the learning context**, can be identified across learning theories. They would like to be more competent, to belong and be accepted, to be connected with others, to be valued etc. But what happens, if they have not experienced much of the above?

The role of educators is to enhance their students' learning and achieve goals so that they may feel motivated for learning in everyday life and at work.

No one can ever learn on somebody else's behalf. Mentors are therefore asked **to create learning opportunities with the intention of engaging learners so they will want to continue learning.**

We know that *motivation is a goal-oriented action*. Learners can be motivated **by deficiency needs** they want to meet, or **by growth needs** (primary drivers of motivated actions). It seems that in low-educated adults, the deficiency needs prevail and they mostly become evident when low-educated parents want to help their children with school work. Helping children is the most frequent reason why adults with literacy difficulties enrol in education. They feel they lack knowledge and skills.

In general, adult learners with low basic skills are sceptical about engaging in adult learning activities. Low literacy level and lack of knowledge and basic skills may cause feelings of shame and embarrassment, and also guilt, and these feelings can discourage low-educated learners from enrolling in an adult learning programme.

UNIT 2: Advice for adult educators on how to trigger primary motivation for learning

Below we provide advice to adult educators on how to trigger primary motivation for learning.

2.1 Assess the learners' needs and goals

Adult learners are more likely to engage in learning programmes if they think they will gain tangible benefits from them (be able to help their children, communicate with their relatives) or if engaging in literacy programmes is seen as a kind of "honour", or they think they were selected among others to enrol. If they are already in the labour market, they are less interested in being promoted at work than in learning something that **could improve their other social roles** (parenting).

2.2 Triggering motivation in practice

The first step is to assess company needs, and the first strategy is to discuss the importance of education with the workers' direct social environment (*animation*). This can also help the adult education providers and educators to design pragmatic targeted programmes from scratch (rather than customising existing ones).

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This is especially true for disadvantaged groups. Often people feel too embarrassed to return to learning and they put a lot of energy into hiding their difficulties from their employers, co-workers, friends and family. Similarly, some people had a negative experience of school in the past and associate returning to learning with that experience.

Adult education and **literacy education primarily focus on the needs and interests of the learner**. Adults with literacy difficulties often had a negative experience of school, and it is a very brave decision for them to return to education.

“I am so proud I dared to enrol”, said a participant in a course on emerging technologies.

“If you were not like a mother to us, I would have fled away.”

It is important for the educator to keep getting familiar with his/her students. To assess the learners' profile, a simple tool called the “Persona canvas” can be used to introduce information about your targeted learner. This form can be used to prepare a guided interview, which should sound spontaneous.

I want to know the people I'm working with
by visualising their key characteristics

PERSONAS

ADD PICTURE OR DRAWING PERSONA NAME: AUDIENCE SEGMENT:	WHO AM I?	3 REASONS FOR ME TO ENGAGE WITH YOU		3 REASONS FOR ME NOT TO ENGAGE WITH YOU	
		1.		1.	
		2.		2.	
		3.		3.	
MY INTERESTS	MY PERSONALITY	MY SKILLS	MY DREAMS	MY SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	

Also, students' life stories should be discreetly collected... Some details at the beginning of the course, others later on.

“ I had been diagnosed with dyslexia. First, I was nervous but it all somehow blended in and It feels good when you see that others have the same problems and you soon create bonds with them and the teacher. When I was at school, I was always sitting behind at the bottom of the class thinking why it does not learn in there. But here you soon create bonds with others, particularly if this is a small group. I learn about people's characters. And it simply (learning) blends in. The teacher jokes. The others too. It is fun just now.”

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Adult educators (mentors) should involve all students equally and should also talk about their own failures and incidents on the learning path to get closer to their students. Mentors have to be good communicators and should empathise with and understand adults with literacy difficulties.

Much of the providers' and educators' work is about breaking down barriers, creating greater awareness of the available support and motivating people to return to education through the creation of national awareness campaigns. (TV programmes, TV series, radio and cinema advertising).

2.3 Promote adult learning as a concrete concept

Link adult education to a specific activity and communicate specifically what is appealing for the target group.

2.4 Refer to non-economic motivations

Personal and social goals (helping children as parents, gaining esteem, having a good time later in retirement) can be more important than pragmatic economic ambitions.

Adults enrol in literacy courses to improve their self-confidence, to become better

parents or grandparents, or as a stepping stone towards future lifelong learning goals. As an example, the possibility for grandparents to keep in touch with their grandchildren using technological means is a strong motivation for enrolling in computer literacy programs. *It is essential that the educators truly believe that all students are good and can develop their potential in due time.*

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2.5 Provide affordable or free educational offers

Adult learners with low literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to belong to socially disadvantaged groups – such as immigrants, women, low-qualified workers - with limited financial resources. In order to motivate their enrolment in adult learning, it is essential to provide an affordable – when not free – educational offer.

2.6 Customise some measures

Adult learners tend to abandon education early due to private or family reasons and get more easily discouraged about their possibilities. To avoid this, institutions have to adapt courses and schedules to their learners' preferences and may need to develop tailor-made measures to attract adults back to learning.

2.7 Encourage learners to stay in learning

It is basic to remove the psychological burden of shame and guilt that adult learners carry on their shoulders. Evidence shows that activities can be bridges to further education. Stimulate the learners' curiosity in order to encourage their educational journey and everyday numeracy and literacy practices, e.g. reading for pleasure or using maths in daily life. Share your free time with them.

2.8 Consider the possibility of slowing down or speeding up the programme

Adult learners may find it difficult to keep up with the learning activities and schedules and feel discouraged about continuing with the programme or, on the contrary, may feel bored about learning something they already know.

2.9 Add coaching elements to the learning activity

Adult learners with low literacy skills experience feelings of embarrassment, lack of self-esteem and confidence that could discourage them from continuing education. Moreover, work, family and other obligations can hinder the learners' motivation to continue with the learning journey. Coach them, as much as possible.

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2.10 Use role models

It is important to use role models who are appealing to learners but not too distant from them.

2.11 Provide information, advice and guidance

Sustained attendance to a learning programme appears to depend upon the appropriate level of support available according to the learners' needs – particularly during the early stages after enrolment – and the efforts made by the providers to link the learning programme to the outcomes desired by learners.

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

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1. Is this statement true or false?

Adult education providers should promote learning as a value in itself.

TRUE FALSE

2. Complete the sentence.

In order to motivate learners, education providers should angle on...

- a. ...possibility of career improvement
- b. ...increase in self-esteem and confidence
- c. ...personal or family reasons
- d. ...All of the above

3. Is this statement true or false?

Adult educators should encourage collaboration and cooperation in class.

TRUE FALSE

4. Choose the correct answer.

What should you, as an adult education provider, NOT do if you want to motivate adult learners not to leave the course?

- a. Proceed with your schedule without considering the learners' individual needs
- b. Belittle the learners' achievements
- c. Ignore the individual learners' goals
- d. All of the above.

MODULE 7. ORGANISING LEARNING PROCESSES

(Adapted from Sabina Jelenc Krašovec's *ABC izobraževanja odraslih* (1996) Ljubljana: ACS)

This module deals with the organisation of learning processes. Learning processes and how they are planned should be reflective of a fair number of factors: the mentor's beliefs about learning, his/her attitude towards (functionally illiterate) learners, his/her knowledge of low-educated and low-skilled workers' characteristics and life stories, the situation and mission of the company, the mission of the educational provider, etc.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL:

This module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: Organising learning processes

UNIT 2: Five planning phases for the implementation of the educational programme

UNIT 1: Organising learning processes

Organising learning processes is a phase of education comprising:

- *the organisational and technical preparation of the learning process,*
- *the selection and training of mentors,*
- *the use of the media for informing about an educational programme,*
- *the enrolment of low-educated and low-skilled workers.*

While most of the time, educational programmes for adults are simply adapted to the analysed common core needs (the needs of the learning group), in the case of functionally illiterate low-educated and low-skilled workers, the approach is substantially different.

Planning the implementation of learning processes and an educational programme starts with the belief of the mentor and educational provider and the employer that

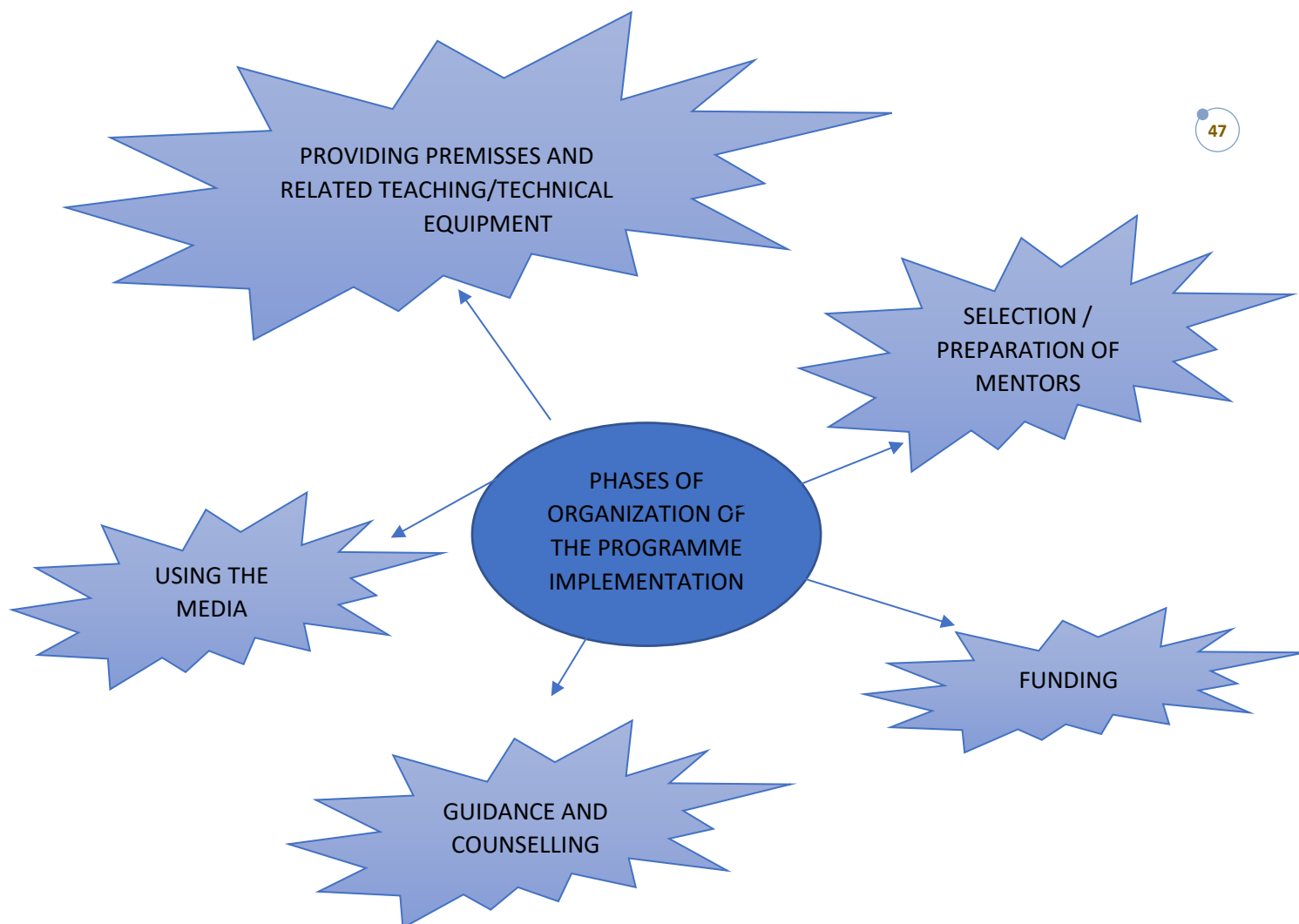
future learners have great potential, though little knowledge and not enough skills. So, both programming contents and planning *the learning processes/programme start from what learners know and the skills they have*. It would be ideal for education to be highly individualised (based on collected life stories), although being educated in a group has some advantages: learners get to know each other, help each other, and exchange knowledge. The aim here is *transformative learning triggers primary motivation in learners for learning and remaining in education*. It is important to note that there is no transformative learning without addressing the individual learners in the group and paying them some kind of individual attention.

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The organisation of the learning processes is based on learners' *availability (time), readiness to learn and possible impairments* (dyslexia, for instance, requires coloured sheets of paper, etc.). To some extent, the organisation of the learning processes is negotiated with the learners, taking into account, however, that at the very beginning, learners will have a tendency to say that they are not available (due to their fear of education, which they cannot admit). Most probably they will come to the first session unequipped (for instance without a pen, paper, etc.).

Learning processes have to be carried out in small groups of up to 12 learners maximum. The methods used will be adapted to the learners' cognitive, psychological and kinaesthetic needs (they cannot remain seated for long hours) and to the tendency to build community and to strengthen the learners' *ability to learn on their own*.

UNIT 2: Five planning phases for the implementation of the educational programme



2.1. Selection and preparation of mentors

The role of mentors in adult education is different from the role of teachers in children's and young people's education. Their job is primarily to facilitate learning and to help learners to understand themselves and gain knowledge about the external world.

2.2. Providing premises and related teaching/technical equipment

The equipment available in the premises (including technical equipment) can significantly contribute to the quality of education and individual learning.

When preparing appropriate premises, attention is to be paid particularly to:

- the arrangement of chairs according to the size of the group and the methods to be used
- additional factors that influence the smooth running of the course (comfort of chairs, lighting, decoration, acoustics, guaranteed parking places, wardrobe, libraries ...)
- appropriate equipment and decoration of the office where learners register and get their first and most important impression of the institution.

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The mentor's effort to create a relaxed atmosphere in the learning group must necessarily be complemented with a pleasant and comfortable room. This is the first condition for the learners to feel well and participate in the learning process.

Example: The arrangement of chairs in a circle or square, will enable everyone to participate with teachers and learners being in an equal position. Arrangements where the mentor is located in front of the learners as an authority are not accepted. Posters, illustrations and graphics will render the area lively, particularly if learners' products are exposed, creating a visual overview - the chronology of the learners' work and achievements.

Before a learning session begins, all *teaching aids* should be prepared and put in their place (name cards, cards, posters, pens, balls, etc.) and all technical equipment should be tested (overhead projector, laptop, video). The room should always be illuminated enough since darkness can lower the mood of both learners and mentor. Also, coffee, juice or a small snack during the break can have a relaxing impact on learners and can improve their communication. This is particularly important for low-skilled workers who have a tendency to withdraw from the group. Taking care of that requires no more than some good will and organisational skills.

2.3. Guidance and counselling

Generally, most learners know their own needs, but we cannot expect low-educated and low-skilled workers to know them. Many of them *need help and encouragement from all staff in the institution*. In order to attract learners to education and maintain the motivation of low-educated learners, it is crucial to get to know them and their life stories. This way, they can be advised before, during and after the implementation of the educational programme. Remembering their names right from the start and reacting to what they say is essential.

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2.4. Using the media

Normally using the media is important, but in the case of low-educated and low-skilled workers, media can only be used later on in the course. It would be a mistake to think that low-educated and low-skilled workers will react to marketing approaches and will attend our educational programmes, or that they will react to publicity, TV shows, radio shows, articles, posters in their companies, letters addressed to them, etc. Most of the time, courses are devised upon a request from the personnel managers. Therefore, instead of using the media, educational providers have to use their social and professional network to publicise the programme. They need to carefully identify the circle of people who are their target group and encourage future learners to enrol through their direct social environment (employer, colleagues, personnel manager, social worker, company doctor). *They, not you*, should present the courses to potential learners as something valuable, an exceptional occasion, and even *a gift to the learners*.

Example: Potential low-educated and low-skilled learners are not expected to read much, so local newspapers will yield no results, and the announcement of the course will not reach them. Posters can be used, although they will have no direct effect at the beginning. Thus, the most important notification tool is personal contact.

2.5. Funding

There are many different sources of funding for educational programmes. In any case, it is necessary to *financially evaluate* the total inflow (possible registration fee, government funding, donations, etc.) and *anticipate the total cost* of education, including the costs of programme development and teacher training, not just those of the programme implementation. It is also important to inform participants about the possibilities of co-funding their education and the possibility of including them in free-of-charge formats of education.

Check Your Understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

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1. Is this statement true or false?

The role of a mentor in adult education differs from the teacher's role in children's and young people's education.

TRUE FALSE

2. Choose the **WRONG** answer.

Organising learning processes is a phase of education comprising...

- a. the organisational and technical preparation of the learning process
- b. the selection and training of mentors
- c. the personal prejudices about students
- d. the use of the media for informing about an educational programme

3. Choose the correct answer.

The organisation of the learning processes is divided into _____ stages.

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 5

4. Is this statement true or false?

In the relationship between students and mentors, mentors are the most important.

TRUE FALSE

MODULE 8. LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

This module is devoted to low-educated adults and their learning how to learn. It discusses the need to enable them to pursue and persist in **learning**, organise their autonomous **learning**, and effectively manage time and information, both individually and in groups. What does learning mean for the illiterate low-educated person? How can educators approach the learning process for this target group? The units in this module tackle topics that can give simple and practical solutions to the above questions.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL:

The module consists of three units as follows:

UNIT 1: What is learning?

UNIT 2: What are the needs/goals of low-educated adult learners in relation to their learning how to learn?

UNIT 3: How can educators/mentors help low-educated adults to learn how to learn?

UNIT 1 What is learning?

Learning, as Lynda Kelly (2002) put it, 'is a very individual, complex, and, to some degree, an indescribable process: something we just do, without ever thinking too much about it'. It is also a complex social activity. 'Perhaps the most striking result of recent research around learning in childhood and adolescence is that very little comes through conscious and deliberate teaching' (Gopnik 2016). It comes from participation in life.

Children learn by watching and imitating people around them. They observe and learn by listening to what other people say about how the world works. (Gopnik 2016: 89) This is supposed to be the simplest way of learning.

Learning can either be seen as something that is imposed on you by other people or as something you do to understand and manage the real world.

When discussing learning, it is worth turning to Alan Roger's (2003) helpful discussion of **task-conscious or acquisition learning, and learning-conscious or formalised learning**.

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Learning has been primarily perceived as a result of some activity bringing change. Thus, for example, Robert Gagne defined learning as 'a change in human disposition or capacity that persists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to processes of growth' (1982: 2). In the 1990s learning was often described as the relatively permanent change in a person's knowledge or behaviour due to experience.

Wenger (1998) identified a number of principles of learning based on a social perspective, concluding that it:

- was inherent in human nature
- was first and foremost the ability to negotiate new meanings
- created emergent structures through renegotiating meaning through experience
- was fundamentally experiential and fundamentally social
- transformed identity
- built personal histories in relation to histories of our communities
- required an individual to deal with boundaries
- was a matter of social energy and power
- included engagement, imagination, and alignment
- involved an interplay between the local and the global (p.226-228).

Source: Infed

UNIT 2: What are the needs/goals of a low-educated adult learner in relation to his/her learning how to learn

Illiterate adults “need guidance to reach their potential” (Tlhapi & Venter, 2017; p. 53). Therefore, engaging these adults in lifelong learning is of major importance since it provides knowledge, skills, understanding and values to individuals in their personal lives as well in their lives as active citizens and workers (Tlhapi & Venter, 2017).

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Low-educated and low-skilled adults’ needs vary greatly since they are dependent on their literacy development needs, educational levels, socio-economic status, linguistic background and other characteristics (National Research Council, 2012).

Illiterate adults particularly **need to learn how to learn**. Namely, their learning should “erase” their memories of unpleasant and unsuccessful learning in compulsory education. So first and foremost, **learning to learn should be for them a pleasurable, revealing experience promising success**.

Lynn A. Tovar (2008) suggested that there are four relevant learning goals to achieve in adult education: general understanding, basic skills, self-knowledge and the educational process for adult learners.

- **General Understanding** – is the knowledge that provides a foundation for the positive attitude and motivation that learning requires.
- **Basic Skills** – People learn much that is valuable by means other than reading, writing and arithmetic. For instance, the ability to listen and the ability to view technology information is now at the heart of the learning process.
- **Self-Knowledge or Reflective Knowledge** – It pays to develop an awareness and understanding of self as a learner. One can gain valuable insight into the discovery of personal blocks or barriers to learning, to personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as personal preferences for the method of how they learn

and for their preference to a learning environment. It is worth mentioning here that low-educated learners first do things and only then do they reflect on what they have done.

- **Educational Process** – Adults usually learn in one of three modes: self-directed, collaborative and institutional.
- ✓ **Self-directed learning** involves carrying out personal learning projects where one needs planning skills for deciding what, when, how, and where to learn. Setting realistic goals, finding learning resources, implementing learning strategies and overcoming personal blocks to learning is essential for success in self-directed activities.
 - ✓ **Collaborative learning** is most often found in organisations or educational institutions. Often collaborative learning involves small face-to-face groups to learn or solve problems by using the experience and expertise of all members to accomplish group tasks and goals.
 - ✓ In the **institutional model** (which is **not very common for illiterate adult learners**), where credit and degrees become a goal, learners have still other kinds of needs. The learner should have an understanding of the programme they are enrolled in and the support services available to returning adults.

Teachers/mentors of adult learners should **understand and support both the cognitive and the affective mechanisms of learning** of each illiterate student. Therefore, they should **adapt and/or imagine methods to meet their students' needs to learn how to learn**.

Functionally illiterate adults need to learn how to learn and need learning methods to trigger their primary motivation for learning.

UNIT 3: How can educators/mentors help low-educated adults to learn how to learn?

In order to become autonomous learners able to learn on their own from different sources and from other people, functionally illiterate learners should acquire a variety of methods and techniques that support learning. Teachers are supposed to help them to acquire and practice them.

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Functionally illiterate adult learners should therefore learn how to:

- learn from their mistakes to find ways that work well for them. This is especially true of people with dyslexia
- learn to listen for information to identify what is most important from an oral text
- engage different types of intelligence in order to find out which intelligence to privilege in the learning process
- quickly memorise what they are supposed to learn
- understand better and faster
- understand the function of their memory
- discover what type of learner they are (auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, etc.)
- determine mnemonic procedures
- identify the organisation and structure of a text: The start, When, Where, What, Why, How, The end
- organise and structure their learning
- chunk information
- create summarising cards
- create mind maps
- take some kind of notes
- use “sketchnoting” which is memorising in pictures, organising notes in pictures
- use presentation techniques
- organise the learning episodes into learning projects in everyday life
- manage self-planned learning etc.

Adult educators/mentors should support their functionally illiterate learners to use task-conscious learning.

Check your understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

1. Choose the correct answer.

In the teaching process of low-educated and low-skilled adults:

- a. Self-directed learning should not be combined with collaborative learning
- b. One programme or method can serve an entire population of learners because they have similar needs
- c. It is a difficult process because their needs vary greatly and for this reason, not one programme or method can serve all learners

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2. Is this statement true or false?

Crucial skills for a learner to develop his/her learning style and learn how to learn are active listening, active writing and openness to change.

TRUE FALSE

3. Choose the correct answer.

Which of the following is **NOT** advisable as a learning technique for low-educated adults:

- a. Adapt the teaching materials to their life experiences
- b. Conduct a regular formal assessment to monitor their progress
- c. Praise the effort and the process more than the correct answer
- d. Allow space for the learners to express their goals and interesting topics of discussion

4. Is this statement true or false?

Learners should not develop an awareness of how they learn, because the mentor/educator will show them the way.

TRUE FALSE

MODULE 9. CONCERNING EFFICIENT LITERACY TRAINING AND METHODS TO BE USED WITH LOW-EDUCATED WORKERS AND LEARNERS

This module addresses practical literacy training and provides examples of useful methods to be used, preferably in groups, in order to enhance low-educated learners' basic skills, i.e. speaking, writing and numeracy.

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THE MODULE IN A NUTSHELL

The module consists of two units as follows:

UNIT 1: Efficient literacy education

UNIT 2: Examples of methods used for increasing low-educated learners' (communicating, speaking and writing) skills.

Unit 1. Efficient literacy education

The population of adult learners is heterogeneous. Optimal reading and writing education/training will, therefore, vary according to the goals for literacy development and learning, knowledge and skills, interests, neurocognitive profiles, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Learners should

- gain confidence, self-esteem, dignity and, if possible, pride in their learning;
- learn writing for their job or/and acquire better basic skills, i.e. writing, communicating, numeracy;

The contexts in which adults receive literacy education/training are also highly variable in terms of the:

- place and purpose of instruction,
- literacy development aims and practices, and

- mentor preparation.

Today's society requires ever broader, more intensive and more complex forms of literacy due to the widespread use of new communication technologies. Adults need to be able to use contemporary literacy tools (computers, smartphones, etc.). Moreover, they need to familiarise themselves with forms of reading and writing that are necessary and expected for work, health care, and other daily tasks as well as for performing different social roles. It is difficult to be an employee if one is functionally illiterate and does not use the computer enough to develop some computer skills.

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Efficient literacy training should use different methods, such as word recognition, vocabulary, reading comprehension, background knowledge, strategies for more in-depth analysis and understanding of texts.

Effective literacy training combines explicit teaching and extensive practice with motivating and varied texts, tools, and tasks matched to the learner's skills, educational and cultural backgrounds, and literacy needs and goals. **In the beginning, the same text is to be used over and over again so that students might go deeper and deeper into the text.**

Effective literacy training explicitly targets the automation and integration of component skills and the transfer of skills to tasks valued by society and the learner. It also includes formative assessments to monitor progress, provide feedback, and adjust instruction.

UNIT 2: Examples of methods used for increasing literacy abilities in low-educated learners

Enrolling in literacy programmes takes much bravery. Adult students are supposed to be able to accomplish specific everyday tasks where writing is necessary, but they should also develop the academic skills needed for further learning.

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So, mentors should prepare a story for adults or a newspaper article describing an interesting current event. **You should think first about how your adult students will be compelled by specific contents.**

The text is going to be scaffolded so that all students can be successful with the text.

Students will discuss the content of the text with their partners, but they will also teach each other. **Working with a partner is better, as** there are two minds combined.

Steps to follow:

- Students **identify the gist of the text.**
- **Teachers develop organisers** for students to understand how the text is structured.
- **Where, When, How, Start, Events, What happens and the Ending.**
- Each section of the story needs a different colour and a coloured reminder.
- It is truly beneficial if students themselves **can ask the questions** that help them with understanding.
- Student volunteers go around and help to raise questions in the classroom.

Students work together not only to support their own education, but also the education of those around them.

It is important to use the same text, the same vocabulary and the same ideas for the entire time. In this way, the students feel comfortable with telling the story in class. Frequent **oral rehearsal develops language and critical thinking.** Students learn that re-reading a section of the text is important. They become aware of time, pacing and pauses in the story. Students search for descriptive words that would help them to create inspirational stories.

- **In the end, the students focus on reading their stories in pairs. Additionally, they are asked to make a recording of their reading using a tablet.**
- **The class examines model texts and creates anchor charts to support the students' writing.**
- **The students apply their understanding of text structure as readers to organise their own writing.**

This type of exercise is used for learning to read, understand and write in a foreign language. **Do not hesitate to search for foreign language teaching ideas and materials.**

Example 1: Applied writing for everyday tasks

Title: Let me write to my husband

Type of text: Writing a short note

Type of writing: Collective, informal, private

Tools needed: Instruction cards

Time: 20 minutes

Description of the activity: Mandy is having a parent-teacher meeting at her daughter's school. She is writing a note to Peter, her husband, and will stick it on the fridge door. She wants to tell him that there is some soup in the fridge that needs to be heated up, adding that she loves him and will be back by 5 p.m.

Task: Learners need to change this text into instructions:

Dear Peter. I am having a parent-teacher meeting. I'll be back by 5 p.m. Please...

Variation: Single instructions are written on cards and learners have to compose a logic sequence of sentences by placing their cards on the table one after another.

Example 2: Applied reading

Title: Reading a local newspaper

Type of text: Newspaper article

Type of reading: Collective, informal, private

Tools needed: Copies of an article that the tutor has previously selected. It is essential that the article is from a local newspaper and learners are familiar with the topic. Avoid complicated issues, such as politics or the economy at the beginning. It is also important that the text does not exceed ten lines.

Time: 30 minutes

Description of the activity: Learners read the text individually and try to find the basic ideas of the text: what, where, when, how, why. While they do so, the tutor has to be attentive and help the students who have some doubt or problem, for instance, vocabulary questions. Once learners have read the text individually, they work in pairs and compare their answers, and after that, they try to tell what happened in their own words.

Task: Learners have to answer basic questions about the text.

Variation: If it is a small class (ten learners maximum), they can explain what happened together. One learner says the first idea, the next learner adds a new one, and so on.

Example 3: Applied writing

Title: Writing a story

Type of text: Writing a short story

Type of writing: Collective, informal, private

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Tools needed: Copies of a worksheet with a sentence written in it (the first sentence of a story) and divided with dotted lines. For example, the first sentence can be: “Yesterday I invited a friend for dinner” or “Last week, I was at the cinema with my friend.”

Time: 20 minutes

Description of the activity: Each student folds the paper along the dotted line of the original sentence that appeared on the worksheet so that the sentence is hidden. Only the students’ last sentence will now be visible. Students have to pass the paper to the student next to them. Each student must add a sentence. The paper is then folded so that the next person can see only this last sentence and the rest of the empty rows. The game continues until all the rows have been filled in. Open the folded worksheets and read aloud some of the exciting stories that have been created.

Task: Learners have to write basic short sentences to complete a story.

Variation: This activity can be done telling the learners that the sentences they write have to contain some element, such as was/were, an adjective or a verb in the past tense.

Check your understanding

This section will help you to check your understanding of the concepts and issues presented in this module.

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1. Choose the answer that does NOT apply.

The contexts in which adults receive literacy education are variable in terms of the:

- a. Place and purpose of instruction
- b. Literacy development aims
- c. Nationality and mother tongue of the learners
- d. Mentor preparation

2. Is this statement true or false?

Efficient literacy training should use different methods, such as word recognition, vocabulary, reading comprehension, background knowledge, strategies for more in-depth analysis and understanding of texts.

TRUE FALSE

3. Is this statement true or false?

“The text is going to be scaffolded so that all students can be successful with the text”.

TRUE FALSE

4. Is this statement true or false?

When reading a newspaper with the learners, it is better to choose complicated topics so that the adults will learn more.

TRUE FALSE

GLOSSARY

Animation

Act of animating. Animation is not just about motivating. It has many other connotations: to give life to, to quicken, to vivify, to inspire, to encourage, to convince, to persuade people to act, to influence relationships. Animation has specific methods and can be used in different fields like education, community education, consumption, marketing, etc.

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Basic skills

Basic Skills is a concept comprising the skills and the understanding necessary to be an active participant in working life and in society in general. Basic Skills are a foundation for further learning. Other concepts are also in use, such as Key Competences. Basic work skills are: Literacy / reading and writing, Numeracy / everyday mathematics, Digital competence / ICT skills, Oral communication.

Coaching

Coaching is a form of development in which a person called a coach supports a learner or client in achieving a specific personal or professional goal by providing training and guidance. The learner is sometimes called a coachee.

Dyscalculia

Difficulty making arithmetical calculations, as a result of brain lesions.

Dysgraphia

Inability to write coherently, as a symptom of brain lesions or damage.

Dyspraxia

A common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults. It is often perceived as the inability to associate objects with their place.

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Dyslexia

A specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.

Functional illiteracy

Reading and writing skills that are inadequate "to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level".

Learning

A change in human disposition or capacity that persists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to growth processes of growth.

Learning how to learn

A process of acquiring learning methods and techniques to be used when learning in various contexts.

Linguistic background

Linguistic abilities or ideas relate to language or linguistics. Linguistics is the study of the way in which language works. (Collins Dictionary)

Therefore, a linguistic background refers to the language(s) someone speaks, the principles of language in general and their application to the particular language.

Motivation

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Intrinsic or primary motivation refers to learning that is driven by internal psychological rewards.

Extrinsic motivation refers to learning driven by external rewards. Individuals may simultaneously engage in learning for intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Persona canvas:

Personas are hypothetical archetypes of potential learners that aim at representing them throughout the design process. They are not real people or average users, but a group of certain users that behave in similar ways and display the key attributes of the social group they represent.

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ANSWER KEY

Module 1:

1. False, 2. True, 3. False, 4. True

Module 2:

1. False 2. True, 3. True, 4. False

Module 3:

1. False, 2. True, 3. False,

Module 4:

1. False, 2.False, 3. True

Module 5:

1. True, 2. d , 3. False, 4. d

Module 6:

1. False, 2. d , 3. True, 4. d

Module 7:

1. True, 2. c , 3. d, 4. False

Module 8:

1. c, 2. False, 3. b, 4. False

Module 9:

1. True, 2. d, 3. False, 4. False



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