

Ways of working with a “fixed learner”

"In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it."

- Professor Carol Dweck

Common ways of working with a fixed learner.

- Small goals and small steps.
- Start with a unit standard they will know or with easier units at the start.
- Hold back on giving out too many units at the start.
- Have coffee/food.
- Integrate “know and do”.
- Broken down tasks.
- Focus on positive achievements.
- Use meaningful real life examples.
- Be a scribe.
- Sessions of less duration but greater frequency.
- Not to build future on past educational experience.
- Take responsibility as an assessor.
- Mirror what you want from trainee by your own presentation and behaviour.
- Slow yourself down (speech/movement etc).
- Reinforce the good stuff.
- Paid study time.
- Ensure the learner understands the questions.
- Incorporate an integration of evidence across unit standards.
- Draw on the trainees own personal/professional experience.
- Relate question back to their job.
- Language changing to suit learner.
- Team them up with a supportive person.
- Be truthful with the trainee “do they still want to do the qualification”? (if it’s not mandatory).
- Let the odd one fail – let it go.
- Help them to feel good about coming into an educational environment.
- Meet trainee at another place other than work.
- Experiential and realistic learning.
- Acknowledge the barrier and deal with it.
- Presentation of self to mirror (practice).
- Set an actual assessment as a “practice run” especially for nervous trainees. This is not for ALL assessors though – as some may feel they are duping the trainee?
- Use other successful colleagues/trainees successes to inspire trainees that are stuck.
- Group sharing of experiences can help the fixed learner recognise their own potential and skills.
- Focus on positive and reassure that mistakes do happen.
- Normalise re-assessment. Remove the stigma of needing to do it again - To a degree this can work.



Other suggested ways of working with a fixed learner

- ***New*** Give specific tasks to improve confidence.
- ***New*** Give presentations on basic topics.
- ***New*** Focus on the trainees strengths.
- ***New*** Keep talking – get to the bottom of the problem.
- ***New*** Sell the qualification – does management pay for the qualification?
- ***New*** Utilise alternative learning styles.
- ***New*** Does management increase rate on completion?
- ***New*** Ask CWA's for pens etc to offer to trainee.
- ***New*** Offer professional membership within own organisation on completion of qualification.
- ***New*** Celebrate with a graduation within own organisation.
- ***New*** Introduce "wall of fame" ie, photos of those who have graduated in your workplace.
- ***New*** Utilise other methods of presentation for trainees with literacy issues i.e. use typewriter/computers etc.
- ***New*** Pair trainees ie, stronger students with ones who are having difficulty.
- ***New*** Use their core values/knowledge ie, match these to the qualification.
- ***New*** Give examples of other successes.
- ***New*** Give practical examples.
- ***New*** Talk about their job & map their role against the qualification.
- ***New*** Allow time & give permission to interact with the group and to self-internalize the process.
- ***New*** Acknowledge their cultural differences.
- ***New*** Go back & use resources eg, Foundations DVD's etc.
- ***New*** Strengths based model ie, finding their "achieving tools".
- ***New*** How do you lift the trainees' commitment & let them recognise their own abilities.
- ***New*** Integrate practice with theory i.e. what they know is matched with what they can do.
- ***New*** Focus on positive background/successes and life experiences.
- ***New*** Utilise Literacy Aotearoa.
- ***New*** Reassure that they are not out of their depth.
- ***New*** Allow for more interactive activities.
- ***New*** Look at other methods of assessment.
- ***New*** Supply study tips.
- ***New*** Utilise and supply a "learner rep" someone who is neutral in the assessment process but can support/provide mentoring when & where needed – this was used by IHC assessor.
- Focus on a "strengths based" method of assessing.
- Set out on "bite sized" bits of work.
- Encourage the learner to timetable, set times up for study.
- Allow time.
- Provide a safe place to work – e.g. a study hot desk at the office.
- Review their work.
- Name the obstacles.
- Strengths focus.
- Praise the small achievements.
- Work with the whole person.
- Right qualification for that person.
- Set up to succeed.
- Use technology to describe as they work.
- Bring in facts and theory to some of the tasks.
- Story telling from the trainee's perspective .
- Regular contact/support/mentoring.
- If they are stuck, don't hesitate, just ask.
- Act as a resource.
- Peer group support.
- Give a role of more responsibility to increase confidence. (with a mentor perhaps).
- Telephone tree – facilitates study groups and peer support.
- Try orientation sessions.
- Frequency of assessments.
- Flexibility.
- Positive introduction with trainee.
- Showcase other successes.
- Process of working together.
- Be consistent and timely with feedback.
- Keep up the momentum of their work with positive reinforcement.
- Show a belief in trainee.
- Rapport building.
- Conversation and paraphrasing.
- Help to develop confidence.
- Tone of your voice.
- Ensure privacy.
- Clarification of their answer.
- Get trainee to read aloud.

- Jigsaw learning – photos to words – Pictures.
- Milestone celebration – doesn't need to be costly.
- Reward completion.
- Certificates at the end of each piece of learning.
- Evidence can be gained through conversations (remembering to document, date and sign off).
- Scaffold and work in "piece" of units where and when possible.
- Variety of evidence gathering.
- Make the learning meaningful to the workplace.
- Tie in with in-house training.
- Flow charts.
- Make use of Mind maps/spider grams.
- Matching emblems with words.
- IT smartphones.
- Discuss comparisons/examples.
- Reword assessment questions so they can be understood.
- Let trainee do the talking ie, their experience.
- Management support.
- Be honest – hear their interpretation...
- But don't buy into their negativity.
- Empower the learner to make their own decisions.
- Don't over exert yourself.
- Reassure the spelling and neatness of handwriting is not important.
- Treat the fixed learner fairly.
- Supply relevant info and KOPPs.
- Be yourself.
- Relaxed friendly environment.
- Nominate a spokesperson for group.
- Remember the tone of your voice and speak at their level (no big jargon).
- Establish role-play.
- Simplify the questions.
- Change role to one with more responsibility.
- Be available.
- Be consistent.
- Belief in trainee.
- Scaffold and work in pieces of units where possible.