



Recruiter briefing paper 3 Supporting learners

It is well known that adults with poor literacy or numeracy skills have often had bad experiences of education. For some, this shows itself in a fear of failure. It is important, therefore, that the new adult literacy and numeracy tests are handled sensitively and are not seen as threatening. At the same time, it is important for both learners and teachers to be able to assess learning in order to ensure that:

- teaching and learning is effective
- learners gain a sense of progress
- learners gain (national) recognition of their achievement.

Move On has been successfully delivered throughout the country in a variety of settings, generating strong, positive response from learners improving their literacy and numeracy skills. More details are on the Move On web site: www.move-on.org.uk.

Move On/Get On at work enables people to:

- achieve a national qualification
- prepare for other courses (e.g. GCSE, NVQ, Access)
- develop literacy and numeracy skills alongside a vocational course
- develop skills that will better equip them for their role at work
- update their essential skills and go for promotion at work
- prepare to enter or re-enter employment.

Facts and figures

200,000 National Tests have been taken by learners up to April 2004. 62.5% passed. Move On courses are regularly achieving over 90% pass rate.

Learner reactions to the tests

To the surprise of many teachers who were concerned about the introduction of external testing of adult basic skills, learners have been overwhelmingly positive about the tests. Three-quarters enjoyed them, even when they found them challenging. Over 90% found the test papers easy to read and understand. These results confounded many critics who had predicted that 'they'll run a mile rather than get tested.'

Move On has also been shown to affect other aspects of people's lives. It:

- frees them from their belief that they are 'thick', 'useless', 'too old to learn'
- enables people to benefit from being learners, exposed to good teachers/role models and good methods/resources - they can share similar approaches with others, e.g. children or colleagues whom they help in the workplace
- makes them aware of other people who may have similar needs
- demonstrates the benefits of working in a supportive group that helps them to keep going when things get tough.



e-mail: move-on@ctad.co.uk
www.move-on.org.uk tel: (01223) 470480

Teachers' reactions to Move On:

- The positive approach of Move On encourages more people/new returners to come forward for qualifications.
- Any feelings that tests may be off-putting for students have been dispelled with experience of Move On.
- Move On provision takes away the fear of tests and boosts self-esteem.
- Helps people to take a more active part in their family and community.

Removing a sense of failure

There is evidence that many learners who previously felt branded as failures not only improved their skills but developed the self-confidence to demonstrate them under test conditions:

- *'Got my mind working again after three years of no maths.'*
- *'It made me think – I wouldn't mind doing another one.'*
- *'I enjoyed it, it wasn't the sort of things they forced you to do at school.'*

Multiple-choice

For some learners (especially older ones), fixed response questions were seen as liberating. One student, who had returned to learning after retiring, reported:

'I never finished an exam in my life before. I used to write my name at the top of the paper and freeze. This test seemed easy – no big blank spaces needed to be filled in, just need to find the right answer. I finished with 20 minutes to spare . . . and I passed!'

Lessons learnt

The test results, teachers' and learners' views suggest that where learners are given:

- a structured and supported environment
- a meaningful and motivational experience

then previous weakness and poor experiences can be overcome and national qualifications achieved.



e-mail: move-on@ctad.co.uk
www.move-on.org.uk tel: (01223) 470480