

A good adult numeracy tutor

This document accompanies Ofsted's survey report *Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults*.¹ It summarises characteristics of good practice which are explained in detail in the report.

Planning individualised learning

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- has a very good understanding of the practical application of numeracy in everyday and generic work contexts, as well as in specific vocational areas, where required
- explores the practical reasons why learners have returned to learning numeracy and makes these the core of the learning programme.

Teaching strategies to overcome learners' fears

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- explores with each learner why he or she may have struggled with numeracy in the past
- ensures that all individualised learning programmes identify and build on the skills that learners bring with them
- incorporates the numeracy skills that learners may use every day, such as adding and subtracting decimals when using money, which they may not realise involves mathematical thinking.

¹ *Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults* (100225), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100225.

Addressing misconceptions and developing understanding of mathematical concepts

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- has developed his or her own understanding of mathematical concepts beyond level 2
- is very skilled at ensuring that learners get to the root of any misconceptions they may have so that they understand where they go wrong and apply the correct reasoning in the future
- promotes the benefits of analysing incorrect answers to learners.

Involving all learners and developing their independence

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- uses different types of activity, such as group, pair or individual work to allow learners to explore mathematical problems or calculations to develop their understanding and confidence
- uses a wide range of resources, including information technology, to develop learners' ability to use their learning independently and in contexts that are relevant to them.

Making numeracy purposeful

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- focuses on problem-solving and applying numeracy to build learners' confidence in using it in everyday situations and at work and help them understand the practical purpose and application of each mathematical concept
- minimises the use of paper-based and electronic worksheets
- uses a wide range of practical resources, including technology, in an imaginative way to develop numeracy skills that relate directly to those that learners use in everyday situations, at work or for personal projects or hobbies.

A good vocational tutor who supports learners' development of numeracy:

- has developed his or her own understanding in mathematics to at least level 2
- has a qualification in teaching adults in the lifelong learning sector
- has a very good understanding of the practical application of numeracy in the relevant vocational area

- ensures that all learners have individualised learning programmes that identify and build on the numeracy skills that learners bring with them, that are relevant to the vocational area
- is skilled at ensuring that learners get to the root of any misconceptions they may have so that they understand where they go wrong and apply the correct reasoning in the future
- focuses on problem-solving and applying numeracy to build learners' confidence in using it in training and at work
- helps learners understand the practical vocational purpose and application of each mathematical concept
- sets high standards to ensure that learners can perform relevant mathematical or number-related processes accurately and competently to the required industry standards.

Assessing learners' progress

A good adult numeracy tutor:

- continuously assesses the progress of his or her learners during sessions, and quickly adjusts his or her teaching methods accordingly
- provides constructive feedback on learners' progress in understanding individual mathematical concepts, as well as their progress towards personal learning goals
- focuses primarily on developing learners' knowledge, skills and understanding, but also ensures that they are familiar with the requirements of external assessments and tests.

Identifying the need and levels of participation

A good provider of vocational and discrete numeracy provision:

- assesses all learners, including part-time learners, at the start of their programme to provide them with feedback on their levels of numeracy in relation to their learning programme, career aims and/or employment
- ensures that learners are working towards qualifications that are at a level that builds on their prior attainment and are most suitable for their career aims and/or personal goals
- ensures that all learners on vocational programmes, up to and including level 2, take part in numeracy provision to develop the skills they need for their training and employment
- promotes numeracy provision successfully to potential learners,

including those who may be reluctant to return to tackling previous problems in developing numeracy skills

- works well with employers to plan and promote discrete and vocational numeracy provision based at providers and in the workplace.

Tutor workforce, self-assessment and quality improvement

A good provider of numeracy:

- uses data well to monitor the impact of its numeracy provision on meeting the numeracy needs within its institution and where relevant, in the local community
- ensures that all staff teaching numeracy have appropriate expertise and qualifications in teaching or supporting numeracy
- ensures that staff who teach numeracy receive sufficiently detailed feedback on their skills in teaching the technical aspects of numeracy
- has thorough procedures for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching numeracy across types of programmes and subject areas.

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www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100225.

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