



Supporting the Development of Academic Mindsets in Adult Literacy Learners

Components of Academic Mindsets (citations from adult literacy literature)	Instructional Features
Growth & Mastery Students who believe they can increase their academic ability and success through their own effort are more likely to focus on building competence, to be self-motivating and persistent, and to exhibit behaviors associated with academic achievement (O'Neill & Thomson, 2013; NRC, 2012).	Focuses literacy instruction and support on student effort and persistence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructional routines and support convey a view of reading as a complex process of problem solving in which readers work to make sense of text.• Metacognitive conversation reveals as visible and doable the invisible efforts of proficient readers. It normalizes struggle.• Students have many supported opportunities to practice higher-level thinking with complex texts by, for example, generating questions and citing evidence.• Students have repeated opportunities to experiment, fail, modify the parameters, and try again.• Teachers use clear, transparent criteria in assessing student work.• Feedback and encouragement focus on effort or on processes (for example, "you worked hard"), conveying teachers' belief in students' ability to learn and grow.
Identity & Community Learning is socially mediated. Feeling part of a classroom community has significant psychological benefits and makes students more likely to engage in productive academic behaviors (Comings et al., 1999; Patterson & Paulson, 2016).	Creates a sense of safety and belonging: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negotiated classroom norms allow all students to share ideas and difficulties without feeling stupid or "uncool."• Teachers tap students' out-of-school identities and interests.• Small-group work and routines for including more students in discussion get all students thinking, sharing ideas, and actively participating in the academic life of the classroom.
Passion & Purpose When students are interested in a subject or can connect academic tasks with their own future goals, they are more likely to demonstrate persistence and exhibit behaviors that support academic performance (Kruidenier et al., 2010; Mellard et al., 2013; Nash & Kellenbach, 2009; NRC, 2012; O'Neill & Thomson, 2013).	Connects literacy instruction to students' own lives and potential futures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers frame the hard work of reading and learning as a means of increasing autonomy and expanding future options.• Teachers build bridges between students' out-of-school and in-school literacy knowledge and goals.• Students have some choice of reading materials and tasks.• Materials, texts, and tasks are adult-oriented, relevant, related to student goals.• Participation in workplace or family literacy programs may lead to greater gains in reading than participation in other programs.