

Tutor Guidelines

This module is designed for adults keen to improve their numeracy skills so they can work more effectively in their workplace, community or in education. Adults who have been out of education for some time often lack confidence in their abilities. This lack of confidence can be made worse if they suffered negative school experiences, leading them to equate education with failure.

The pack begins by offering students the opportunity to explore their feelings of unease and pinpoint areas of difficulty and establish learning goals. The tutor can point out that feelings and attitudes to numeracy impact on how successful we are and the purpose of a class discussion is to explore these feelings and attitudes. A discussion will also further identify some of the individual maths skills students want to develop.

The materials in this pack place considerable importance on everyday experiences, identifying everyday numeracy situations which people might come across.

An understanding of the more complex lives of adults, who have other commitments and pulls on their time, is built into this module. People are not expected to work right through the pack but rather to concentrate on the areas they feel they need to learn referring back to any parts they may have forgotten or need reminded about.

The module is designed to suit a wide range of people: returners to education, those learning in the community, workplace or at home. To be most effective, it is important that people can relate the exercises in the pack to their own life, where they might come across specific problems and learn how to cope with them.

One of the most effective methods of learning is through experience. In a learning situation, constructive feedback on completed work can play an important part in planning future assignments. As tutor, particularly of students undertaking Distance Learning programmes, one of your most important roles is to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the students' work.

This pack cannot stand alone. Practice is built into the pack but often students may require further practice exercises to help reinforce the concept. Also the strategies developed here need to be applied to real situations, with emphasis on transferability to as wide a range of situations as possible.

Before using this *Keys to Numeracy* module with students, or groups of learners, take some time to think about what they hope to get out of this learning experience and about their learning needs.



As a tutor your understanding of your students can have a crucial influence on their ability to succeed.

Think About These Questions:

1. How much do you know, and would like to know about your students' personal circumstances?
2. What kind of barriers to learning do you think that your students are facing?
3. Are you aware of the learning skills your students have already gained from other areas of their lives? How can you tell? How can you find out more about their strengths and weaknesses and interests?
4. Why are they returning to learning? How can you find out what's motivating them?
5. Do you know what their goals and expectations are?
6. How can you build on their motivation?
7. Are you aware of the strengths and weaknesses within your institution or organisation in addressing barriers to learning? What do you have to offer?
8. Do you have colleagues, or other agencies to turn to, if students need help with problems?
9. Who supports you in your work? Who can you turn to with problems, or to share successes?

In considering these questions, you may develop a greater understanding of the adult learners you work with. This should help you to select and adapt learning materials to best suit their needs.

