



## Working with Lower Literacy Adults

Working with lower literacy adults may be new to the trainer. The following suggestions can help:

1. Take it slow. It is more important that students master a few skills rather than briefly perform and then forget many skills.
2. Break training into smaller time slots. Each lesson in the original curriculum allotted 2 hours per lesson. However, you will most likely find that students need more time than that to cover all of the skills in each lesson. Also, shorter sessions can be scheduled if this is conducive to the students and instructor. A brief review of the last lesson can begin the session, followed by new content.
3. Do not take over the student's mouse or keyboard! It is really difficult to keep your hands off, but the students will not learn if you do it for them. Some may also feel that you are being rude or getting in their personal space.
4. Do not assume students "got it" if they nod and say yes. Take time to walk over to students and check on their progress.
5. Do not assume that students can read and comprehend the Student Manual and other student files. Most are written at middle school and above reading levels, but many adult literacy students may read at lower grade levels. Instead of having students read on their own, read the materials aloud as students follow. Include comprehension checks as you go through the reading and instruction to see if students can answer your questions.
6. Be aware that if you ask the class a question, it will most likely be the same students who are answering. Students who do not understand will not answer and you may not notice. So instead of doing whole group comprehension checks, you can ask students to use thumbs up/thumbs down to answer yes/no questions. Alternatively, you can ask them to write down their answers on a piece of paper and then check them as you discuss the answers.

7. Have students work with partners. You can choose to place students in pairs with a strong literacy and/or computer-skilled student with a weaker one. Sometimes placing strong students together so they can work on their own while you work with students who are struggling is also a good strategy.
8. Apply the computer skills that students are learning to their real lives whenever possible. Also, if you are working with an adult literacy class that meets regularly, gear your instruction towards activities that they need to complete as part of their classroom instruction.
9. Keep a couple of reading glasses available and encourage students to purchase them and use them if they have issues reading the screen or printed paper due to eyesight. This is a common issue in adult literacy classes.
10. Remember that for lower literacy adults, trying to save paper by fitting information in less space is not advisable. If you prepare materials in addition to those included in the curriculum, try to use a larger font size in a clean font and plenty of white space. Headings should be bolded and clear. Illustrations are helpful.