

# Factors *that* Impact Learning Outcomes

*Quality Framework for Adult Literacy*

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Factors	Implications for Practitioners	Implication for Grant Makers	Literacy Cooperative Role
<b>1. Conflicting Workforce/Literacy Goals</b>			
<p>Learner outcomes that state and federal funding agencies require programs to demonstrate (i.e., a one-year academic gain and fulltime employment) often inhibit the successful attainment of objectives by both learners and programs.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Labor's February 17, 2006, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 17-05 provides a national directive on the common measures for the WIA Section 136 performance accountability system. Under TEGL 17-05, three common measures apply to WIA Title I-B programs: (1) Placement in Employment OR Education; (2) Attainment of a Degree or Certificate; and (3) Literacy and Numeracy Gains.</p>	<p>Job placement goals and learning goals are equally important to adult learner development. Successful educational outcomes support long-term workforce success. Encourage learners to address their workforce-training and educational goals.</p> <p>Literacy providers can infuse workforce training into program design, and workforce-training programs can integrate literacy training in their activities.</p> <p>Many adult learners have employment and educational advancement goals and are impacted by conflicting outcome measures of workforce-training and literacy programs. Learners who successfully attain employment outcomes struggle to devote adequate time to degree attainment or to literacy/numeracy gains. Conversely, many learners who show adequate annual educational gains do not meet employment outcomes.</p>	<p>Advocate for aligning federal and state workforce and literacy goals based on the understanding that long-term workforce success and improved literacy skills are not mutually exclusive.</p>	<p>Advocate for aligning federal and state workforce and literacy goals based on the understanding that long-term workforce success and improved literacy skills are not mutually exclusive.</p> <p>Provide training and services to help programs integrate workforce and literacy education.</p>

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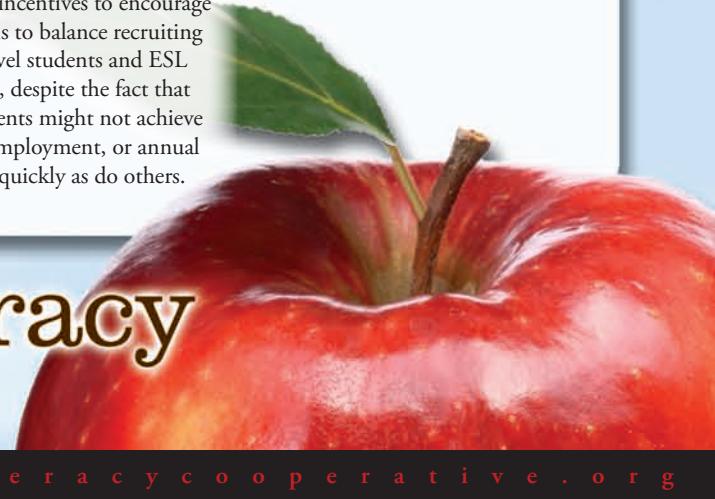


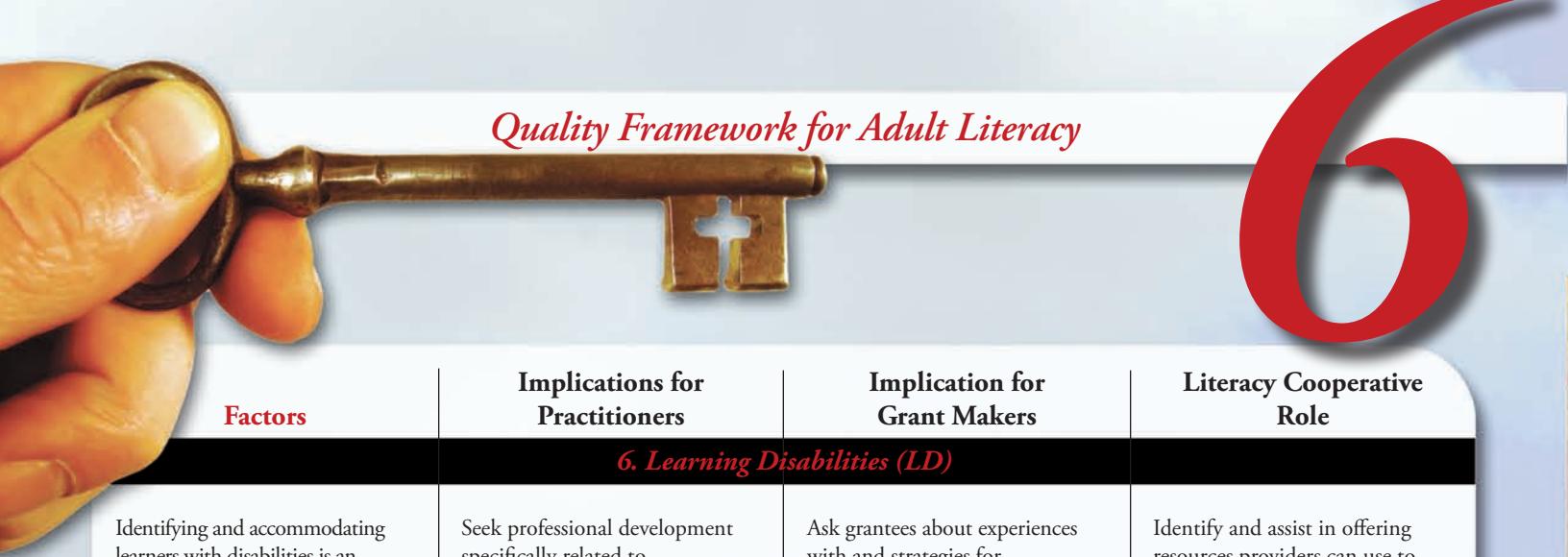
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	<b>2. Support Services/Case Management</b>		
The highest levels of goal attainment for ABE learners have been found among learners who are supported and equipped to better manage outside (external to the program) elements that enable or inhibit educational success. These include family, work, and other forces that impact program persistence (Molek & Guisler, 1997).	<p>Identify incentives (desire for higher wages, GED completion, etc.) and barriers (childcare, time-management issues, etc.) that strengthen or inhibit learner goal attainment. Programs that proactively identify and utilize motivations and/or minimize learner barriers are linked with student persistence (Lewin, 1999).</p> <p>Forge partnerships and develop a referral system with case-management service providers. Include a formal referral process to ensure that learners follow through on service recommendations.</p>	<p>Fund partnerships between social support programs and ABE/ ESL programs. These programs -- often called "wraparound" services -- support the classroom/ educational environment and remove or minimize barriers that inhibit goal attainment.</p> <p>Advocate for case management as an important element of ABE/ ESL services.</p>	<p>Promote relationships among ABE and community social service programs to build partnerships for "wraparound" services throughout the county.</p> <p>Pursue funding opportunities that support expanded case-management services for clients.</p> <p>Advocate for case management as an important element of ABE/ ESL services.</p>
Persistence = Intensity (hours of instruction per month) + Duration (the length of engagement in instruction).  Research indicates that adults need at least 100 -150 hours of instruction to achieve a grade-level- equivalent increase on a standardized test of reading comprehension (Comings, 2007; Comings, Sum, & Uvin, 2000; Sticht, 1982; Darkenwald, 1986; Park & Choi, 2009; Porter, Cuban, & Comings, 2005).	<p>Programs should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to learners on persistence and time commitment/duration in relation to achieving educational goals; this should be presented during orientation.</li> <li>• Instruction relevant to life realities of learners.</li> <li>• A system that supports self study so that "stop-out" periods may be productively used.</li> <li>• Extended learning opportunities outside of formal class time (computer-assisted instructional time, etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Discuss, with grantees, programming and options to increase the intensity of instruction.</p> <p>Require grantees to report on average hours of instruction per student, per month.</p> <p>Encourage grantees to incorporate additional opportunities for self study/alternative instructional practices into total program design (e.g., Learner attends class 15 hours per week and dedicates another 15 hours per week to computer instruction and self study.) (Comings, Parrella &amp; Soricone, 1999).</p> <p>Support/fund non-traditional or evening ABE/ESL hours for working adults.</p>	<p>Provide capacity-building, training, and resources to practitioners and providers that support time on task and self study.</p> <p>Provide professional training on use of authentic materials.</p> <p>Assist programs in providing innovative instructional activities and opportunities outside the classroom environment through technology, media and other means.</p>

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<b>4. Instructor Professional Development and Program Development</b>			
The amount of time that staff and management devote to planning, enrollment -management, professional development, and reviewing and reporting learner data is an important factor in learner success (Mellard & Scanlon, 2006; Patterson & Mellard, 2007; Perin & Greenberg, 2007; Pelavin Research Institute, 1998).  Many instructors are not paid for class-preparation time.  Learner input and participation in program development and structure are critical to program success and help increase learner achievement, retention and attitude.	Build in paid preparatory time for instructors.  Offer every instructor (volunteer or paid) opportunities to participate in professional development, and support their attendance. Pay for and require teachers to devote a specified amount of preparatory time outside the classroom/educational environment. This should include time for developing programs (specifically, innovations for increasing learner instructional time), analyzing learner data, acquiring feedback from learner councils, and attending professional-development activities.	Provide funding to support paid time to support staff participation in professional development and preparatory time.  Require grantees to report on the average number of hours teaching/instructional staff (including volunteers) devote to professional development and how professional development affects classroom practices.  Inquire about the average number of hours staff/instructors devote to preparation time and program structure.	Identify and provide research-based professional development and training opportunities for instructors and volunteers.  Assist programs in ensuring learner participation in program development through focus groups, learner councils, etc.
<b>5. Entry Level of Learners and Proportion of ESL/ABE Clients</b>			
A learner's proficiency level at the time of enrollment in an ABE program strongly impacts his or her rate of progress and the outcome of the ABE education experience.  Programs deliver higher levels of learner outcomes when higher proportions of participants are ABE students relative to ESL students (Patterson & Mellard, 2007).	Practitioners should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administer assessment tests during initial enrollment to determine learners' proficiency levels.</li><li>• Structure instruction/learning plans accordingly.</li><li>• Conduct periodic assessments to determine progress toward goals (especially if clients are at very low levels).</li></ul>	Funders and grantees should <u>negotiate</u> a reasonable set of program outcomes, such as grade level increases or GED attainment, based on the <u>demographic background</u> of the clients served. Factors to consider include full-time vs. part-time employment, ESL or ABE level and family structure.  Provide incentives to encourage programs to balance recruiting lower-level students and ESL students, despite the fact that these clients might not achieve GED, employment, or annual gains as quickly as do others.	Provide trainings for funders and grantees on how to establish a reasonable set of program outcomes based on learner demographics.





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	<b><i>6. Learning Disabilities (LD)</i></b>		
Identifying and accommodating learners with disabilities is an important contributor to successful learner outcomes (Patterson & Mellard, 2007; Vogel & Reder, 1998; Young, Gerber, Reder & Cooper 1996).	<p>Seek professional development specifically related to identifying LD.</p> <p>Seek funding for resources to support accommodations for learners with special needs.</p>	<p>Ask grantees about experiences with and strategies for accommodating LD.</p> <p>Provide funding support for LD training, screenings and accommodations.</p>	<p>Identify and assist in offering resources providers can use to document and accommodate adults with disabilities.</p> <p>Provide training on conducting LD screenings.</p> <p>Develop shared/rotational/circuit LD screening tools that can be shared between agencies (e.g. Power Path).</p>

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