Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills

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Why should OECD focus on teaching, learning and assessment?

• Increasing awareness that instructors need support if they are to help learners achieve high-quality outcomes

• Policy-makers can provide more effective leadership and make better investments with an understanding of “what works” in practice
The Classroom as “Black Box”
Methods

A focus on the classroom: Inside the “black box”

Reviews of international research (English, French, German, Spanish)

Case studies of exemplary practice [Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, England, France, Norway, Scotland, and the United States]

Country background reports (6 case study countries + Australia, New Zealand and Spain)
Formative Assessment as the starting point

- Formative Assessment refers to the frequent assessment of learner understanding and progress to assess needs and shape teaching and learning.

- The focus on the individual learner, on the process of learning as well as on outcomes, and the engagement of learners in deciding what and how they will learn, go well beyond traditional approaches to student assessment.

- The generic techniques of formative assessment (feedback, scaffolding, etc.) have been shown to have a consistently positive impacts across age-groups (school-age and university) and countries.
Findings: Research

- The international research reviews revealed few controlled studies measuring impact of different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment for adult LLN learners.

- BUT, there is a rich literature based on practitioner wisdom and small-scale empirical studies, providing a foundation for further research on the impact of different approaches and techniques.
The Steps of the Learning Journey

1. First Steps: Diagnosing Learning Needs and Setting Goals
2. Relationships within the Classroom: Dialogue and Peer Assessment
3. Techniques: Feedback, Questioning and Scaffolding
4. Developing Learner Autonomy
5. Recognising Learning Progress

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The Steps of the Learning Journey: Step 1

First Steps: Diagnosing Learning Needs and Setting Goals
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- Identify learner capacities and needs, and the depth and nature of any barriers to learning
- Identify learner motivations and goals, and develop learning plans or contracts
Step 2:

Relationships within the Classroom: Dialogue and Peer Assessment
Step 2: Relationships within the Classroom: Dialogue and Peer Assessment

- Building rapport and creating a “safe” environment
- Using dialogue to promote participatory and democratic learning
- Negotiating learning goals and methods
- Structuring dialogue to meet specific learning goals
- Using dialogue to establish what learners do and do not know to adjust teaching and better meet identified learning needs
Step 3:

Techniques: Feedback, Questioning and Scaffolding

- Relationships within the Classroom: Dialogue and Peer Assessment
- First Steps: Diagnosing Learning Needs and Setting Goals
Step 3: Techniques: Feedback, Questioning and Scaffolding

- Techniques of formative assessment have been shown to have a significant impact with school-age and university learners
- Little research on impact of different techniques for adult LLN learners
- But, a rich literature based on practitioner wisdom and small-scale empirical studies
Step 4

Developing Learner Autonomy

Techniques: Feedback, Questioning and Scaffolding

First Steps: Diagnosing Learning Needs and Setting Goals
Step 4: Developing Learner Autonomy

- Adult education is a process through which adults aim to gain independence from the instructor.
- Peer and self-assessment, learning-to-learn are key strategies for building learner autonomy.
- ICT and independent learning.
Step 5:

Recognising Learner Progress

Developing Learner Autonomy

Techniques: Feedback, Questioning and Scaffolding

First Steps: Diagnosing Learning Needs and Setting Goals

Recognising Learner Progress
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- Placing the emphasis on “measuring the distance travelled” toward goals
- Using tools to track learner progress
- The role of summative assessment and certification