

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION – BASIC MODULES FOR TEACHER TRAINING – TRAIN

Module 2: Principles of Adult Learning in the field of Literacy and Basic Education

Klitos Symeonides
Cyprus Adult Education Association (CAEA)

Contract Number:	229564–CP–1–2006–1–DE–GRUNDTVIG–G1
Project Title:	Professionalization of Literacy and Basic Education – Basic Modules for Teacher Training -TRAIN
EU Research Programme and Financing:	Socrates Grundtvig 1
Project Coordinator:	German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning Monika Tröster
Project Homepage:	www.die-bonn.de/train
Reporting Party:	Cyprus Adult Education Association (CAEA)
Publishing Date:	Bonn, September 2008

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION – BASIC MODULES FOR TEACHER TRAINING – TRAIN

Module 2: Principles of Adult Learning in the Field of Literacy and Basic Education

Klitos Symeonides
Cyprus Adult Education Association (CAEA)

1. Title / subject: Principles of Adult Learning in the field of Literacy and Basic Education
2. Description of the target group
3. Aims and objectives
4. Rationale
5. Description of content
6. Methodological and didactical aspects/considerations
7. Key learning points and recommendation
8. Results
9. References

Any communication or publication by the beneficiary, in any form, shall indicate that sole responsibility lies with the author and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

1. Title / subject: Principles of Adult Learning in the field of Literacy and Basic Education

The module gives an overview and introduction of necessary information and practices how to work effectively with adults. Special emphasis will be given to teachers who work on literacy and basic skills.

2. Description of the target group

The target group will be the teachers-tutors of the Adult Education Centres. This large group of tutors in most European countries have many limitations to be effective working with adults in basic non formal education. They have very little training to work with adults with low education and with adults with learning difficulties. The teachers –tutors of the adult education centres are usually teachers of Primary or Secondary education of different backgrounds. There are also many tutors working at the adult education centres who are subject specialists graduate from secondary education.

In general the target group will be teachers of the formal system and tutors subject specialists who are working at the adult education centres and teach basic education, literacy, basic skills.

3. Aims and objectives

The general aim is to give literacy and basic education - skills teachers all necessary information, practices, skills, competences and attitudes to work effectively with adults.

Specially:

- To give information on the principles of adult learning
- To inform about principles of teaching
- To discuss factors affecting learning and implications for teaching
- To give information and skills about approaches of literacy and basic education
- To discuss in practice the interaction in the group-group dynamics
- To discuss literacy strategies and methodologies
- To discuss learning methodologies and didactical approaches
- To present the profile of the adult, literacy participant
- To give information how to develop the best learning environment
- To give information about intercultural education
- To inform about the best evaluation methods
- To inform about the causes and effects of illiteracy
- To acquire techniques of how to recruit illiterate participants
- To discuss techniques in working in group
- To have information about the adult learner
- To feel how it is like to be illiterate
- To be aware of the auditory, visual and motor processing difficulties and about the relevant strategies
- To plan a teaching programme.

4. Rationale

Teaching adults with low basic skills requires a large set of special know-how and competences. Professionalism within literacy and basic skills is difficult subject because teachers and tutors have to deal with adults who are marginalized or disadvantaged. In addition to reading and writing difficulties the students have many other learning difficulties due to social and other problems. Therefore the importance of training literacy and basic education practitioners and professionals is widely recognized. Every sustainable national strategy to raise basic skills should contain a system to professionally train literacy and basic skills teachers.

Nevertheless, in Europe there are enormous differences concerning strategies and concepts to professionalize the system of teacher and tutor training. While in northern countries there are job descriptions for the staff and universities provide trainings with final examinations and certificates, in most European countries the development of a professional system has just started.

Alberto Melo, UNESCO expert, said that without the proper training of teachers-tutors of adults ,we are building on the sand. Especially the training of literacy and basic education teacher in non formal education is a necessity due to the problems that persons with learning difficulties are facing.

In many countries adult education is the poor relative of the formal system and training opportunities for adult education teachers are limited. In many cases literacy teachers have no qualifications to work with adults. In non formal education where most adults are participating it is easy to get employment as there is no any requirement to have training on how to work with adults. The only requirement is to be specialist on the subject undertaken.

5. Description of Content

The seminar will discuss and explore many areas of adult learning. It will give participants all means to work effectively with adults.

The seminar will work on the following

a) Principles of adult learning and teaching

- Principles of teaching
- Skills needed to learn
- Motivation to learning
- The conditions of adult learning and approach to adult teaching.

b) The adult learner

- Child-adult differences and implications to learning and teaching
- Characteristics of the adult learner
- Adults as learners. Who is the older adult? Who is the illiterate adult?
- Learning styles.

c) Group Dynamics

- Developmental stages
- Characteristics of effective groups
- Teaching/Learning groups.

d) Intercultural learning

- Recruiting immigrants
- Removing boundaries
- Intercultural education in adult education
- Intercultural competences
- Needs of immigrants.

e) Strategies to recruit literacy students and understand participants and their communities.

- The literacy students
- Barriers to participation of literacy students
- Who are the non-participants
- Institutions in the community
- Active citizenship.

f) Learning and teaching methodologies

- Selection of the appropriate methods
- Methodologies and their use
- Group work – Group sizes
- Characteristics of an effective group
- Matching methods to learning aims.

g) Literacy strategies and methodologies

- Literacy strategies and methodologies
- Causes and effects of literacy
- Positive and negative effects of learning difficulties
- Effects to the individual. Positive support strategies
- Case studies
- Auditory, visual, motor processing difficulties and the use of appropriate strategies
- Reading, writing, spelling and numeracy strategies.

h) The learning environment

- Creative learning environment
- Learner and tutor in the centre
- Factors contributing to a healthy, effective learning climate
- Barriers to communications.

i) Planning a teaching programme

- Information about the target group
- How to start
- Subjects and methods
- End and Evaluation.

6. Methodological and didactical aspects/considerations

The course will take place in two weekends. Saturday will be a full day and Sunday half day. The duration will be 24 academic hours. If possible it will take place in 3 days from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon.

Emphasis will be given to literacy and basic skills students. Therefore subjects such as strategies to recruit literacy students should be included. It is well known that illiterates hide themselves and it is not easy to identify and assist them. Also motivation is important issue that literacy teachers should be aware. Knowing the learner, especially the illiterate learners, is very important, as drop out rates are high in literacy classes.

Many methods will be used during the course. All methods will be presented in a practical way so participants to become aware of the various methods of teaching. The most important is to know to choose the appropriate method in every case. The variety of learning methodologies will broaden the experience of the participants and will offer an awareness of the different techniques that can be used.

The seminar is designed to take account of different learning styles.

Learning methods which will be used include:

- Group discussion
- Workshops
- Games
- Lectures
- Questions and answers
- Personal reflection
- Role play
- Life history and narration
- Exhibitions
- Case studies.

The participants will be adult education practitioners mainly tutors of language, ICT, literacy, basic skills, crafts, in general teachers of basic education. Their experience will be used largely. Experiential learning will be in the centre of each activity. Students will be in the centre of the learning process.

Each participant will work on self evaluation as well as on management team evaluation and course evaluation.

A course pack folder with all information and didactical materials will be given to all participants. Questionnaires, case studies, texts, games, evaluation papers etc will be included in the folder.

7. Key learning points and recommendations

Those attending the seminar will have the opportunity to become acquainted with: The methods and techniques working with adults, the learning environment for adults, the interaction in the class, learning and teaching methodologies and literacy, strategies and methodologies, intercultural learning and ways to recruit adult learners.

In general teachers will be more confident to work with illiterate adults.

The modules should be taught by experts in the field of adult education and literacy learning. It will be better to take the form of a workshop in small groups. It is preferable that the participants should demonstrate experience in teaching literacy for adults so that the seminar becomes more interactive.

8. Results

On successful completion of the module, participants will have a clear idea of the nature of adult teaching and learning and be able to put in practice what they will have learned during the course.

Specially:

- They will be able to communicate with the learner in a positive way.
- They will know the principles of teaching and learning and the importance of active participation.
- They will be aware of the adult illiterate learners, their characteristics and their profile.
- They will know the characteristics of older adults, as the majority of illiterates are senior citizens.
- They will have an idea of the different learning styles and to think of ways to maximize learning according to the persons learning style.
- They will be able to understand what is happening in the group in the learning situation and be able to maximize positive interaction and group coherence.
- They will be able to limit conflicts in the group. They will be able to remove the barriers which are blocking learning.
- They will be able to work with mixed ability groups and groups with immigrants being familiar with competences needed to work with immigrants.
- They will be able to use basic techniques to recruit immigrants participants and identify their learning needs.
- They will be able to work effectively in group work and become familiar with the characteristics of an effective group.
- They will be able to know the basic teaching methods and to use the appropriate method.
- They will be aware of the causes and effects of illiteracy and the consequences for the individual and the society.
- They will be able to practice how it is like to have difficulties with reading and writing.
- They will have an idea of the positive effects of illiteracy.
- They will become aware of the emotional and social aspect of illiteracy and empathize with them.
- They will be aware of the auditory, motor and visual processing difficulties and the relevant strategies to support the participants.

- They will know the factors which affect learning and identify barriers to communications.
- They will be able to identify the reasons which affect the participation of illiterate people in learning.
- They will be able to know the structure of the community, where learning will be promoted.
- They will be able to identify the main strategies to recruit illiterate people.
- They will know the role of the tutor as facilitator
- They will be able to plan teaching programme
- Finally they will be more confident to work with illiterate adults, and their self esteem and self image will become much higher and so that they become effective in their work as tutors.

9. References

1. Alan Rogers (1994) Teaching Adults, Open University Press.
2. Brita Lonstrup (2002) Teaching Adults with Openess, Aretoms Ltd, Riga.
3. Willen Bax (1997) Training the volunteers, Project Report. A.E Monographs, EAEA, the Newtherlands.
4. Peter Jarvis (1983) Adult Continuing Education, Theory and Practice, Croom Helm, London-New York.
5. David Minton (1991) Teaching Skills in Further and Adult education, City and Guilds/Macmillan.
6. Jumbo Klercq (2006) Focus on the participants, Interactive learning in Later life, Odysse publication, Netherlands.
7. Alexia Kokkos (1997) Practical Guide to the tutor. Metehmio Publications, Athens.
8. Alan Rogers (1999) Adult Education, translated in Greek, Metehmio publications, Athens.
9. Peter Jarvis (2000) Handouts to seminar in Cyprus for adult educators.
10. Klitos Symeonides (1999-2002) Papers, handouts, materials for seminars for adult educators.