



# Integrating Literacies in Parenting Programs

## Introduction

Adult participants in community programs or training courses may have difficulties with some of the literacy requirements of their program. Integrating literacies means addressing these difficulties and providing support for people to use and practice literacies while learning the program content. Integrating literacies is also way to reduce barriers and widen access to participation and learning.

This workshop was prepared for facilitators of parenting programs. The approach could be adapted for facilitators of other community learning programs.

## Workshop intentions

- Practice participatory approaches and create a supportive learning environment
- Share information and experiences about the contexts and realities of parenting groups and their participants
- Identify literacies needs: skills, strategies and challenges of participants in parenting groups
- Share what is being done and what might be done to support literacies in parenting groups

## Supplies

- Flip chart paper and markers
- Plasticine, pipe cleaners, markers, etc.
- Picture collection (see workshop plan) OR
- Object collection (Small objects that can be used to prompt story telling e.g., measuring spoons, key, toy car, teddy bear, shoe, flashlight)
- Copies of Reading Exercise (p. 5)
- Collection of easy to read materials about parenting<sup>1</sup>
- Integrating Literacies Handouts (Available on the Widening Access for Adult Literacies website)

Time: 3 hours

Developed by Mary Norton, 2008.

Widening Access for Adult Literacies Project.

<http://www.wideningaccessforliteracies.ca>



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<sup>1</sup> See the Links page on the Widening Access for Adult Literacies website.



<p>1. Who comes to parenting groups? What do they have in common? What skills and challenges do parents have in using literacy?</p> <p>2. What do parents want to learn about? What topics do you cover in your programs?</p> <p>Invite participants to comment on highlights or insights from the activity.</p>	
<p>Looking at our own literacies (How we read)</p> <p>Ask participants to work in pairs. Give each pair a copy of the Reading Exercise. One person reads aloud and the other observes. The reader also talks aloud about how they are reading.</p> <p>After readers are finished, ask for examples of how the readers figured out words and understood what they were reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figuring out words: Note and add as needed about attending to print, sounding out words, reading ahead, re-reading, asking for help.</li> <li>• Understanding as we read: Note and add about strategies people use before reading, during reading and after reading (e.g., looking at titles and scanning for interest and difficulty; reading ahead, re-reading, predicting vocabulary; agreeing or disagreeing with the author; making other comments)</li> </ul>	<p>20 min</p> <p>Reading Exercise</p>
<p>Break</p>	<p>15 min</p>
<p>Supporting people to use, practice and extend literacies?</p> <p>Refer back to reading activity. Note the role of background knowledge in reading. Invite participants to talk about what they currently do to support reading in their programs.</p>	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Strategies to help readers use their background knowledge</p> <p><u>Before reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm what people know about a topic; list ideas so people can see the relevant words written down.</li> <li>• Introduce and list new vocabulary.</li> </ul>	<p>20 min</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and list questions readers have. These provide a focus for reading.</li> </ul> <p><u>During reading</u></p> <p>Deal with new vocabulary.  Invite readers to read in small groups.  Ask for volunteers to read aloud.</p> <p><u>After reading</u></p> <p>Add to ideas/respond to questions from before reading.  Invite people to summarize what they read.</p>	
<p>Easy to read materials</p> <p>Handout or show an article that is easy to read.</p> <p>Invite discussion about what makes the article easy to read (e.g., short sentences, vocabulary, pictures).</p> <p>Handout or show an article that is more difficult to read.  Invite discussion about what makes it harder to read and how to make it easier.</p> <p>Refer people to materials about writing in clear language.  Invite people to browse easy to read resources.</p>	15 min
<p>Feedback/evaluation</p>	10 min

## Reading exercise

### Integrating literacies

Adult participants in community programs or training courses may have difficulties with some of the literacy requirements of their program. Integrating literacies means addressing these difficulties and providing support for people to use and practice literacies while they learn the program content. Integrating literacies is also a way to reduce barriers and widen access to participation and learning.

We often think about reading and writing as of skills or strategies that we learn and practice in school. The term literacies includes the wide range of social and cultural practices that are associated with reading, writing and oral communication. This includes the reading and writing that we do in everyday activities and networks, as well as the traditionally more valued literacies associated with schools, workplaces, legal and medical, government and similar institutions.

Literacies also recognizes that reading and writing are social in the sense that people often help each other out and share what they are reading or writing: "What does this word mean?" "How about you read the instructions while I put the shelf together." "How do you spell...?"

You can integrate literacies in your program in informal ways. You can integrate literacies when you support reading and writing in real situations that are meaningful to people. People read and write for meaning. They use their knowledge of a topic and of the situation to make sense as they read and write. Reading is affected by purposes and situations as well as the feelings and values associated with them.