

Community Support Worker Training: How to Build Literacy and Essential Skills Learning into Daily Life for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Research Institute, Bow Valley College
Training Series 2016

The Background

- ❖ **Answers May Vary (AMV) Research Report** talked to tutors and teachers who work with adults with disabilities.
 - ❖ Common themes resonate with **adult learning principles**.
 - ❖ **Easy-to-read AMV guidebook** gives you concrete instructions and ideas about how to incorporate literacy and skills building activities into your work.
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The Basics – An Agenda for the Day

Starting out: What does a community support worker do? What are the challenges? What do we want to learn today?

Defining our terms: What do we mean by developmental disabilities, literacy, and essential skills?

Adult Learning Principles and Effective Practices: Creating respectful, meaningful learning environments

Let's try it out: Strategies, effective practices, and resources to facilitate learning in everyday life

Review and Reflections



Starting out

- ▶ What does a Community Support Worker do?
 - ▶ What are the challenges?
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Starting Out

What do you know?

- ▶ Have you worked with an adult with a developmental disability in a learning environment before?
- ▶ How have you helped them improve their reading, writing and other essential skills?

What do you want to know?

- ▶ What challenges do you have when you think of helping an individual with developmental disabilities improve their reading, writing and essential skills?
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Defining our terms

- What do we mean when we talk about developmental disabilities?
 - What do we mean when we say literacy?
 - What are essential skills?
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Adult Learning Principles

Adult learners:

1. Are autonomous and self-directed
2. Have accumulated a foundation of experiences and knowledge
3. Are goal oriented
4. Are relevancy oriented
5. Are practical
6. Need to be shown respect

(Malcom Knowles, 1970)



What are Effective Practices?

The 2005 Literacy and Disability Study (LaDS) identified important effective practices when working with persons with disabilities. These included:

- ✓ Be learner/person centered
 - ✓ Be competency based – focus on strengths
 - ✓ Use materials and experiences from learners' daily lives
 - ✓ Patience
 - ✓ Respect for others
 - ✓ Positive attitude
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How do I know where to start?

- ▶ Alberta Reading Benchmarks Levels (ARB)
 - www.arbforadults.ca
- ▶ ReadForward
 - www.readforward.ca
- ▶ WriteForward
 - www.writeforward.ca
- ▶ Sharing the Journey with Adult Indigenous Learners: A teaching reading strategies guide
 - <https://centreforfoundationallearning.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/pryce1.pdf>

Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 1: RAP

Read

Ask yourself what it means

Put it in your own words

Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 2: Chunking

Chunking breaks things down into smaller pieces. You can chunk any written material into a page, a paragraph, a sentence, or even part of a sentence.

Which is easier to read?

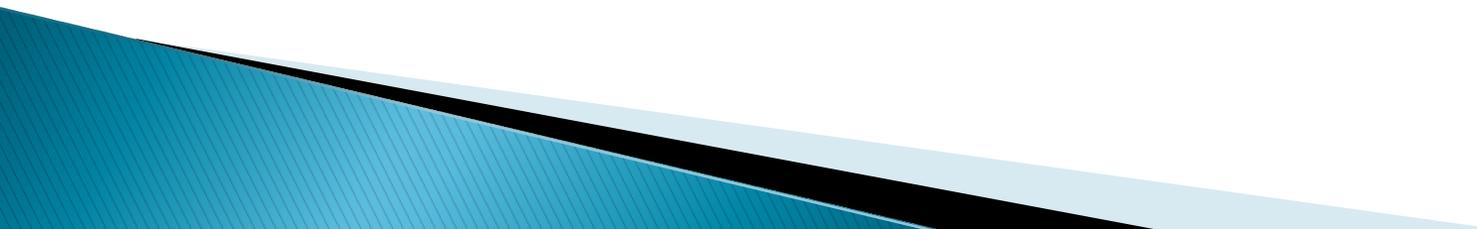
You cover the rest of the text with another book, a piece of paper, or your hand

You cover the rest of the text with another book, a piece of paper, or your hand (especially if you are out in the community) so that the person only sees the part she is reading.

Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 3: Use as many senses and learning styles as possible

Teaching the same skill in different ways, including addressing the different learning styles (kinesthetic, visual, auditory) is recommended in effective teaching principles.



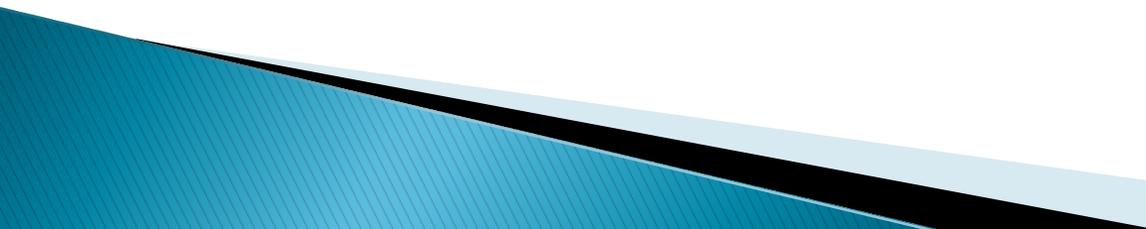
Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 4: Language Experience Approach (LEA) – Use the person’s own writing

This strategy uses the learner’s writing instead of a work written by someone else. It is one of the most successful strategies/effective practices in most adult literacy programs. It is also called Language Experience Story.

Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 5: Make it fun and of interest to the person

- ▶ Making learning fun is a wonderful strategy. So is connecting what you are teaching to your learner's life – making it something that is relevant to them.
 - ▶ Making learning fun can encourage curiosity. If a person is curious about something, he is more likely to be engaged.
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Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 6: Assisted Reading (also known as Echo Reading)

- ✓ The idea behind assisted reading is exactly how it sounds – reading together, echoing back what the learner has read.
 - ✓ You can also do assisted reading using any software or app that reads text out loud. Have the person follow along as the program reads the words.
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Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 7: Phonics

- ✓ Phonics – the relationship between the sound of the letter(s) to the written letter – doesn't work for everyone, but it is definitely worth trying a few times. It could be one tool, but not the only tool used.
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Strategies to Build Literacy and Essential Skills into Daily Life

Strategy 8: KWL (what I know, what I want to know, what I learned) and other predicting activities

What I <u>K</u> now	What I <u>W</u> ant to Know	What I <u>L</u> earned
What do you know about elephants?	What do you want to know about elephants?	What did you learn about elephants?

Review: Highlights

Be learner/person-centred:

- ✓ Involve learners in planning
 - ✓ Draw upon learner's experiences
 - ✓ Focus on learner's interests
 - ✓ Respect their life experience
 - ✓ Offer choices
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Review: Highlights

Thinking of the strategies and approaches you've learned today, can you foresee any potential difficulties?



Review: Highlights

Use resources from everyday life to create relevant lessons

Technically, resources can be any item, thing, book, tool, etc. that helps with learning. A resource can be a workbook, a form, some kind of technology, or a book.

Examples of everyday life resources:

- ▶ Cell phone, iPad, tablet, computer, or television
- ▶ Menus, brochures, transit map, flyers, newspapers, forms or other printed materials readily available

Reflections

What did you find most helpful about this training?

What did you think was missing? What could be improved?

Who else do you think might be interested in learning about this training?

