



Big Book of Literacies Training:

A resource bank for supporting
young people with their
literacies



Section 2

Getting it Right for Learning





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Getting it Right for Learning

Introduction

It is important for all learners embarking on a learning journey, that they are ready to learn. Readiness usually means motivated to learn, but a number of circumstances get in the way of this and can cause a seeming reluctance to engage in learning. Learning happens best when young people are physically, emotionally and mentally ready to learn and have a reason for learning. Strong purpose, clear objectives and a definite reason for learning are important to the eventual success. But if further barriers exist, they may need additional support to overcome these before learning can take place.

'To reach the full range of learners, many of whom will not have engaged in any form of learning for a number of years, we must remove any barriers and stigma attached to literacies learning and continue to offer a variety of flexible and accessible learning opportunities. If we are to reach the most marginalised, providers need to identify those places/services which are visited/used by those who may need literacies support and wherever possible, provide the support there'

ALIS 2020

Working with young people to develop their literacies practice

As with all work with young people, it is important to look at their individual needs and interests, modifying sessions to fit in with the differing needs of the group.

If the individual literacies abilities of the group are unknown, care needs to be taken not to put individuals on the spot with tasks that involve reading, writing or numeracy. If there is suspicion that someone in the group has some problems with literacies tasks, offer a number of options to everyone in the group so that they could choose the task that they are most comfortable with.

Literacies are complex skills that vary depending on the context. Whatever the young person's interests are, think about related activities and tasks that provide the opportunity to write, read or use numbers. Make these activities as authentic as possible by using 'real life'



resources.

With many activities team work, negotiating, planning and ICT skills will also be used, learned and improved on.

Engagement is key to working with young people on literacies, it is important to get the right balance between activities being fun and interesting and useful learning opportunities. Tasks the learners view as useful to their everyday lives will motivate and engage, e.g. using internet to plan a trip. However, if learners aren't aware of the skills they have used, they are less likely to be able to use the same skills again in a different context. It is important to take time at some point to tease out and discuss the different skills and strategies used throughout the process.

In order to get it right for learning it is useful for us to think about our own views on learning and reflect on how it affected our and practice.



Young Person's Working Agreement (ground rules)

It is often useful for young people to have a working agreement which is negotiated with the facilitator of the group. This should include a list of expectations that the young person can have of themselves, the other group members and the facilitators who are supporting the group. It could also include what is reasonable for the facilitator to expect from the young people.

These expectations should be negotiated, discussed for clarification and agreed by all before everyone signs to say they agree. Young people should be given the opportunity to identify the behaviours that are acceptable within the group as it is more democratic, values the young person's contribution and ensures understanding and agreement of the contract.

The working agreement can be recorded on a flip chart, typed up and copied for the group members.

Developing a working agreement

A working agreement or contract for learning is a shared and agreed statement or document of understanding and signed by both parties clearly outlining what they can expect and what is expected of them.

Previously it was custom for ground rules to list a series of negative behaviours that you do not want to see or experience. However, it is more effective to utilise a positive enquiry focus to shift perspective by defining the behaviour & atmosphere you want to see and experience. This moves rules away from a list of 'no' statements towards a series of positive statements.





An example of a positive group working agreement:

- We respect each other and demonstrate this in the language we use and in our actions towards one another
- We like to laugh and have fun
- We are a dynamic group and our programme demonstrates this with a range of fun, energetic, informative and creative activities taking place
- Young people are participants and leaders in our group. We develop new skills and build confidence through our activities
- We are relaxed and safe in our environment by knowing that smoking, alcohol, drugs and violence are not acceptable in our centre. Where the age of members is relevant, there is a designated smoking area and smoke breaks are negotiated off the premises away from the centre
- We value our group and treat all equipment with care
- We are good neighbours and respect the other users of the centre
- We care for the environment so use the appropriate bins for our litter
- Our staff and volunteers are motivated, enthusiastic and genuinely interested in the positive development of young people, we respect them

The language used should be accessible to young people, they will often want a list of 'no' statements, and this is okay as a starting point. The discussion that follows should centre around what it would look, feel or be like if that negative behaviour was not in our youth group. 'Our' and 'we' are important words as they demonstrate shared ownership. It also means that staff should be aware that young people will hold them into account if their behaviour breaches the ground rules or working agreement.

Where there are organisational rules, consequences should be clearly stated so staff, volunteers & members all know the implications of breaking the agreement or rules.



Managing your working agreement

Techniques should be age and circumstances appropriate. It is essential whether utilising a youth work partnership approach or adult literacies person centred approach that time and trust are invested in establishing a good relationship. Building the relationship with young people, listening to and talking to them, getting them involved in setting their own working agreement is key to successful learning.

There are some elements of the agreement that can be negotiated and other which cannot because of law, policy or organisational procedure so it is important to be up front and explain these.

Some organisations have a policy on discipline. It is important to know what the policy is in the setting you are working in and be clear about how and when to use it. Any organisational policies will have to be included as part of the working agreement.

Some suggestions of areas you may wish to record as starter for discussion:

Possible expectations of a young person

Give full attention during the session

Attend regularly or as agreed upon at the outset

Complete any work out with the group that is agreed upon

Let the staff know if they are going to be late or absent

Participate in planning of the session

Respect the limits/boundaries of the support staff responsibilities as agreed upon (i.e. support staff are not expected to be counsellors or advisors etc.)

Take responsibility for highlighting areas that they want further work on

Possible Expectations of the Facilitator

Be on time for session, give enough notice if sessions need to be cancelled.

Make reasonable attempts to maintain schedule (time and place) as agreed at outset.

Plan the sessions with the young people.

Incorporate the young person's ideas and goals.

Incorporate additional literacies needs as they arise i.e. letters, forms etc. that they need to write.



Properly prepare for sessions.

Return any materials that the young person has given to you for comment

Maintain records/paper work as required.

Keep support worker up to date with the young person's progress.

Bring the young person's needs and/concerns to the attention of relevant staff.

Treat the young person as an adult and value their past experience and knowledge

Be non-judgmental.

Be friendly and approachable

Further Examples

Some groups use a statement such as:

Breaking ground rules will result in the application of our disciplinary system. Members will first be warned with a yellow card and a second one will follow with any further rule breaking. This could then be followed by a red card which means a one week suspension; this could be longer depending on the nature of the ground rule breaking.

Continuity

Continuity of management of the working agreement is essential.

It is the responsibility of all - staff, volunteers & group members.

Staff and volunteers should have a shared understanding and approach.

Breaches in the agreement should be seen as a learning opportunity.

These should be reflected upon.

Individual agreements

Whether working with individuals on a one to one basis or in a group setting individualised agreements can be negotiated to tailor support and responsibilities for each individual learner.

Consequences

Is it appropriate to have consequences?



If yes, these should be proportionate and where possible the consequences should be discussed and agreed as part of the development of the working agreement.

Exclusion only moves a “problem” outside of your group or setting and may create a different problem.

Consider why young people are behaving in a particular way. Is the behaviour a reaction to something else?

Challenging Behaviour

A young person's behaviour might be perceived as being challenging and may interfere with the group dynamic. It is important to be aware that there may be a hidden cause for the behaviour. See information on additional support needs section 4.

Challenging behaviour can show itself in a number of ways including:

- Disrupting group
- Demonstrating disinterest
- Lack of respect/ poor timekeeping/ Non-compliant behaviour
- Attention seeking behaviour/ vandalism/ Property destruction
- Overreacting and clowning around
- Aggression towards others/ Agitation
- Opting out/withdrawing
- Bullying
- Stealing/lying/cheating
- Bad manners/bad language
- Self-harming behaviour.
- Stereotyped behaviours such as withdrawn, boldness and over confidence
- Socially inappropriate behaviour

Negotiating and abiding by ground rules can help to avoid a challenging situation arising. The group should discuss how to deal with challenging behaviour when discussing ground rules.

Facilitators can help to avoid challenging behaviour by; listening to young people; being non-judgemental; respecting opinions and involving young people in designing and carrying out the activity.

The facilitator should be aware that there may be some issues in a young person's life that



are causing the behaviour and if possible allow the young person an opportunity to talk it through. It is useful to have a good network of organisations to signpost a young person on to if the issue is out with their area of expertise.

Other environmental, social and physical influences can also affect a young person's participation in a group.



The Right Space for Learning

Health and Wellbeing - a responsibility for all!

Promoting positive emotional health and well-being can help young people to understand and express their feelings, build confidence and emotional resilience and therefore improve their capacity to learn.

Health and wellbeing across learning

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to:

- Make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- Experience challenge and enjoyment
- Experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- Apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- Make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
- Establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life, and which will help to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation of Scottish children.

Good health and wellbeing is central to effective learning and preparation for successful independent living. This aspiration for every child and young person can only be met through a concerted approach; schools and their partners working together closely to plan their programmes for health and wellbeing explicitly, taking account of local circumstances and individual needs.

For more information about health and wellbeing across learning visit this [link](#)





The ability to deal with the challenges daily life can throw up, respond to stress, and maintain a sense of meaning, hope and identity is called resiliency. Factors long associated with mental health and well-being, such as achieving goals, having positive relationships, doing well in life, and feeling hopeful, seem to promote resilience and so lead to positive mental health. Positive mental health can lead to being more ready to learn.

Ideas and resources for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing can be found on the Princes Royal Trust for Carers website Young Carers Mental Health Toolkit ([link](#)).

Crucial Connections

'Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 strategic guidance' states that no one sector or organisation alone can achieve its vision.

Organisations need to work together, share resources and make learning journeys as streamlined as possible. Those involved in organising provision for young people should consider the importance and benefits of literacies. They should outline the positive impact literacies development can have in enabling individuals to progress and participate in society.

Youth Literacies and partnership with others

Partnership working can prove to be a powerful tool for working with young people to support their literacies. It can also help to maximise the use of resources and access to services for young people and can provide a new target group for organisations. Each organisation can bring different strengths and skills to the work, but share a common goal of improving opportunities for young people.

'At this time of challenging circumstances and huge pressure on resources, it is more important than ever for all of us to work together to improve literacy for all , with a determined focus on the most vulnerable. We must use our combined resources productively to ensure we achieve our vision for literacy in Scotland.'

([Link](#)) to the Literacy Action Plan



Linked themes within literacies work

A number of agendas link in to literacies work with young people, including the following:

Employability and work

There is a strong correlation between literacies capabilities and income. SSAL 2009 shows that 14% of people with an income of less than £9,500 scored at the lowest level of skills. In contrast to nearly 50% the people scoring at the highest levels of quantitative literacy, who reported an income of more than £29,501 per year. Also, a considerably higher proportion of people who are unemployed and receiving state benefits, such as housing benefit or jobseekers allowance, were more likely to score at lower levels.

The benefits of workers improving their literacies capabilities may include increases in productivity and efficiency, reductions in costs, improved staff loyalty and flexibility, lower wastage rates and reduced absenteeism. Employees who undertake literacies learning in the workplace gain confidence in their abilities so that they can sustain existing employment, apply for promotion, take up further learning opportunities/qualifications and participate in workplace activities. (Adult Literacies in Scotland ALIS 2020)

My World of Work is a useful web service for all work, skills and learning needs ([Link](#))
(Skills Development Scotland)

Activity Agreements

Activity Agreements are a targeted intervention for those young people, who without additional support would not make a successful transition to employment, further education or training. Although this approach is most successful for those young people leaving school without a secured destination, the age range for Activity Agreements is 16-19 year olds. This approach is in line with the entitlement of a senior phase of learning, delivered out with the school environment. (Link to information on Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence).

Activity Agreements are funded by the Scottish Government and delivered through a partnership approach in each local authority area, with the local authority being the lead body.





An Activity Agreement is a bespoke programme of learning and is very much determined and driven by the young person themselves. This needs-led approach will identify if there is a need for further literacy work to be undertaken with a participant. Many of those undertaking an Activity Agreement will have disengaged early from school and as a result have a low level of educational attainment. Indeed, evidence shows up to 80% of participants attainment level is at level 4 or below on the SCQF. ([SCQF link](#)).

Many of those participating require a certain level of input to increase literacy levels to ensure they can enter the world of work.

Over 2,500 young people benefitted from an Activity Agreement in the year 2012-13, with 70% of those who completed their learning plans successfully progressing to employment, further education or training.

Further information on activity agreements, including policy, guidance and case studies are available ([link](#)).

Financial capability

Literacies capabilities underpin financial capability; the skills, knowledge and motivation to make the most of financial services and products such as bank accounts, insurance and loans are essential. Financial capability work embedded in literacies support can help adults develop skills, knowledge and understanding to manage their money effectively through every day financial activities. Scottish Book Trust in partnership with the Scottish Government has developed Skint, an interactive resource for 16 to 26 year olds to work on financial capability. Skint is supported by a website containing ideas and materials to support this topic.

([Link](#)) to Skint

Young Scot Financial support

Young Scot website provides advice on financial aspects, from travel money to credit cards, mortgages and more.

The National Entitlement Card for young people is a free card for all young people aged 11-26, created by the Scottish Government, Young Scot, local council and other organisations.

The card entitles young people to discounts and offers on a range of shops, services and travel. For more information visit the website ([link](#)).





Family

Many adults with the lowest levels of literacies reported that, as children, they received little support or encouragement in relation to education.

Family learning is an investment in Scotland's future, as it contributes to equality of opportunity by changing learning patterns within families. Working with the family together rather than with the child or the adult separately can often make a greater impact on the literacies development of both child and parent or carer. This can be achieved by combining early interventions and early parenting strategies with adult literacies work. Parents and carers who develop their own literacies often gain confidence and skills to help their children with reading, writing and numbers, which can create a home learning environment and promotes lifelong learning for all.

[\(Link\)](#) to Embedding Core Skills into Family Learning Programmes

Health and Wellbeing

Health-related behaviour and outcomes affected by literacies are identified in the New Light on Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland report:

- Poor physical and mental well-being is associated with poor literacy and/ or numeracy.
- Men with lower literacy levels who drank alcohol were also more likely to consume a higher number of units than those with good skills.
- More had symptoms associated with depression
- They were more likely to smoke cigarettes.

The report states that 'Many adults with low literacy and numeracy manage their lives very well, overcoming adversity... However it is when the personal, social or employment situation changes that the constraints and disabling effects of low literacy and numeracy skills are likely to be felt.' The effects of recession or of diagnosis of a long-term condition could be considered among these changes.

SSAL 2009 shows that adults with lower literacies capabilities are also more likely to have health problems, including problems with sight, speech, hearing and learning, as well as other disabilities or health problems lasting more than six months.



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in Scotland and who find themselves in the Scottish education system, could be at risk of becoming disengaged with learning due to the language barrier. Appropriate support strategies can help to ensure that young people with English as another language will engage with learning. The materials in this resource pack may help to set the context in ESOL learning for young people.

Looked After and Accommodated Young People

Young people who are looked after and accommodated are often disadvantaged in their educational opportunities.

'The tendency for looked after children and young people to become lost in the education system has also been noted in previous research, and solving this problem is crucial to helping them achieve in education.'

Improving the Education of Looked After Children: A Guide for Local Authorities and Service Providers (2009) ([link](#))

Improving literacies with looked after young people can make a difference to the opportunities available to them in the future.

The Centre for Excellence for looked after children in Scotland (CELCIS) website 'We can and Must Do Better' ([link](#)) – provides training materials aimed at working with this group. The materials cover areas of Scottish policy and practice around:

- Getting It Right for Every Child
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Additional Support for Learning
- The Looked After Children Regulations 2009
- Early Years
- Parenting

Transitions

Transitions can be a trigger point for literacies support, when suddenly young people require literacies for a new purpose. Lack of literacies skills can influence transition pathways and the social identities of these young adults. Curriculum for Excellence recognises that literacy and numeracy is essential for young people to make the transition successfully into adult life.

significant challenges if literacies is also an issue.

'A strong focus on literacy and numeracy is essential: all children and young people require these skills to gain access to learning and to succeed in life.'
Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 ([link](#))



Equalities and Literacies

When working with literacies and young people, it is important to consider equalities issues. Literacies learning can benefit people who are experiencing disadvantage and have issues with their confidence and self-esteem. It is important to understand the needs and issues affecting different groups and to plan, deliver and promote activities accordingly. The Same Difference section on the Education Scotland website may have some useful information on resources to deal with equalities ([link](#)) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission website ([link](#)) has up to date information on the issues.



Hints and Tips: for making learning more accessible to all the young people you work with

It is good practice to give information in a variety of formats to help to ensure it meets the individual needs of all the young people you work with. For example, when giving verbal instructions for a task it is also recommended you provide the instructions in written form and whenever possible visual form (illustrations, PowerPoint or practical demonstration). The Easy Reading leaflet ([link](#)) provides useful tips to help get your message across by making your writing easier to read.

Some other tips are:

- Use plain English
- Avoid jargon
- Be careful when using abbreviations and acronyms without explanation
- Check for understanding - go over forms / information
- Use prompts / clues / reminders
- If you change something - explain the changes
- Use your communication skills – model/give simple notes/use graphics
- Have user friendly computer screens
- Consider the colour of paper for handouts (black text on white paper can make visual difficulties worse). Cream is recommended though different people like different colours
- Consider the font (Arial 12 is considered the easiest to read), size of print and spacing
- Use bullet points instead of dense text
- Encourage young people to use their mobile phones to programme in appointments and reminders
- Offer reminder texts or phone calls
- Check to see if your learner is right or left handed – if right handed, sit on their left; if left handed, sit on their right





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- Try not to sit opposite a learner – you can't see what each other is doing and it's a bit like 'the teacher at school'
 - Always try to use a mixture of topics in each session to break the session into 10 to 15 minute sections
 - Build in a short revision section at the beginning and a review section at the end
 - Encourage your learner to speak. You have to check if the learner has understood or is keeping quiet because of lack of confidence. This will improve when the learner starts to feel comfortable with you – it can be hard for the first few sessions
 - Check out whether the young people are doing what they think you want them to learn. They may see you as an expert and think you must know best
 - Use ice breakers and ground rules in a group

Young people who have dyslexia, ADHD or other learning support needs may have associated memory difficulties. Provide strategies to assist them planning and organising learning and remember appointments.

Free Resources to Support Learning from EduApps

There are a number of free programmes available on the internet to support learning including 'My Study Bar' for supporting literacy. Eight useful software collections that are free for you to download are provided by EduApps available at this [link](#).

Perception of Young People in Scotland

Huge effort and resources are being deployed to encourage intergenerational relationship building to increase community confidence and cohesion. Media perceptions of young people often focus on the negative, images of them taking part in what appears to be unacceptable behaviour. 'Reality TV' images and 'CCTV footage' capturing young people's involvement in anti-social behaviour is readily available. Is this really so different from previous generations? A Scottish Government social attitudes survey, exploring attitudes towards young people, with particular relevance to youth crime (2004) found that:

'There was a widespread view that the amount of crime committed by young people is higher than a decade ago – 69% think this and just 2% that it is lower. Between a half and two-thirds of respondents also thought that each of a series of specific youth crime-related problems were either 'fairly' or 'very common' in their own area.'

2004 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey ([link](#))

All adults have been young at some stage and have grown through the experiences of being young into adulthood, but often lack empathy towards young people. Adults share places and spaces with young people in the community and in their families, yet often articulate young people as a separate entity referring to them as 'those young people' rather than being seen as part of it, as 'our young people.'

Reflect on what effect the stereotyping of young people has on your attitudes towards them? Do you see young people as active citizens who make a positive contribution to society, or do you see young people as lazy, rude antisocial beings who take no responsibility for their choices?

The following reflective questions should help you to challenge your views.



Practitioner reflective questions

As we consider working with young people we should consider how we perceive them and why, consider:

- How do you feel about young people?
- If you are to construct a stereotypical picture of a young person what kind of young person would you build?
- Are young people providers of community solutions or perpetrators of community problems?
- Where do your perceptions come from?
- Did you have any personal experiences as a young person that demonstrated a positive community connection?
- Did you have any personal experiences as a young person, which demonstrates a lack of community connection or negative response based on age?
- Can you move away from generalisations and consider individual young people with their issues, experiences and potential?

Truth About Youth

Additional activities are available on [ALO](#), these have been provided by 'Truth About Youth' an initiative designed to challenge and change negative perceptions of young people. ([link](#)).



Activities relating to this section

The activities that have been included in this section are designed to reflect on some of the ideas around literacies work and young people. The table in the introduction is designed to help practitioners to find the most relevant activities for their context.

Section 2 - Getting it Right for Learning			
11 P92	Perception of Young People in Scotland	Identify vocabulary linked to young people and the media considering positive and negative images of young people.	Practitioners/ young people
12 P93	Facts about young people in Scotland	Explore perceptions of young people in Scotland.	Practitioners/ young people
13 P95	Chasing Out the Demons	Increase awareness of the characteristics which make learning a positive or negative experience and develop a positive approach to learning.	Practitioner
14 P98	How We Learn	Reflect on the participant's own views of learning and identify the key components involved in learning.	Practitioner
15 P101	Self Reflection Learning journey	Practitioners reflect on their own learning and consider the influences on their practice.	Practitioners



Section 2 - Getting it Right for Learning

16 P103	Literacies reflection on own skills - How does it feel?	Recognising the barriers to developing effective reading skills and demonstrating the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar text.	
17 P107	Alternatives to a cold sell approach	Encourage thinking about the meaning of literacy and use innovative ways to raise the issue of literacies with the general public.	Practitioner
18 P108	Facilitator/tutor Self-Assessment Questions	Reflect on practitioners own attitude to learning and identify any areas for further development.	Practitioner



Activity 11 – practitioners or can be adapted for work with young people

Perception of Young People in Scotland

Aim: Identify vocabulary linked to young people and the media considering positive and negative images of young people.

Source: YouthLink Scotland

Materials:

Local and national newspapers

Scissors

Glue stick

2 sheets of paper or card per person or pair

Method:

Individually or in pairs, go through newspapers to identify positive and negative words and images of young people. Cut out the words and images. Use the glue stick to fix them onto the paper or card. Use one for negative words and images and another for positive words and images to enable you compare the results.

An alternative way of doing this would be to ask half of the group to work on positive images and half to work on negative images and discuss the impact.

Discussion/reflection points:

Display your collage creations in a group.

- Are there words, phrases or images used regularly to describe young people?
- Which was easier to find positive or negative?
- Why do you think that is?
- Which has the most impact, the positive or negative?

Top Tip: This could be followed up with the 'Facts about young people in Scotland' quiz below.



Activity 12 – practitioners or can be adapted for work with young people

Facts about young people in Scotland

Aim: To explore perceptions of young people in Scotland.

Source: The questions are based on fact from research undertaken by various recognised sources:

- YouthLink Scotland
- Being Young in Scotland 2009 A survey of hopes, fears and aspirations of over 2000 young people aged 11 – 25, produced by YouthLink Scotland
- Fact file 2008-09 Facts and figures about Scotland's Young People, produced by Action for Children (Scotland)

Materials:

Facts about young people in Scotland quiz and answers, available from Adult Literacies

Online additional materials to support the BBLT section ([link](#)).

The answers to the quiz are based on formal research sources.

Top Tip: This can be used with young people using the 'Young people the facts!' worksheet.

Method:

Download and hand out the facts about young people in Scotland quiz.

Ask the practitioner to answer the questions either individually or in a group.

Prior to provision of answers please consider individually or discuss in small groups the reflective questions.

Reflective questions:

- Do you consider young people to be a positive part of your community?
- Where do we get our information about young people?
- Has the perception of young people change over time? Why?
- Is the picture you hold of young people accurate?



Discuss the findings, were there any surprises?

Activity for young people

- Hand out the facts about young people in Scotland quiz
- Ask the young people to answer the questions either individually or in the group
- Discuss some of the findings using the 'Young people the facts!' discussion sheet (on [ALO](#)).

Supplementary Activity

View a short film and discuss your thoughts on it.

1 minute and 15 seconds: Pro-social behaviour produced by Young Scot click [here](#).

Discuss your response to the film.

Top Tip: See [ALO](#) for additional materials and resources for more activities

- *Ideas to encourage intergenerational activities ([link](#))*



Activity 13 – practitioner

Chasing Out the Demons

(This could also be used with young people to build confidence about what they already know)

Time: 40 minutes

Aims:

- To increase awareness of the characteristics which make learning a positive or negative experience
- To develop a positive approach to learning

Source: BBLT Development Group

Materials:

Handout

Flip Chart Paper

Flip Chart Pens

Method:

Ask the group to complete the 'Chasing Out The Demons' worksheet which asks about learning experiences and what made them positive or negative.

Once the group has completed the worksheet ask the group to feedback the characteristics rather than the actual experience.

Write these up on a flipchart and discuss points that are raised.

Expected Outcomes:

Participants will

- Be more aware of the characteristics which make learning a positive or negative experience
- Be more aware of their own attitudes that they bring to a learning experience, based on their own experience of learning
- Develop a positive approach to learning



Top Tip: Ensure everyone has time to discuss their own positive and negative experiences and link into experiences young people may encounter.

Points for discussion/reflection:

It is important that the group are asked to feedback the characteristics and not the actual experience, as these may be very personal.

Draw out the different themes which may emerge. Themes may include personalities, environment, type of work, relevance, age and stage, approach and group dynamic.

How do you think your own experiences influence your current work practice?

Do negative experiences stay with us longer?

What would a perfect experience of learning look like?

Top Tip: We all have a variety of learning experiences through our lives, it is useful to reflect on what made them positive or negative.



Activity 13 Handout

Chasing Out the Demons

We all bring with us our own experiences of learning that will influence our approach to developing learning opportunities with young people.

- Can you remember a positive learning experience that you have had?
What made this experience positive?

- Can you remember a negative learning experience that you have had?
What made this a negative experience?



Activity 14 – practitioner

How We Learn

Time: 30 min

Aim: To reflect on the participant's own views of learning and identify the key components involved in learning

Source: Adapted from Innis and Woodrow 1992 How Adults Learn

Materials:

Print learning statements on card

Method:

Cut out the statements and turn face down.

Turn one statement over at a time and using the following points as a guide discuss as a group. If you are looking at this on your own reflect on the statement using the same prompts:

1. Clarify your understanding of what is written
2. How much do you agree with the statement?
3. How does your current practice take this on board?
4. What tools are required to facilitate the theory on the card?

Level of prior knowledge required:

Own experience of learning

Top tip: This exercise is better used in a group

Discussion/reflection points:

Do you think young people learn in a different way to you?

How do your views on learning influence work with young people?

Were any of your own views of learning challenged by the group?



Expected outcome/impact

Participants will be able to identify, consider and reflect on their views of learning and consider how that impacts on their practice.

Learning Statements

Effective learning requires the provision of opportunities for taking risks and making mistakes.

Young people have many different ways of learning and may have a preferred learning style. It is important to use a variety of methods to engage young people.

Learning works best when tutors/facilitators model the strategies they promote.

Young people are more responsive when their tutors communicate well and use plain English.

Young people need opportunities for independent work to build their self-confidence and reduce the sense of dependence that some young people may feel.

Young people learn by being with people who are enthusiastic about learning

A critical factor influencing successful learning is the relationship between young people and tutors.

Young people quickly learn things that are meaningful to their lives and that they can immediately put into practice.

Young people must be able to relate the new information to what they already know.

Young people learn best if they are actively involved in making decisions about their learning.



Young people do not want to spend time going over what they already know. Find out what they don't know and develop exercises to support this.

Motivation is important for young people, they must have a need to learn something and a practice application, before they will bother to learn and remember it.

Young people will generally remember something if it is important to them and if it is presented in a memorable way and repeated. Try a variety of different methods to reinforce the learning.

Young people will maintain interest if tasks are challenging but not overwhelming.

Divide learning into chunks that are the right size and right level, the chunk should be challenging but not overwhelming.



Activity 15 – practitioner Self-Reflection Learning Journey

Time: 15 – 45 min

Source: BBLT Development Group

Aim: Practitioners reflect on their own learning and consider the influences on their practice.

Introduction:

Everyone has different needs, desires, self-understandings and identities. Explore these, and your own challenges and experiences with education or any learning context below. By reflecting on these experiences, you may improve your empathy with young people, which can be harnessed when developing your practice and to empower young people to take ownership of their learning.

'Without [empathy and understanding], no qualification or training will prepare you for this type of work.'

Unnamed FE provider's response to a research questionnaire

(McNeil and Dixon, 2005, p.23).

Materials:

Paper

Pens

Method:

Write about your own experiences:

- At school
- Further education or training
- Any learning experience in your life (i.e. riding a bike)
- Explore any challenges you faced, how they felt and the strategies you used to overcome them, or if you didn't – why not?

**Level of prior knowledge required:**

Tutor – Theory behind reflective practice and why it can benefit young peoples' literacy and numeracy learning.

Top Tip: To develop this further you may want to reflect on your own learning journey. A good tutor/facilitator also has a willingness to learn and adapt. These worksheets can be used intermittently with tutors to allow a space to explore.

Discussion/reflection points:

How has your own experience of learning affected your current attitudes to learning?
What lessons can you take from your positive/negative experiences that could inform your youth literacies practice?

Expected outcome/impact:

The participant will have:

- A greater understanding of the influences on current attitudes of learning
- An understanding on how previous learning experiences can influence your attitude to learning
- A recognition of what can make learning positive or negative

'Young adults often need a high degree of support to make it to an emotional and physical place where they are able to think about learning. Many face a range of complex and challenging issues, including navigating the benefit system, securing and sustaining housing and employment, and managing relationships. Their lives may be unstructured and their futures uncertain. These issues and concerns often have to take precedence over engagement in learning programmes.'

Source of quote

Developing Skill for the Future Working together to develop young adults' literacy, language and numeracy NIACE



Activity 16 – practitioner

Literacies reflection on own skills - How does it feel?

Time: 30 minutes

Source: This exercise was developed by Alison Mann, West Lothian Council.

Aims:

Recognising the barriers to developing effective reading skills

Demonstrating the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar text

Level of prior knowledge required:

Tutor – literacies/youth work experience

Participant – no experience required

Materials:

Card

Scissors

Top Tip: You will find a dictionary of text speak available on the internet which can help to understand messages sent using text abbreviations. This can be done in teams if the numbers allow.

Method:

How to play:

1. Cut up the message cards and give out 1 card per player.
2. The player with the Start Card reads it out.
3. Other players follow on, adding to the message, keeping the message in the correct order, until the message is complete.
4. Ask for the most experienced texter to act as an expert if the teams get stuck to help them out
5. Find out who uses text regularly and is familiar with text speak to give hints if the group get have problems deciphering the message, tell them not to jump in too quickly.



6. Ask them to check that the 'follow me' message makes sense.
7. Ask players to do this task away from a table, the more space to move about the better! Do this activity as quickly and as accurately as possible.
8. Appoint texting expert to help if required.

Discussion/reflection points:

How easy was it to read 'text speak' when the text is not familiar to you?

How easy was it to understand the message in the text?
What strategies did you use to decode unfamiliar text speak?

Has this helped you to understand what it feels like to have limited reading comprehension skills?

Expected outcome/impact:

Workers will recognise barriers to understanding when working with a learner and consider how best to communicate with young people to assist their understanding of the written word.

Top tip

For more information on the use of digital media and being digitally responsible see section 3 p173.



Message cards

hi m8 u k	sry i 4gt 2 cal u lst nyt
amf	hd d8
bykt	y dnt we go c film 2moz
If u 12cm w8 @ bs stp @ 730	if nt pcm



Solution cards

hi mate are you ok?	Sorry I forgot to call you last night.
As a matter of fact	I had a date.
but you knew that.	Why don't we go to see a film tomorrow night?
If you want to come wait at the bus stop at 7:30	if not please call me.



Activity 17 - practitioner

Case Study – Alternatives to a cold sell approach

Time: 45 min

Source: BBLT Development Group

Aim: To encourage thinking about the meaning of literacy and use innovative ways to raise the issue literacies with the general public.

Materials:

Adult Literacies Online [ALO](#) – look at available resources online

Paper and Pen

Method:

Read the following situation and design an integrated literacy programme that could be used to engage such a group:

- You attend a health event at a local homeless shelter every 6 weeks with the aim of promoting literacy awareness and of the local support offered. You have an info stand lasting 2 hours and the participants are normally different every time due to the turnover rate within the hostel. This cold sell approach isn't working, think of an alternative

Level of prior knowledge required:

Some understanding of literacies practice

Top Tips:

- *Empathy – Think of what would grab your attention and engage you if you were someone who had a difficulty with literacy*
- *Think about who the learners are and what their motivation is?*
-

Expected outcome/impact:

Learn more about promoting learner motivation and engagement

Create a resource that you could use in practice



Activity 18 – practitioner Facilitator/tutor Self-Assessment Questions.

Source: Inspired by Diane Baker Tutor Self-Assessment Guide for more information [click here](#).

Top Tip: To improve your practice it is useful to reflect on your learning before, during and after the learning experience.

Reflective learning is not only about recognising something new, it is also about looking at something with fresh eyes and learning from what you detect.

Self-assessment questions can be used by tutors/facilitators intermittently throughout work with young people and are useful to:

- Help identify ways in which links with young people can be strengthened
- Improve skills and help to assess growth as a tutor/facilitator

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Do I enjoy meeting and working with young people?
2. Am I able to communicate effectively?
3. How friendly and approachable am I?
4. How much time can I commit to tutoring/facilitating young people on a regular basis?
5. How do I react when confronted with challenges?
6. Am I motivated am I to learn myself, how can I motivate anyone else to learn?
7. How open minded am I to new/other people's ideas?
8. Do I respect other people and different cultural backgrounds?
9. Do I enjoy reading?
10. Do I enjoy writing?
11. What are my attitudes towards reading and writing?
12. Am I confident using numbers?
13. How do I use numbers in everyday life?
14.
this to my learners?



-
15. Am I able to listen and learn from young people?
 16. Do I incorporate young people's changing needs and ideas into my sessions?
 17. Do I make time to reflect on the learning process with young people?
 18. Am I creative and flexible so that I can plan and use a variety of approaches?
 19. Am I able to establish a good creative learning environment?
 20. Am I able to relate a young person's life to the sessions so that they have a positive impact in their everyday literacy use?
 21. Am I able to respect a young person's confidences?
 22. Am I honest about my own strengths and weaknesses? Am I able to share these with young people?
 23. Can I teach? Can I learn?

Points for discussion/reflection:

Once you have worked through the self-assessment questions reflect on your answers and consider:

- Are there any areas of concerns?
- What do you think you can improve in your literacies work with young people?
- What have you discovered about your own views to learning and literacies?
- How do you think your own views to literacies/learning affect your attitude to work with young people?

Support for Young People

Young Scot Extra

The Young Scot Extra package is specifically aimed at young people who are making the transition to independent living, especially those aged 16-19 and in need of more choices and more chances.

The online and offline package provides relevant information to help young people make important decisions, navigate pivotal life events and make the transition into independent living successfully. The service revolves around an advanced digital platform ([link](#)), the website uses cutting-edge functionality and social technology to deliver accessible and reliable information to young people from 16 to 26 on key topics, with a focus on supporting young people into positive destinations. The responsive website is complimented by FREE National Entitlement Card, the freephone Infoline service (0808 801 0338) and associated social media including a Facebook group offering exclusive deals and competitions.

A guide for practitioners working with young people has been developed, outlining what the service is and how it can assist in work with young people. The document can be found on the Young Scot website at the following [link](#).