

unionlearn

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# The Union Role in Opening Doors to Learning

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## Basic Skills – Barriers for Adults

- Previous educational experiences
- I get by -what is the need and relevance for my life?
- Not a priority
- Busy and complicated adult lives – fitting personal learning in?!
- Fear of failure

## The Union Model

- Central to the union value base – fairness and justice
- Doing learning *with* people, not *to* them
- Positive message – what people *could* do, not *can't* do
- Bringing learning to where people already are e.g.
  - workplaces, community venues, learning centres
- Support and encouragement by peers

## The Role of the Union Learning Representative (ULR)

- They are just like their workmates and friends
- Often basic skills learners themselves
- Understand the barriers and issues first hand
- They receive approved and accredited training for the role
- Recognised by the government inspectorate Ofsted as “an outstanding model of peer support for learners”

## The Importance of Partnerships

- Unions cannot “go alone” – learners need strong partnerships to support their learning
- Employer support is very important – time off to learn, premises e.g. learning centres/room, learning agreements with unions
- Working with providers to deliver the learning – unions know their industries and learners and can advise on where, when and how learning can happen
- Government and funding bodies
- Others organisations with expertise in learning

## **The Union Model Making Difference**

**On the basis of the government survey completed in 2011 in England:**

- **It is estimated that 8.1 million adults aged 16-65 have difficulties with everyday maths.**

## What does this mean?

### In everyday life

- making sense of food labels, work out best buys
- household bills, VAT
- read and understand train timetables, charts
- helping children with homework

### At work

- check pay slips
- managing time
- manage maths at work (recognising numbers, drugs calculations, measurement, etc etc)

## Making a Difference in Maths

- The union model in practice
- 800 Maths Champions trained through our Union Learning Representative network
- “Maths Positive” materials and resources including [Maths4Us.org](https://www.maths4us.org) website
- Attitudinal change to maths was needed
- More maths learners coming through the Union Learning Fund – an increase of 17% more maths learners this year