

Action resource worksheet 3



Working ethically and with different beliefs, cultures and ways of being¹

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

The wealth model approach

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

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

The wealth model in practice

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

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

Guidelines for good adult literacy work: Guideline 3

Adult literacy work respects different beliefs, cultures and ways of being. An ethical code of trust and confidentiality underpins all aspects of the work.

This guideline addresses the central issue of respect for difference and diversity. Adult literacy tutors and organisations need to operate from a clear position of respect for different beliefs, languages, cultures and ways of life. This variety should be seen as providing opportunities for all participants in a learning group or programme.

Adults who return to learning come from many different social and cultural backgrounds. Confidentiality and respect must be established from the outset in order for students to feel safe. They can then begin to develop the trust that is needed if meaningful learning is to take place.

Top tips

- **Get to know the expectations of the group and clarify them.**
Expectations usually reflect our ways of being at an unconscious level. Discussing them allows them to be brought to a conscious level. The tutor can identify what aspects of the programme can be changed and what can't be changed, and the learner can adjust accordingly. For example, discussions around expectations will soon enable the group to understand that they have experiences, concerns, fears and hopes in common.
- **Link with the local community.**
Ireland is becoming an increasingly multicultural society, with ESOL tutors at the interface between many migrants and Irish society. These tutors show that working respectfully with learners from different cultures means thinking about their needs, and creating new opportunities for them to interact with Irish people. Tutors can help learners engage with activities in their local area so they feel more connected to their communities.

My three top tips on my approach in the classroom:

1.

2.

3.

The 'Not Like School' checklist

Ways my classroom is 'Not Like School'	Check
It is an informal, relaxed learning environment	
We agree ground rules and everyone understands the reason for a ground rule.	
There is peer teaching and learning	
There is mutual respect	
I see learners as adults with prior experience, knowledge and skills to draw on	
The prior skills and experience of the learner can be relevant	
I learn from the group	
The advantages of going for certification are identified	
I see myself as a facilitator of learning	
I create collaborative classrooms	
I know how the curriculum is negotiated	
I provide critical literacy and numeracy skills so people can read the word to read the world	



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