



Reading Tips for Adult Learners

Introduction

Adult participants in community programs or training courses may have difficulties with some of the literacy requirements of their program. Integrating literacies means recognizing and addressing the needs of people with literacy and learning difficulties. Here are some ways to support reading in community programs.

Use print materials that invite people to read

Use reading materials that are interesting, informative and readable for participants. Fluent readers also appreciate materials that are easier to read.

Check your handouts. Are the sentences clear? Is the print a readable size? Is there enough white space?

Review your bulletin boards. Can people find the information they are looking for? Is the printed information easy to read and understand?

Refer to the Widening Access for Adult Literacies website for more information on clear language.

Help participants use their knowledge to read

Invite people to discuss the topic before they read. This helps readers understand as they read. Participants can also learn from each others' experiences and knowledge.

Ask questions about the topic and encourage participants to ask questions too. Questions provide a focus for reading.

List participants' ideas and questions on a flip chart. This introduces vocabulary that may come up in the reading.

Invite participants to retell or summarize what they read.

This can help participants to check their understanding and to remember what they read.

Developed by Mary Norton, 2008.

Widening Access for Adult Literacies Project.

www.wideningaccessforliteracies.ca

Share what you know about reading

Introduce strategies that reflect good reading practices (e.g., use context to “guess” the meaning of a word). Think about how you read and share your strategies.

Encourage people to help each other read

Encourage people to work in pairs or small groups so more able readers can help others read.

Suggest that people read aloud sometimes. Reading aloud is social and can be motivating for learners. (See Handout 5, Reading aloud in community learning programs.)

Encourage participants to read between program sessions

Help adults to access resources they can read.

Encourage people to get a library card.

Finding reading materials

Your public library may have a collection of easy to read materials for adults. You could also check with your local literacy program.

The National Adult Literacy Database library includes stories that you can download. Go to <http://www.nald.ca>. Click on *Use the library*. Click on *Advanced Search* and scroll down to *short stories*.

You can also order easy to read books from the following Canadian sources:

- Grassroots Press. <http://grassrootsbooks.net/ca/>
- Frontier College New Readers Press Bookstore. <http://www.frontiercollegebooks.ca/home.aspx>

Also see the Links page on the Widening Access for Adult Literacies website.