

# Intervene to Succeed



SERVICES ÉDUCATIFS  
**COMPLÉMENTAIRES**  
FORMATION GÉNÉRALE DES ADULTES ET PROFESSIONNELLE

This intervention guide was developed by the Centre Saint-Michel of the Centre de services scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke (CSSRS), in collaboration with Centre de services scolaire de Laval, and the Success Support Committee (Centre 24-Juin, CSSRS).

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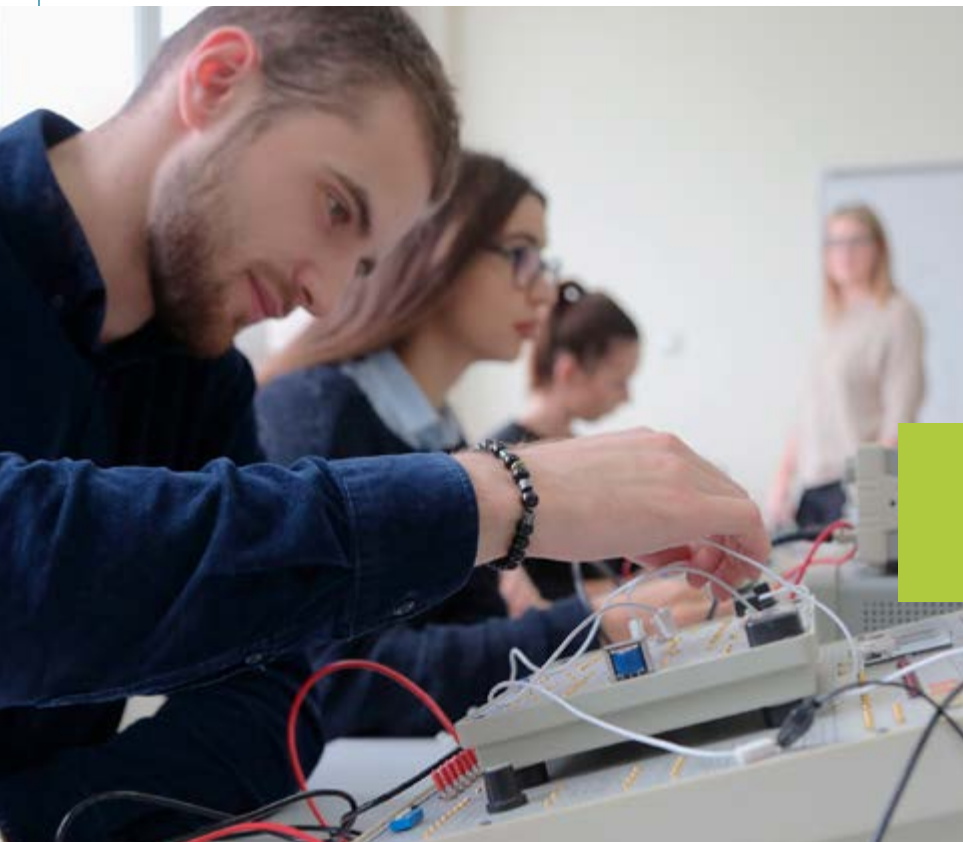
# Background

Teaching in the Adult General Education (AGE) and Vocational Technology (VT) sectors occurs in a world of diversity. Many generations cross paths. Cultural communities share and communicate together. Students come and go and then come back to study for many reasons. Our classrooms are filled with adult students from all walks of life, who have different life experiences.

Teaching in the AGE and VT world is very stimulating and fulfilling. Classrooms are usually diverse in age, culture, experience, and/or learning styles. Intervening with our adult learners is done differently; they usually organize themselves with fewer means at their disposal. We believe that everyone can learn throughout their lives.



This document is designed with the intention of understanding adult learners and their challenges. Whether they are from here, or elsewhere, or have learning challenges or disorders, they all can learn. To better serve adult learners, you must be well prepared to identify their needs and to offer appropriate support and interventions.





# Change

Any facilitator wants to help adults quickly improve their grades and their strategies. As professionals, they want to support their students on their journey towards success, improve their independence, and improve their life situation. An effective facilitator explains the subject in several ways, shares work methods, and fosters peer cooperation. In short, they are never short of ideas to support their students.

Adopting a new work method requires students to mentally assimilate concepts that they may have already learned. Learners must overcome their counterproductive thoughts and incorporate more positive approaches. Often, they do not need to learn — they must **RE-LEARN** instead, which is much more difficult than conceptualizing new ideas.

For every change, a period of 21 days is generally required to notice any improvement. Therefore, the “small steps” principle leads to big results.



## Labels

In this document, no behaviour should be associated with a learning disorder or a mental health disorder. The concern is not to describe adults with a diagnosis and not to label them. In a systemic vision, it is best to be aware of observable and measurable characteristics in order to adapt interventions to each person based on the context and expectations. In reference to the Lignes directrices document (section 1.2), published by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEES), by adopting this approach, learners are less stigmatized, and their challenges are better accommodated.

# Agitation and Impulsiveness

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Acts impulsively and spontaneously.
- ▶ Is constantly moving and seeking attention.
- ▶ Is frequently in conflict with their peers or educators.
- ▶ Gives excuses to avoid new tasks.
- ▶ Has difficulty managing frustration (becomes angry or overreacts to events).
- ▶ Behaves immaturely, interrupts and/or makes inappropriate comments.
- ▶ Does not follow classroom instructions or their group's rules.
- ▶ Is inflexible and acts in opposition.
- ▶ Defies authority.
- ▶ Displays high need for attention.
- ▶ Has difficulty finishing a task.



## Strategies

### INTERVENTIONS

- ▶ Set basic rules and standards for the group.
- ▶ State the expected behaviour and tell the adults when they have done well.
- ▶ Diversify instruction method.
- ▶ Encourage learners to leave the class to calm down and regain their concentration.
- ▶ Use positive reinforcement.
- ▶ Ensure that learners are paying attention by calling on them.
- ▶ Get closer to the adult, at eye-level, and/or place a hand on their shoulder.
- ▶ Ignore some behaviour.
- ▶ Allow learners to move in their environment.
- ▶ Raise awareness about the effects of stimulant substance use.
- ▶ State the consequences of breaking the rules, repeat the rules, and enforce the rules.
- ▶ Use a neutral tone and low volume to avoid escalation.

# Concentration and Attention

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Has difficulty performing two tasks at the same time.
- ▶ Has difficulty following instructions whether given orally or in writing.
- ▶ Has difficulty starting a task.
- ▶ Gets discouraged in the face of difficulty and does not complete tasks.
- ▶ Submits work that was rushed.
- ▶ Is easily distracted by background noises.
- ▶ Asks irrelevant questions or questions that were already answered.
- ▶ Has difficulty following a text or exercise with several steps.
- ▶ May skip practice questions or steps when solving.
- ▶ May seem anxious or shows little emotion.
- ▶ Has difficulty staying awake during self-guided work.



## Strategies



- ▶ Identify the adult's internal and external sources of distraction.
- ▶ Start with structured activity.
- ▶ Give a specific amount of time to complete a task.
- ▶ Model and encourage them to organize their schedule.
- ▶ Crouch down when you go to the adult's desk to support.
- ▶ Break the work down into smaller steps.
- ▶ Provide a checklist of steps to follow.
- ▶ Maintain as much visual or physical contact with them as possible.
- ▶ Use different tones of voice and vary the speed at which you talk.
- ▶ Allow the adult to move around in the class and change position.
- ▶ Encourage the adult to chew gum and drink water.
- ▶ Encourage momentary transition breaks between required tasks.
- ▶ Allow the adult to work while standing up.
- ▶ Provide sensory manipulative to regulate (a ball or sensory object).

# Coordination and Motor Skills

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Has difficulty articulating and controlling the rate and the intensity of speech.
- ▶ Seems to move awkwardly.
- ▶ Has difficulty reproducing a table, aligning columns of figures, or copying down information.
- ▶ Submits draft work: may have writing that is difficult to read and may invert letters and numbers.
- ▶ Has spatial difficulty.
- ▶ Exhibits difficulty using tools such as scissors, compass, ruler, etc.
- ▶ Gets tired easily.
- ▶ Has difficulty starting a task.
- ▶ Has difficulty understanding concepts of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow).



## Strategies



- ▶ Divide tasks.
- ▶ Alternate between reading and writing tasks.
- ▶ Use the computer.
- ▶ Allow more time to answer questions, use books with wide margins.
- ▶ Record your lessons.
- ▶ Allow course notes to be photographed.
- ▶ Provide a model of the task to be completed.
- ▶ Indicate what is important to note down.
- ▶ Allow for questions to be answered orally.
- ▶ Demonstrate a how-to, step-by-step task simultaneously so that learners can imitate you.
- ▶ Have various sorts of pencils and show how to use them.
- ▶ Check whether a student has a vision problem.
- ▶ Provide a variety of tasks to improve motor skills (cutting out, highlighting, rewriting).
- ▶ Place yourself in front of the learner or side-by-side to teach a learning method.



# Communication

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Has difficulty choosing the right words.
- ▶ Has difficulty pronouncing certain sounds or words.
- ▶ Has an inverted syntax.
- ▶ Has few cultural references and does not understand idiomatic expressions.
- ▶ Is slow when formulating the first words of a sentence.
- ▶ Speaks with a limited vocabulary, inverts syllables and words in a sentence.
- ▶ Uses non-existing words.
- ▶ Repeats exactly what was just said.
- ▶ Has difficulty giving an opinion.
- ▶ Copies teacher's corrections without understanding them.
- ▶ Has difficulty putting what they hear in their own words.
- ▶ Is passive and quiet.



## Strategies



- ▶ Speak slowly and use several intonations.
- ▶ Repeat the task with the exact words and re-use the same syntactic structures.
- ▶ Encourage the student to make eye contact.
- ▶ Articulate and exaggerate the pronunciation of certain problematic syllables.
- ▶ Give the adult time to structure their thoughts.
- ▶ Reword the adult's sentence correctly.
- ▶ Use gestures to connect sounds/syllables.
- ▶ Allow the adult to record themselves and/or to record you.
- ▶ Use images to help with mental representation.
- ▶ Use the student's mother tongue to teach cultural references.
- ▶ Opt for oral assessments in small groups.
- ▶ Use technological applications or computer software to support teaching.

# Reading and Writing

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Does not like reading or writing tasks; prefers to anticipate answers.
- ▶ Reads in a choppy manner and/or cannot read groups of words.
- ▶ Can be out of breath when reading aloud.
- ▶ Has trouble remembering how to spell a word.
- ▶ Confuses similar-looking words (night/might).
- ▶ Spells the same word in different ways.
- ▶ Does not consistently read the same word in a text.
- ▶ Has difficulty taking notes and re-reading them.
- ▶ Confuses certain sounds (f/v, b/p).



## Strategies

### INTERVENTIONS

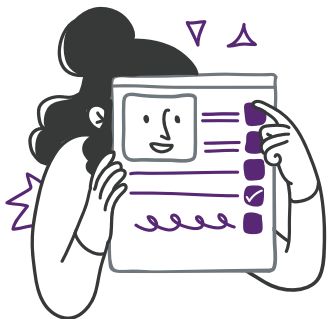
- ▶ Provide hard copies with teachers' notes/annotations.
- ▶ Reduce the number of exercises to do (quality vs. quantity).
- ▶ Read out loud to give an example of intonation and punctuation.
- ▶ Use word processing tools to write (Immersive readers).
- ▶ Use speech syntheses to favour feedback.
- ▶ Create a bank of familiar words that are built with the adult.
- ▶ Read instructions with them and make sure that they understand (paraphrasing).
- ▶ Limit notetaking and copying.
- ▶ Personalize certain reference materials (quick reference sheet, dictionary).
- ▶ Allow the adult to complete work orally instead of in writing.
- ▶ Teach patterns in spelling.
- ▶ Use Arial, Tahoma, or Comic Sans MS font and 14 letter size to present the work.
- ▶ Use 1.5 line spacing and align the written text.

# Memorization and Planning

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Has difficulty memorizing steps or repeating a sequence of tasks.
- ▶ Has difficulty remembering several items of information or can only remember the first statement.
- ▶ Has difficulty assimilating material or transferring concepts to other situations.
- ▶ Forgets what they just read, heard or what they wanted to say.
- ▶ Has difficulty creating a visual representation of a problem.
- ▶ Focuses on only one aspect of the work (e.g., writing the word). Does not consider a sentence as a whole, its structure, or corrections.



## Strategies



- ▶ Start the class period with a review of the material.
- ▶ Allow the adult to celebrate their successes.
- ▶ Have the student explain concepts in their own words.
- ▶ Give short, written instructions.
- ▶ Finish periods with a recap and a return to the large group.
- ▶ Ask the learner how they feel about the new lesson and have them describe emotions accordingly.
- ▶ Encourage the use of their body to process information (e.g., counting on fingers).
- ▶ Let them rewrite course notes and regroup information.
- ▶ Give a summary of a concept and have the adult make connections.
- ▶ Have the adult find and use personally relevant examples.
- ▶ Encourage the adult to anticipate problems in a given situation.
- ▶ Illustrate a problem using symbols, diagrams, drawings, sketches.
- ▶ Break-up material and lessons into manageable chunks.
- ▶ Point out student errors as little as possible (e.g., give counterexamples instead of looking for mistakes).

# Motivation

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Asks others to do their work for them.
- ▶ Shows inconsistency in the quality and quantity of submitted work.
- ▶ Often leaves the room or takes many breaks.
- ▶ Does not finish, or rushes through, exercises.
- ▶ Makes excuses to justify his/her behaviour.
- ▶ Gets tired, or easily loses interest.
- ▶ Does not set a work goal for themselves.
- ▶ Puts themselves down.
- ▶ Does not see the point of making any effort.
- ▶ Is socially withdrawn or excessively connected to social media.
- ▶ Is dependent on others for structuring their actions or completing their task.



## Strategies



- ▶ Set a realistic objective for the adult.
- ▶ Highlight their effort.
- ▶ Have the adult set out a measurable objective (such as completing six questions in a class period).
- ▶ Divide longer tasks into smaller steps.
- ▶ Provide checklists for individualized work plans.
- ▶ Write the goal for each of the group's adults in a class schedule.
- ▶ Use blue or green pens for grading rather than red ones.
- ▶ Favour work zones and group work.
- ▶ Give the student an active role during team activities.
- ▶ Highlight good prior work before starting a new task.
- ▶ Review the day's lesson and encourage its continuation.
- ▶ Give feedback at the end of each class period.
- ▶ Check for learning difficulties hidden behind behaviour.



# Metacognition/Self-observation

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Always takes the same approach whatever the context.
- ▶ Copies teacher's corrections without understanding.
- ▶ Does not know what steps to take in order to improve.
- ▶ Is dependent on others.
- ▶ Does not understand the relevance of a task.
- ▶ Starts a task before having their tools ready (or before reading the instructions).
- ▶ Does not approach the instructor or open reference books for help.
- ▶ Completes an entire task without stopping.
- ▶ Is not able to assert themselves or give a point of view.
- ▶ Is not able to self-evaluate or to give a grade to their work.
- ▶ Is not able to anticipate obstacles or difficulties that may arise.
- ▶ Undervalues their success, associates success with an easy test.



## Strategies

INTERVENTIONS

- ▶ Get the adult learner to react or take a position regarding a lesson:  
*“What do you think about...?”*
- ▶ Identify the skills targeted in the lesson.
- ▶ Break down the steps of the plan with them.
- ▶ Place value on teamwork so that they can see other ways of learning. Encourage a return to individual work thereafter.
- ▶ Think out loud while modelling a task (ex: teaching a concept on a whiteboard).
- ▶ Discuss differences between correct answers and student responses.
- ▶ Expand oral questioning to further develop reasoning skills.
- ▶ Arrange peer evaluation sessions.
- ▶ Ask students to anticipate their grade before beginning a task.
- ▶ Have the student explain what they understand about a concept, then focus on what they do not understand.
- ▶ Ask students what they found easy or challenging about a task.

# Anxiety and Post-traumatic Stress

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Has trouble starting and organizing steps in a task.
- ▶ Finishes a task quickly and doesn't welcome comments about it.
- ▶ Needs reassurance and security.
- ▶ Has difficulty with attention and memory.
- ▶ Is unstable or seems inflexible to change.
- ▶ Is irritable, cries, easily gets distressed.
- ▶ Is sensitive to comments.
- ▶ Makes somatic complaints (stomach ache, headache, nausea).
- ▶ Has trouble sleeping.
- ▶ Is easily tired and sighs in an exaggerated fashion.



## Strategies

### INTERVENTIONS

- ▶ Welcome the adult learner when entering your class.
- ▶ Give examples of steps needed to complete the task.
- ▶ Remove drama from anxiety-inducing situations, use humour.
- ▶ Write your class routine on the board.
- ▶ Use the clock to structure a period.
- ▶ Show empathy when the learner is discouraged.
- ▶ Identify the concepts that will be evaluated (prepare the adult learner for the evaluation).
- ▶ Carry-out practice evaluations.
- ▶ Provide stress-relief aids such as stress ball.
- ▶ Encourage student use of a day planner.
- ▶ Promote a class routine that integrates time slots for breathing exercises, development of self-awareness, and cardiac coherence training (CCT).
- ▶ Encourage the adult learner to focus on the present and be conscious of what they can do here and now.
- ▶ Refocus unrealistic or demeaning ideas by mentioning their strengths.

# Performance Anxiety

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Is apprehensive of exams and believes that he/she cannot continue if he/she fails.
- ▶ Seeks praise.
- ▶ Presents somatic disorders when it comes to being evaluated (stomach ache, headache, nausea).
- ▶ Is never satisfied with his/her results.
- ▶ Has irrational thoughts.
- ▶ Attributes failures to internal factors:  
*"I didn't study enough; I am incompetent."*
- ▶ Does not believe they are loved for who they are; believes that everything depends on success.
- ▶ Builds up a lot of frustration and has difficulty explaining its source.
- ▶ Studies and works hard without achieving high grades.
- ▶ Focuses on the details; if unsuccessful, is unable to move on to the next question.



## Strategies

### INTERVENTIONS

- ▶ Have tutoring intervention in a neutral environment (cafeteria, multipurpose room).
- ▶ Alternate work and rest: give time for breaks, leisure, and culture in class to favour socializing.
- ▶ Teach new study strategies and new ways to approach a task.
- ▶ Have learners name their personal limits and fears; encourage them to clarify their thoughts.
- ▶ Focus on healthy habits, like importance of sleep, diet, and physical activity.
- ▶ With the student, review what will be evaluated and its value/weighting.
- ▶ Make learners familiar with the examination room.
- ▶ Allow learners to listen to soft music while working.
- ▶ Have the adult learner list their successes.

# Personal Life Management

## Observable and Measurable Behaviours

### The adult:

- ▶ Arrives late, is frequently absent.
- ▶ Leaves work/exam without calculating time.
- ▶ Has difficulty organizing transportation, budgeting, and maintaining financial stability.
- ▶ Has family problems.
- ▶ Is unable to set priorities.
- ▶ Underestimates the requirements of the job market.
- ▶ Lacks emotional stability.
- ▶ Has angry outbursts, experiences continuous stress, and often cries.
- ▶ Is very impressionable and concerned about the opinions of others.
- ▶ Listens to unfounded rumours, is a source of drama, and is sensitive.
- ▶ Takes-on a victim mindset.
- ▶ Uses his/her cell phone excessively.
- ▶ Has difficulty separating personal life from professional/school life.



## Strategies



- ▶ Get them involved in working with a tutor.
- ▶ Name the inappropriate behaviour.
- ▶ Determine how much interest the adult learner has for his or her studies.
- ▶ Identify the problem by asking questions.
- ▶ Identify the **NEED** behind the revealed problem.
- ▶ Propose active solutions; ask learner to choose one; create an action plan.
- ▶ Find out what resources are available in accordance with need.
- ▶ Establish an attainable goal and follow-up weekly.
- ▶ Provide support tools (quick reference sheet, time management schedule) in accordance with the objective.
- ▶ Focus on one change at a time; set a second goal after 21 days.
- ▶ Show the learner how to use the “Airplane” mode and “Night” mode on their cell phone.
- ▶ Get the student to become aware of their **POWER** over the problematic situation.
- ▶ End meetings by letting the adult learner draw their own conclusion about the meeting.



# Principles of Effective Teaching

## Daily Review

Daily review is an essential practice of effective teaching. It promotes connections between learnings and allows for transfer into long-term memory.

## Asking Questions

The most effective teachers spend more than half their time asking questions to their students and carrying-out strategic teaching. Frequent questioning allows the teacher to better monitor the progress of students' comprehension.

## Guided Practice

Students need time to review, develop, and synthesize new learning so that it can register in their long-term memory. Effective teachers dedicate more time to guided practice.



## Breakdown of New Material

Working memory is limited, therefore, we need to avoid overloading it. Presenting the material in segments or chunks better ensures retention of knowledge.

## Providing Examples

Students need cognitive support to help them learn new content. To provide them with such support, teachers can model examples of thinking out loud so that students can understand the reasons behind their actions.

## Scaffolding of Concepts

Scaffolding is a temporary learning aid. Examples include having the teacher model, giving a demonstration by thinking out loud, or even providing visual references or checklists.

# Principles of Tutoring

## Empathy

Empathy is defined as the ability to understand what others feel in a situation. It is the comprehension of the emotion displayed by the student. The expert is able to separate themselves from the other person's feelings and not experience them.

*“You are feeling ... because...”*

*“I see that you are afraid of... What is it that frightens you about this situation?”*

## Reflection

Professionals should repeat and highlight their understanding of the problems and emotions conveyed to them. When reformulated in someone else's words, hidden needs can be effectively identified from an adult learner's issues.

*“So, if I understand correctly, you think that...”*

*“What you are telling me is that you are afraid of...”*



## Questions

Teachers who ask open questions will help develop critical thinking in adult learners. This practice is an effective way to provide direction in an interview. Where a climate of trust has not yet been established, the expert can introduce relevant personal situations to create bonds with the adult learner.

*“What do you think of your class participation?”*

*“I've already dealt with a similar problem in the past and...”*

## “I” Messages

Sentences beginning with “I” are beneficial because they state objectively what is seen and desired of a situation. Voicing such a message is neither a criticism, advice nor judgment.

*“I feel that your concentration decreases in the afternoon.”*

*“I'm looking for the best way to help you...”*



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