



These are key components in all effective education programmes, whether they be related to changing risk behaviours or developing adult literacy skills.

Some of the programmes I've recently been involved in developing are very short—as short as three or four hours. Every minute needs to be used wisely and thoughtfully. There is no room for padding! For me, as a writer of education curriculum and resources, this, combined with the awareness of the key components of effective programmes, has made me more conscious of the programme purpose and desired outcomes and the need to base programmes and activities on a *good* theory. It has also highlighted the importance of interactive activities and the importance of allowing time for practice, rehearsal and role play.

These types of activities build self-efficacy (a person's belief in their ability to achieve a goal or outcomes, or to achieve in specific situations). Initially I saw this as a *foreign* concept, one relating to the work of psychologists. However, self-efficacy is increasingly seen as related to students achieving their goals. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to put in greater effort, to challenge themselves, and to recover from setbacks.

So what relevance is this to adult literacy and numeracy education? For some people, becoming a literate and numerate member of the community isn't just about developing the broad range of skills that we call literacy and numeracy; it's also about believing in their ability to use the skills, and then using them. If students are to act

as literate and numerate members of the community they are more likely to take part in activities that require the use of literacy and numeracy skills, which, in turn, is likely to build their skills.

Funding models have forced literacy/numeracy educators to report on skills development and this has, to some extent, seen teaching and learning focus on skills development. While many teachers are aware of the importance of developing more than just skills, time may prevent them from providing practice, rehearsal and role-play activities that help to develop both literacy/numeracy skills and self-efficacy.

Perhaps it's time to examine the role of literacy/numeracy teachers in also developing students' self-efficacy and the effect of this on skills development.

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## References

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