

The Components of Numeracy

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Summary

The term "numeracy" is used in the adult education community to include an array of mathematically related proficiencies that are evident in adults' lives and worthy of attention in adult education settings. This occasional paper attempts to describe the complex nature of numeracy as it exists today. All stakeholders—including policymakers, program directors, educators, professional developers and curriculum designers—need a full understanding of numeracy to know how to provide adults with effective numeracy instruction. While there are large-scale assessments, standards documents, and position papers, there has not been a field-and research-based synthesis of the components required for adults to be numerate, to act numerately, and to acquire numeracy skills. This paper attempts to identify and clarify the nature of these components with the hope that such identification and clarification will guide instruction, contribute to the design of assessments, frame research, and inform policy. Appended are: (1) Reviewed Frameworks and Standards Documents; (2) Context in Adult-Focused Documents; (3) Mathematical Content Strands in Selected Frameworks; and (4) Cognitive and Affective References in Selected Frameworks. (Contains 4 figures.)

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