

Optional Lesson Plan: Literacy and Essential Skills**1 hr 15 min total****Lesson Description**

In this lesson, participants are introduced to the different ways in which literacy and essential skills affect learning. Participants examine different ways to support learners who lack these skills in a training environment.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Explain how literacy and essential skills affect learning and training.
2. Identify solutions for how trainers can support people with literacy challenges and skills gaps.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Pens/pencils

Preparation

- Read and prepare lesson plan
- Write the list of essential skills on the flip chart (See lesson plan)
- Write the learning outcomes or lesson description on the flip chart

Introduction**5 minutes**

1. Ask the participants to form a line according to how confident they are in their skills in the following three categories. Have them create a new line for each category.
 - People who excel at spelling on one side of the room; those who struggle with spelling at the other.
 - People with strong math skills at one side of the room; those who struggle with math at the other.
 - People who always fill out forms correctly at one side of the room; those who struggle with filling out forms at the other.

2. Ask the participants to return to their seats. Ask them: “What did these three different lines demonstrate?” *They demonstrate that each of us has different skill-sets and competencies along a range or spectrum of abilities.*
3. Ask the participants: “We have recognized that people have a range of skills and competencies. Why does this matter for trainers?” *Participants will also have a range of strengths and areas for improvement. A trainer’s duty is to be aware of this continuum, and to support learners while engaging their strengths.*
4. Present the learning description or learning outcomes.

Exploring Literacy and Essential Skills

15 minutes



1. Divide the participants into small groups.
2. Ask each group: “In the past few days within our lessons, what skills or abilities were required for you to participate successfully?”
3. Give each group 3-5 minutes to discuss and brainstorm different ideas. *Ex: Working together, communication, listening skills, reading and writing, etc.*
4. Have them volunteer their responses, writing the answers on the flip chart.
5. Explain that the responses can be largely organized into the terms “literacy and essential skills.”
6. Write the word “literacy” on the flip chart. Ask the participants: “What does the word ‘literacy’ mean to you?” Record their ideas on the flip chart.
7. Provide the traditional definition of literacy: “The ability to read and write.”
8. Explain that this definition has been expanded to include many life skills deemed essential in different societies. As with the introductory activity, literacy is not a “have” or “have not” situation, but rather a continuum.
9. Write the words “Essential skills” on the flip chart. Ask the participants: “What does ‘essential skills’ mean to you?” Record their ideas on the flip chart. *“Essential Skills” includes all of the foundational skills a person needs to learn and succeed as determined by their specific context. In one society they might include computer use; in another society they might include the ability to drive.*
10. Highlight the typical 9 literacy and essential skills on the flip chart, emphasizing the first 4 as core skills.

Core Skills

- Reading
- Writing
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Technology Use (*specific technologies differ by context*)
- Critical Thinking
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

11. Ask the participants: “Why do you think the first 4 are called core skills?” *The first four literacy and essential skills are the building blocks for many of the others.*
12. Ask the participants: “What impact do you think a gap in literacy or essential skills could have on a person’s life?” (Education, health, employment, etc.) *Research has indicated that a gap in these areas is correlated to reduced employment, health, and educational outcomes.*

Literacy and Essential Skills in Training

20 minutes



1. Ask the participants to individually reflect on this question: “How do the four “core” literacy and essential skills – reading, writing, document use, and numeracy – impact people’s ability to participate in WASH training?”
2. Take four pieces of flip chart paper and label each with the name of one of the four core skills.
3. Divide participants into four groups, assigning each group to one of the four core skills. Allow the groups approximately 3-4 minutes to brainstorm and record WASH training activities that require their skill. After 3-4 minutes have passed, have the groups rotate. Repeat until each group has had time to record activities for every skill.
4. Review the completed lists. Ask the participants: “Is there anything that surprised you?” *Many WASH training activities require a large amount of reading and writing, interpreting numerical values, reading tables, performing calculations, etc. We may underestimate the extent to which these skills are required in our workshops.*

Creating Solutions

30 minutes



1. Tell the participants they will be working in groups to create short skits that illustrate solutions for working with participants who lack or are deficient in core skills. Each group will focus on one type of core skill.
2. Explain that the key point of this exercise is for us to understand skill gaps can occur among our participants, and that participants often have coping strategies to hide these gaps. Our goal is to think through the different ways we can diversify our activities or approach to reduce the incidence of any gaps impacting a person’s ability to fully participate in our training.
3. Explain that their skits should:
 - Illustrate the challenges that occur if participants are weak in a core skill
 - Present a way of addressing their given challenge.
4. Divide participants into four groups and assign each group to one of the core types: reading, writing, numeracy and document use. Give participants 5 – 10 minutes to prepare their skits.
5. In the large group, present the skits. Between each skit, ask the observing participants to identify the strategies used to address the challenge. Record their observations and ask them to add additional strategies.

Review

5 minutes



1. In pairs, ask participants to discuss any strategies they saw in the skits which they would like to use in the future in a training situation.

Reflections on Lesson