**literacy and the promotion
of citizenship:**
discourses and effective practices

literacy and the promotion of citizenship

UNESCO

United Nations
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UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning

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Foreword

More than twenty years ago, the UNESCO Institute for Education (now the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning) organised the "European Meeting on the Prevention of Functional Illiteracy and the Integration of the Youth in the World of Work" in Hamburg, Germany. The main conclusion was that, contrary to the commonly-held belief that illiteracy only affects minority groups such as the Roma and immigrants, a growing number of the majority population either had a poor foundation in literacy from school or had no opportunity to utilise their literacy skills and therefore lost them. In response, a number of governments carried out studies to determine the extent of functional illiteracy, while others broadened the scope of their programmes to cover other groups in addition to the minorities.

Later, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the subsequent Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) series provided proof of the numbers and nuances pertaining to literacy in the region. In 2000, the European Union launched the Lisbon Strategy with the aim of transforming the region into the world's most competitive knowledge society, anchored on the acquisition of basic competencies like literacy and numeracy.

Yet today, even though it is clear that a focus on literacy is needed in order for national and regional goals to be attained, many countries have still to implement a national strategy and there is no concerted effort at the regional level to address this issue systematically. Many European governments associate improving literacy with providing development assistance to regions like Africa and Asia from which the majority of the world's 774 million illiterates come. As school attendance is compulsory in the region, it is assumed that the Education for All (EFA) goals have been achieved and literacy is therefore not deemed a priority concern.

It is in this context that the Institute and its partners, the Agence Nationale de Lutte Contre L'Illettrisme (ANLCI) and the UNESCO French National Commission, organized a Regional Meeting on "Literacy and the Promotion of Citizenship: The Challenge of Learning" from 2-5 April 2005 in Lyon, France. With the support of the European Union and the involvement of the European Association of Education of Adults (EAEA), it brought together 145 participants representing governments, research institutes and universities, non-government organizations, and public and private literacy providers.

In the light of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), the Institute considers that this meeting contributed significantly towards raising the awareness of governments and other stakeholders on the urgency of addressing key issues in literacy such as 1) conceptualizing literacy; 2) research and measurement; 3) training of trainers; 4) networking and partnerships; and 5) institutional arrangements. Participants from 38 countries of what UNESCO considers to be the European Region (i.e. Europe, Canada, Israel and the United States of America) reviewed pertinent policies and shared good practices. By focusing on the theme of citizenship, the meeting sought to establish a link between literacy and the empowerment of citizens.

This publication brings together the main presentations from that meeting, and as such documents the diversity of literacy-related thinking and practice in the region. The literacy map of Europe does indeed differ from that of other regions. Yet identifying markers in this region could also help us to navigate the roads and pathways of literacy in other regions. In turn, we believe that other regions can greatly assist Europe in charting its own route to literacy and laying the foundations for Learning Societies for All in the twenty-first century.

The meeting aimed to craft a broad agenda for literacy in the region's countries. As an advocacy meeting that brought together policy makers, researchers and practitioners, it succeeded in creating a momentum to forge a collective commitment not only to put literacy high on the policy agenda but also to find ways and means of working together across national boundaries. Regional and global literacy challenges are diverse and complex. With the shared vision and collective commitment of the stakeholders, we will be able to construct a literate and democratic world peopled by critical citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives.

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Literacies for Active Citizenship

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Introduction

The European Commission's (EC)White Paper on governance highlights the widely observed and acknowledged decrease of active citizenship: "Today, political leaders throughout Europe are facing a real paradox. On the one hand, Europeans want them to find solutions to the major problems confronting our societies. On the other hand, people increasingly distrust institutions and politics or are simply not interested in them."(E.C. 2001b, p.3). This so-called paradox is based upon an interpretation of the citizens' attitudes and of their respective social classes. In our opinion, this interpretation does not take into consideration the active participation of European citizens when they are called to defend their socio-economic standpoints (e.g. the workers' unions in Italy, the farmers of Poland and Czech Republic etc.) or when they protest, for example, against terrorism or against the war in Iraq. In these occasions, citizens challenge the given political formations and decision-making processes, as well as the institutions expressing these policies, calling for an active reformation of the political sphere. We are wondering if the above EC's statement implies that when we request a change from politicians we have to accept institutional processes as given. In that context, any form of dissent and any discourse on state reconstruction is conceived as 'non-natural'. This statement is essentially requesting for the overall acceptance of the eurocratic authenticity from the citizens, whereas we know that 'posing questions' is a necessary prerequisite of active participation in democracy. For this reason, the sphere of social activity is unique and cannot be regarded as separate from the political or economic activity, and the relations existing between them.

These interrelations have an impact on the identity of the citizen, as the dominant practices for the social integration of the individual through his/her social relations with others (Bauman 2004), that is, the dominant cosmo-theories through which the citizen entrenched his/her position in the world as natural, gain a different structure as they are directed towards practices of information and access to supra-regional networks of action, or even of resistance. Therefore, we are summoned to participate each time in different networks, projecting on them a different side of ourselves (Gee, Hull, Lankshear 1996).

Hence the notion of a creative, active citizen has attained a variety of meanings that vary in accordance to the political, economic and cultural physiognomy of the social formations. For example, at the level of political rights and obligations, the concept of active citizen (i.e. that of an actively politicized adult) signifies the participation of the citizen in the Civil Society. Beyond the rights of voting and being voted, it signifies, for most western societies, volunteer work at the level of local society, that is, the participation in social networks aiming to connect individuality with social action (Kabeer 2005).

On the other hand, the diversity of the ways of participation of the citizen in the socio-economic action of different local-global, international-national communities-networks, has an impact also on the citizen's communication practices, the practices of production and negotiation of meanings, resulting each time to a different constitution of values and beliefs, the transformation of the solid identity into a variable of changing cultural and social contexts (Isin and Wood 1999). However, these contexts are related to the rights and status of ethno-cultural minorities in multi-ethnic societies (the 'minority rights-multiculturalism' debate) and the virtues, practices and responsibilities of democratic citizenship (the 'citizenship-civic virtue' debate).

Such a thing presupposes that the citizens have developed the capacity for critical reflection, so that they can perceive the processes of the constant reframing of their action as well as their consequences. This prerequisite places learning at the core of every social interaction and within the constant differentiation of our single world; learning could constitute a solid value, a common feature of the new identities (Cope, Kalantzis 1990).

Therefore, in terms of political participation, democracy is defined by a variety of actions that in turn demand a variety of skills and knowledge. These

skills and this knowledge concern not only political rights and obligations, the appearance of the citizen in the public sphere, but also his/her participation in public discourse.

The variety of skills and knowledge is not independent of the cultural practices that the members of a society are carrying out and experiencing, depending on their socio-economic position. The different social and cultural subgroups (ethnic, linguistic, religious etc.) are negotiating their positions in the contemporary social transformations through specific practices. These practices constitute the identity of the members that comprise the social and cultural subgroups, and are also apocalyptic of their cosmo-theories, their beliefs and values. Therefore, learning and literacy in the framework of active democratic citizenship is not the sum of information, knowledge and skills that we have, but more than that, it is the expansion of our personal and social identity; that is, the emergence of new ways of existence and negotiation of ourselves. From the above, we can define the basic parameters of the field of literacy. It is the formation of identities, the participation in the learning society, and the negotiation of meanings.

Towards the literacies for multi-citizenship

If one examines the works of social historians on literacy (Anderson: 1965, Graff: 1978/1979, Cressy: 1980) it can be established that the great steps of progress in the field of commerce or even industry, took place in periods and in places with a significantly low levels of literacy. These great steps, from the commercial revolution of medieval times, to the first industrialization of the 18th century in agricultural areas, up to the factory-based industry of the cities, owed very little to the literacy of the people or to its school education. In reality, industrialization often decreased the opportunities of social education since it obtains its taxes from human capital, from which it operated.

Subsequently, there was no apparent analogy between literacy and economic development. In the exemplified occasion of England, the first industrial revolution was not constructed upon the shoulders of a literate society, neither is it arguable that it functioned as a positive force in the increase of the literacy level of the lower classes, at least in the short term. As it appears, the most important element for development was the educational status of key-figures in the institutional distribution of political authority, and not that of the many. In our days, this observation feeds into the debate of lifelong learning (LLL), as the development of a knowledge economy requires an expanded democratic base of literate/educated citizens.

No matter what position one may have in these modern European practices of LLL for a competitive knowledge econonomy, it is without doubt that the way of economic evolution and the issues of democratic governance are connected directly with the significations of literacy. From this angle, in different occasions and in different contexts, literacy is defined differently with its levels and its consequences varying in every form of development. The discourses around literacy and levels of literacy, as well as the discourses around a deficiency of literacy and their correlations with development vary depending on the institutional distribution of power.

As G. Kress notes: "the discourses are inclined towards exhaustion and condensation, that is, they try to explicate not only a sector of immediate interest over an institution, but increasingly wider fields of interest […] A discourse colonizes the social world in an imperialistic manner assuming the angle of an institution" (Kress: 1989: 6). In the event of the powerful metaphor of a deficiency in literacy practices we have discourses that colonize other social fields. For example, 'literacy deficiency' could imply a 'deficiency' in oral speech as well as a 'deficiency' in the ability to work, or in the raising of the children of a specific ethnic group resulting in the strengthening of political choices of differentiation in work compensation, of even a racial character since responsibilities are attributed either to the person or the collectivity.

If we examine the relation between political agenda in the national and supranational levels (UN, UNESCO, OECD) and the discourses concerned with the program of study, pedagogy and evaluation in the field of language and literacy, it becomes even more obvious that there does not exist one and only one signification of literacy; also, there is not one and only one articulation of notions such as development, citizenship and democracy, since these are in their turn subject to different articulations and

significations. It also becomes obvious that new mythologies of literacy are created, which blur the fact of its complexity, mainly that of its articulations with power, the politics of literacy and as a result, the articulations of literacy politics with the pedagogy of literacy. (MacLaren:1995, Street:1995).

In the study of the binary opposition literate/illiterate citizen, many social groups, even in societies of high technology, are incorporated in mixed categories, such as that of "deficient communication" (Ong: 1970) or that of "limited literacy" (Goody: 1977). Often is the case in which members of societies have very limited chances to use their skills as they had learned them in school, though they are able to read and write at an elementary level. A great part of their everyday life is full of literacy events, in which for example, they have to know how to answer orally or in writing and are definitely in a position to recognize these practices of literacy that are related to the dominant communicative practices of the society. The action of citizens is a societal issue and not only a personal choice. This issue becomes even more important, if we take into consideration that the development which emphasizes social cohesion, today more than ever, has to confront or deal with the multiplicity of contemporary societies beyond the traditional concept of a national, cultural, linguistic or religious homogeneity.

The emphasis is on the communicative practices of the citizen instead of the emphasis on an "objective set (independent from a sociocultural context in time and space) of literacy skills".

Citizenship and Literacy: designing Adult Education Programmes

The approach to literacy as a sociocultural practice (Street 1987, Ogbu 1990, Gee 1996) that correlates every time with specific spatial and historic contexts, in which the subjects act and react with specific identities and roles, is posing new questions regarding the planning of educational intervention programs of literacy for active citizenship. The emphasis of such programs is centered upon: (a) the critical understanding of the development of personal identity, the collective identities and relations, and also the methods/actions in which they become visible. The emphasis is on the understand-

ing of systems in which people are connected, forming local and global communities, and (b) the development of knowledge, abilities and skills that are required for the construction and deconstruction of meanings and the critical understanding of relations of power among the participants in a communicative framework as well as in the critical understanding of the use of new technologies of communication. Such strategies aim at:

*   access to the socially dominant ways of action, expression and existence, and simultaneously, access to the recognition and acquisition of the linguistic and cultural differentiation and of the literacies that are connected with extracurricular and intercurricular specific contexts. (Janks 1993)

*   productive differentiation, such as the utilization of pedagogic steps that will deter the exclusion of trainees with different language and different sociocultural experiences and knowledge of literacy/social constructive practices, exchange and negotiation of meaning. In that sense, a program of literacy for active citizenship is organized by placing emphasis on the citizen as an agent/source of knowledge and practices. (Egawa and Harste 2001).

*   teaching someone how to learn, to create meaning through the use of different semiotic systems via differentiated cultural social practices, so that s(he) would incorporate his/her voice in transforming the dominant, powerful discourses, in other words, the socio-cultural ways of action and expression. (Freire and Macedo 1987, Lankshear 1997)

As Barton and Hamilton observe in sharing their experiences from programs of literacy in particular societies of England "literacy is an activity, placed into the space existing between thought and text. Literacy does not belong to the heads of the people as a whole; it is not a set of skills that has to become a subject of learning, and it is not located on paper, captured in a text that has to be analyzed. As every human activity literacy is mainly social and is in interrelation between people" (Barton & Hamilton: 1998: 3.) In other words, "to be literate means to be present and active in the struggle to reestablish a voice, history and future." (Giroux: 1988a:65).

Literacy does not only presuppose the attainment of particular skills but becomes understood as a social practice. This conceptualization of literacy as a social practice for the construction, exchange and negotiation of meaning (Barton 1994), is articulating literacy in space and time while simultaneously recognizing its relationship with power. What is therefore meaningful is to wonder, each and every time, what is regarded as literacy, and extending that, who is judged/evaluated as literate in a given space and time, but also whose literacy is considered to be dominant and whose literacy is set apart or resists the specific space and time.

Viewed as a social practice and not as a package of techniques and neutral skills; literacy concerns the ways with which people are applying reading and writing, while acting and reacting to a written text in the constant continuum between verbality and literacy, using methods that are compatible with their conceptions of what is knowledge, what is identity and existence. (Street: 2001)

Its nature is ideological, and always antagonistic, since within every spatial and historic context literacies are developed as social practices that antagonize others claiming the hegemony (Fairclough 1995, 2000). Therefore, when we are talking about literacy we are talking about multiple literacies and for this reason we need to distinguish between the types of activity within particular historic, spatial, cultural and societal contexts and the beliefs/standpoints of the participants towards them.

Every time we adopt the sociocultural viewpoint of literacy, we are taking the task of unveiling its three interrelated dimensions, the functional, the cultural and the critical (Christie 1990, Knobel 1999). With the functional dimension, the interest is placed upon the ways/manners by which the users of a linguistic system apply language in order to function efficiently in specific historical and spatial contexts of literacy. With the cultural dimension emphasis is located in the ability of the individual to correlate an event of literacy with a system of meanings. We are literate means that we are literate in relation to a specific aspect of knowledge and experience. Through the cultural dimension, the understanding of texts in relation to the communicative framework also deals with the appreciation on behalf of the participants of what is that which distinguishes, in the given contextual framework, a way of reading and

writing as "suitable" or "not suitable". The critical dimension is centered upon the socially constructed nature of every human activity and system of meaning. In order for people to be able to participate in a social practice, they have to be socialized in it. However, social practices and systems of signification are always selective and divisional processes that represent specific explanations of the world and its social processes as well as particular taxonomical principles.

In planning and applying programs of intervention for adult education in Greece where literacy has been connected with active citizenship, we have employed texts of everyday use as educational material, which would allow citizens access to different types of socioeconomic services, and would enable them to articulate their demands in the negotiation of their position in societies. The examination of language was treated as (a) social practice: ideological views inscribed in the text, (b) social process: verbal and visual resources used to achieve the goals of the text, and (c) text: textual and lexico-grammatical organization of text. (Baynham 1995). The literacy practices in relation to citizenship have been conceived as discourses: ways of representing the structure of the public spheres; genres: ways of acting and interacting with other people, in speech or writing, which effectively enact, produce, reproduce or counter particular kinds of social relations; and styles/voices: ways of identifying, constructing or enunciating the self.

Hence, the citizens participating in these programs are trained in:

- Practices that deal with the comprehension of the interrelationships among the parts that comprise the verbal and written texts

- Practices through which the citizens are called to construct meaning by producing written, verbal texts using at the same time additional semiotic systems (multimodality)

- Practices through which the citizens are involved in the usage of texts, by understanding and acting in accordance with the cultural and social functions that these various texts put forward.

- Practices of critical analysis and transformation of texts that are based on the understanding that

the texts are not ideologically neutral but that they project each time particular viewpoints of the world while silencing others. The aim is to 're-view' these texts as new and not self-evident, uncovering in that manner aspects of knowledge that would not be able to become uncovered without this critical framing.

This approach subscribes to a critical literacy pedagogy, which views/ incorporates critical awareness as part of the educational process. The main aim is not only to familiarize learners with the linguistic and discursive practices associated with various domains/ spheres of public and private, but also to be able to evaluate these practices critically and acquire a deep and thorough understanding of how meanings are created through language use and how knowledge is construed.

What we hope to achieve within this educational practice is a more active and conscious citizenship, aiming to empower the citizens, to provide them access to socially powerful meanings and practices applied in different fields/ domains of social life and render them able not only to reproduce but also to reconstruct the social practices construed as "naturalized".

In this way, learners will be empowered to contest the practices which maintain and reproduce patterns of domination and subordination in society and which consequently disempower them.

As Fairclough (1995) highlights, critical awareness about language and literacy is a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship and should therefore be seen as an entitlement for citizens.

Suggestion from the Workshop

Social coherence is encouraged not only in the traditional sense of ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious homogeneity. The multiplicity of contemporary societies has imposed new needs for open collaborations aiming toward productive diversity. The basic priorities are differentiation, pluralism, social justice, common good, solidarity, active participation, sharing of values and of responsibilities. It is a form of social coherence beyond a "specific locality". The UN-Literacy Decade initiative is needed to manage these highly diversified contexts, focusing on:

- The collaboration of different sectors of social and economic activity for the formulation of broad spaces of learning, e.g. learning regions/ zones

- The registering of dominant literacy practices for the activity of the citizen within the public sphere in the above mentioned broad spaces of learning.

- The identification of non-dominant literacy practices as sources of knowledge and innovation in the learning communities and regions.

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Literacy[1] and Social Inclusion in Ireland and the European Union

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Introduction

This paper starts with an overview of adult literacy in Ireland, highlighting three programmes designed to maximize access and participation. The next section introduces the REPRISE project which gathered data from 12 European countries on adult basic education interventions that contribute to social inclusion and then proceeds to look at the Irish case study on homelessness within this project. To conclude, the main recommendations of REPRISE are presented.

Adult literacy in Ireland is the top priority in national policy on further education[2] and is firmly embedded in policy agenda outside of the education sector. This change has been largely due to the results of the first-ever national adult literacy survey, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), which was carried out in 1995. The survey showed that one out of four Irish adults scored at the lowest level of literacy on a scale of one to five (Department of Education, 1997). IALS also showed how poor literacy skills among the adult population negatively affected family, community, and work life. This led to government recognition of the importance of improving adult literacy levels for wider social and economic development.

Since the publication of the IALS, the funding has increased 18-fold and participation in literacy services has increased almost six-fold. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2000–2006 outlines a vision of the future that provides for greater economic and social development. Adult literacy is part of the NDP as a clear contributing factor to upskilling the workforce, and facilitating greater participation of those on the margins of society (Government of Ireland, 1999, pp. 191–192). Also, in 2000, the Department of Education and Science (DES) published the first-ever policy on adult education, containing a national adult literacy strategy as the top priority in the document. It also collated educational profiles of adults in Ireland showing that 24 percent have only primary education, with a clear link between literacy level, age and educational attainment. This policy document, Learning for Life, recognizes that adult education can make a major contribution both in meeting the skill requirements of a rapidly changing workforce, as well as improving social cohesion and equity in the emergence of a broadly inclusive and proactive civil society.

The present system: philosophy and structure of Adult Literacy Services

Philosophy

The Natural Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) definition of literacy states that *Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and numeracy. It also encompasses aspects of personal development—social, economic, emotional—and is concerned with improving self-esteem and building confidence. It goes far beyond mere technical skills for communication. The underlying aim of good practice is to enable people to understand and reflect critically on their life circumstances with a view to exploring new possibilities and initiating constructive change.* (NALA, 2002a)

As the definition used by adult literacy providers, it encapsulates the main approaches to adult literacy work in Ireland, namely that it is learner-centered and promotes social action. The need to ensure respect for the dignity and autonomy of adult learners in all aspects of adult literacy work is central to national adult literacy policy and practice.

In order to support the development of this ethos in adult literacy programmes, NALA provides a wide variety of training and development opportunities, funded by the DES and designed in consultation with the key stakeholders. Moving away from the school model, the adult literacy service embraces new approaches to tutoring and new learning materials. Trainers discourage the deficit model—identifying a learner's weaknesses in order to develop an individualized learning programme—as it often reinforces the feeling of failure experienced by learners when they attended school. Instead, practitioners are trained to identify both learners' strengths and weaknesses and to develop programmes that build on the individual's strengths while addressing their literacy problem.

It can be said that the adult literacy philosophy in Ireland is the antithesis of the dominant education ideology of an economically driven society, where the focus is strongly on the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the sustenance of the labour market. In that context, such an ethos will have to be defended on an ongoing basis.

Adult Literacy Services in Ireland

The core adult literacy service is provided by the Vocational Education Center (VEC) in 135 locations. Although each VEC is unique in its approach to the provision of adult literacy, especially in structural matters, in most cases service is available during the day and in the evening, Monday to Friday. Adult Literacy Organizers (ALOs) manage the service, working alongside paid group tutors and volunteer one-on-one tutors. Most adult learners are now in tuition groups, although some are given the option of starting with a tutor on a one-to-one basis. Most services offer classes on a two-hour-a-week basis; some services are able to offer more where requested. However, in a small number of locations, only one-hour sessions can be offered, due to a shortage of facilities.

Some programmes have private rooms for one-to-one tuition. Other programmes, usually in urban areas, offer one-to-one tuition workshops, where several one-to-one pairs work in the same room. This can be a more sociable and less isolating way of offering one-to-one tuition, for both the learner and the tutor. In many cases, a support tutor—an experienced group tutor who provides back-up support to the tutor as required—is also available in the room. Adult literacy services also have a resource room, of varying quality, which can be used by learners and tutors.

Other Adult Literacy Programmes

In addition to the traditional method of provision of adult literacy services—through the VECs—there are a number of other literacy programmes in Ireland. This section focuses on three programmes which arose from research highlighting that adults experiencing social exclusion were often not participating in traditional adult literacy services.

(1) TV and Radio Distance Education—The low-tech approach to reaching the hard to reach

With the success and the learning from a small-scale radio initiative, NALA, with the support of the DES, approached RTE, the national state broadcaster, and proposed a TV literacy series. The DES committed funding to the project and RTE donated two time slots for the proposed series. One was a late-evening slot to allow adults to watch the programme—children would be in bed and most people would be free of home and work commitments—the other was a daytime repeat slot that would accommodate a different audience. READ WRITE NOW started broadcasting in autumn of 2000. It was accompanied by a learner pack, which was distributed free to the general public upon request and supported by experienced tutors available via a free telephone line.

At the end of the programme, NALA commissioned an evaluation and concluded that the series had successfully attracted an audience of new independent and existing centre-based learners. Viewing numbers for these television programmes were very high, averaging 136,000 viewers for the evening timeslot and 19,000 viewers for the repeat, morning broadcast. In fact, the viewing figures for the READ WRITE NOW series were equivalent to other mainstream programmes broadcast at these times. This was an achievement for an educational broadcast aimed at adults with low literacy levels.

Of the 30,000 learner packs distributed in conjunction with the programme, significantly, 11,000 were sent to independent learners. Participants interviewed by the NALA evaluation team stated that the series and the learning pack helped them learn in a very practical and proactive way.

As a result of the success of the first TV broadcast, a further four READ WRITE NOW series broadcast and plans are underway for a new multi-media distance learning initiative. NALA has also developed an interactive website for literacy learning. www.literacytools.ie is a highly accessible resource for people wishing to improve their skills on their own, at home, at work or in a training environment. As ICT's increasingly becomes a basic skill and Ireland faces the development of the digital divide, the use of technology for basic education learning is vital for the future.

(2) Return to Education—An intensive basic education model for unemployed people with adult literacy needs

The 1997 OECD survey concluded that an Irish person at Level 1 would experience a higher incidence of unemployment than people who scored at Level 1 in any other country surveyed (OECD, 1997). The ratio of unemployed to employed people scoring at the lowest literacy level in the Irish survey was 2:1.

The Return to Education programme was initiated by NALA to provide for the needs of unemployed adults with literacy difficulties. NALA brought together FÁS, the national employment and training authority, and the VECs, to see how combining their expertise and resources could result in better provision for this client group. Community Employment (CE), funded and administered by FÁS, is the main state-funded work-experience programme for unemployed people. People unemployed for more than six months are eligible to apply for supported work in their local area and are paid a salary for 19.5 hours of work. In addition, participants are given a small budget to pay for limited specific training they might require. For participants with literacy difficulties, the training available was insufficient to meet their needs and a barrier to their progress into mainstream employment resulted.

Return to Education aims to give participants in CE programmes an opportunity to attend a basic reading and writing skills course as part of their CE work-experience programme. Participants are released from their CE work for nine hours per week to attend this course. CE participants receive the same entitlements as if they were working for the full 19.5 hours.

The course was designed to ease participants, regardless of their education level, back into education. Participants receive accreditation in some cases, depending on the level achieved. Due to the nature of the course, a flexible approach is adapted to suit the requirements of each student. One-on-one or small-group instruction is available to suit the needs of the students. The programme concentrates on English, communication skills, computers, and numeracy. It also teaches personal-development and job skills.

An external evaluator (McArdle, 1999), rating the pilot programmes from March to June 1999, high-lighted a variety of gains from this programme for long-term unemployed adults with literacy difficulties: educational advances, including certification in many cases, increases in self-confidence, changes in outlook in terms of further education/training or work, and, in some cases, actual movement of learners into mainstream training or jobs (subsequent to the evaluation).

(3) Integration of Adult Literacy into Vocational Education and Training targeted at the socially excluded

In addition to the local VEC adult literacy programmes, adult literacy tuition takes place in a number of other settings, including the Prison Education Service, Centres for the Unemployed, Youthreach (early school leavers), SIPTU (trade union), Community Training Centres, Travelers' Workshops, and centres providing services for people with disabilities. In most cases, tuition is an "add on" to the main vocational-training programme and is therefore not fully integrated.

However, NALA has been promoting the integration of adult literacy within the core-training framework. The integration of adult literacy into training programmes combats social exclusion by ensuring that no person is, or feels, excluded from these programmes because of a literacy difficulty. Integration also ensures that programmes help every participant to develop the literacy skills necessary for successful completion of the course and for progression in further education, training, or employment. In order for this to be effective, NALA stressed that trainers need to make these skills an explicit part of their programme, which requires a planned and purposeful approach.

NALA, in cooperation with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), has developed a training programme for vocational skills educators and trainers, to enable them to integrate adult literacy into their programmes. NALA also published Guidelines on Integrating Literacy (NALA, 2002b), which outlined the key features of an integrated, whole-centre approach to literacy within vocational education and training programmes. The document presents ten guidelines, indicating (a) the systems and procedures needed to ensure that adult literacy development is built into every phase of an education and training programme, from induction to progression; and (b) methods individual trainers and teachers

can use to build adult literacy into their programme delivery. Education and training centres are using the Guidelines, particularly in vocational training programmes for young people, as an aid to developing integrated, whole-centre policy and practice on literacy.

Despite the effectiveness of these programmes in reaching groups with multiple disadvantages, many people who are socially excluded in Ireland and the EU, do not have sufficient access to services to improve their basic education. This was the rationale for the REPRISE project, which focused on programmes targeting disaffected youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, offenders and homeless people.

REPRISE – A European network on basic skills and social inclusion[3]

In 1998, national agencies responsible for basic skills education in six EU member countries came together and formed the European Basic Skills Network (ESBN). ESBN was established with funding from the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs which is primarily responsible for setting the European Union's social policy objectives. The project — Results Exploitation, Project Research and Information on Social Exclusion (REPRISE), aimed to continue the work of the EBSN by disseminating its research recommendations and conclusions to new national organisations operating in the field of adult education and basic skills. Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland and Romania joined Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain and the UK to form a network of 12 countries mapping research in these new participating countries to basic skills definition and levels, qualifications, adult education policy provisions and aspects of social exclusion. The REPRISE project network of 12 countries looked at the impact of poor literacy on social exclusion and compared practices and programmes that contribute to social inclusion. The network met six times and each partner produced a survey, a thematic report and an action plan on basic skills and social inclusion in their own country or regional context. The timescale for the project was 1st October 2002 - March 2005. It was funded by Directorate-General, Education and Culture Socrates/Grundtvig 4 – European Cooperation Projects in Adult Education.

The themes that were studied by network members included:
- basic skills – definition and policy; and
- social exclusion under the following categories:
  - housing/homelessness;
  - offenders/crime prevention/prisons;
  - health and disability;
  - drug use;
  - disaffected youth;
  - refugees/asylum seekers; and
  - rural/dispersal disadvantage.

The outcomes of the network included:
- basic skills surveys for each of the 12 partner countries;
- desk research on specific themes within basic skills and social exclusion; and
- basic skills action plans.

National Report on literacy and social exclusion – Homelessness

In Ireland the definition of social inclusion underpinning Irish social policy revolves around "ensuring the fullest participation of the marginalised and those living in poverty in decision-making processes as a means to raise their standard of living and improve their quality of life"(Combat Poverty Agency, 2002). The corresponding definition of social exclusion outlines it as "the process by which certain groups are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, inadequate education or life skills" (Combat Poverty Agency, 2002). With clear evidence that people experiencing social exclusion were less in evidence in traditional adult literacy services, NALA decided to focus on the area of homelessness as part of the REPRISE project.

Provision for homelessness faces certain constraints as they are a hard-to-reach group in terms of providing education opportunities. Factors laid out in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) to be considered by service providers include a recognition that homeless people may have a range of priority needs. Literacy needs of homeless people therefore must be addressed within this range of contexts. The Homeless Agency coordinates provision to homeless adults in Dublin. There is no national coordination brief at present as the majority of homeless adults are in Dublin.

Links between homeless and literacy services that would support an integrated strategy:

- Users of literacy and homeless services share similar profiles – they are representative of the White Paper (2000) target groups;
- The adult literacy and homeless services are both working to break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion;
- The coordinating bodies are both promoting and supporting cross-sectoral partnerships at the local level;
- Literacy provision is happening in homeless services and homeless persons are attending the adult literacy service;
- Both sectors operate on a client-centred ethos;
- Both have expressed an interest in addressing the literacy needs of homeless adults in an integrated way; and
- The homeless and adult literacy services have links with a broad range of cross-sectoral (for example, literacy, homeless, disability, health, family, young people and older person's) service providers.

Outcomes of case study – City of Dublin VEC Foundations Project

- The City of Dublin VEC is the largest VEC in the country. They run a very interesting basic skills programme for homeless children, young people and adults called the Foundations Project.
- Set up in 2000 to improve access to education for homeless people in the city, the project team provides a range of literacy programmes for adults and children. They help and support homeless service users to progress in their learning journey within the community and further education. The project aims to reflect the value placed within the homeless sector on:
  - the move-on process;
  - developing independent skills; and
  - re-integration into the community.
- The Foundations Project places an emphasis on the significance of education for persons experiencing homelessness in terms of:
  - building self-confidence;
  - self-esteem; and
  - motivation levels.
- The Project has a number of workers who have previous personal experience of homelessness (peer workers). Their involvement is vital to

the project and has substantially informed its development.

- The Foundations Project team has developed programmes for children in homeless families as well as adults in response to the lack of learning opportunities available to them.
- Outreach is the most effective way to recruit learners who are new to education services. Peer workers visit accommodation bringing information on courses and services available. Particular programmes target different service users. Open days, mailshots to service providers, self-referral and involvement in on-site programmes, such as Computers on Wheels, have encouraged some learners to seek further learning and personal development opportunities. In addition, Bat Club, the Project's Saturday social club is a very effective way of involving reluctant participants. The team keeps contact details for all individuals using their Information and Advice service and then follows up these contacts when new programmes are beginning.
- The most successful features of the Foundations Project have evolved substantially over time and are continually changing. The Project team remains closely linked to services on the ground and therefore rapidly picks up trends, changes and needs within the homeless services. The involvement of peer workers and homeless services users in the Project is particularly important in this regard and is a central tenet of the Project. The Project is also very imaginative and creative in terms of the programmes and services it devises.
- Positive impact of the Foundations Project. Now in its third year in operation, CDVEC Foundations Project provided programmes for up to 433 homeless learners in 2003, with around 212 people attending regularly for a period of time (this means attending for a period of 3 months or more).

Other achievements have included:

1. 72 participants referred to other education programmes (such as in community education centres);
2. 36 participants referred to the project for literacy tuition;
3. 15 participants referred to CDVEC Education Guidance service;
4. 18 participants referred to employment services;

5. 41 participants referred to part-time, full-time or evening courses in CDVEC colleges; and

6. 23 participants referred to support services, such as counselling services and homeless services.

- Features of the Foundations Project that could be improved

  More formalized planning of the Project's services and evolution is required.
  Greater quality assurance through more systematized monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of the Project, including areas such as tracking participants' progress.
  Improve ownership and participation among participants by ensuring that the project is delivered in adult-friendly buildings.
  Long-term sustainability of 'move-on' work needs to be developed: this will require a multi-pronged approach, one feature of which is a 'buddy' system utilizing peer support.

- Project participants said
  "It's helped me to think about stuff away from being homeless, made me feel that I can do a lot more for my family. From learning I feel better in myself".
  "Education has made me feel more like I am and can achieve something more than what I have done in the past. It has given me options and choices".
  "Education gives people with addiction achievable goals and changes their social circle for the better".

Conclusions from the REPRISE project

The evidence from the research suggests that action in the area of adult literacy is essential for their participation in employment, education, and community life as citizens and parents. Adult literacy should be an integral feature of all community-wide initiatives, including those specifically aimed at improving social cohesion and inclusion. Action to improve basic skills levels helps to promote equality and opportunity for all citizens.

It is clear from the results of this project that provision varies significantly, and that the benefits of long-term networking will develop gradually. In some countries, adult literacy provision is at the starting point, so every example of practice is of interest, and may help shape the future in both policy development and practice. While many partners could point to statistical evidence of a link between unemployment and educational level, some found few examples of adult literacy provision to meet these needs.

The main impact of the project noted by the partners has come from observing practice during visits to each other's countries. A number of partners have exchanged ideas and are looking at how to introduce some of the models they have seen. The majority of the partners on the project have expressed an interest in continuing to network with each other. A particular theme for future networking raised by the partners centered on the development of materials and assessment tools in other countries. All partners intend to use the learning gained from this project in their own particular contexts to develop their practice and policy.

Recommendations from the REPRISE Final Report

Recommendation 1
Over and above the activities of the Member states, the European Community should seek to develop a coordinated strategy for improving the basic skills of European citizens. The Community should recognise the impact of a lack of basic skills on social exclusion, for the individual and for society as a whole, as well as the positive impact of action to tackle basic skills training as a means of social inclusion.

To make progress, it is recommended that coordination at the community level be provided, to monitor the progress of Member States in this area, and to support the sharing of best practice. This might take the form of an advisory committee or a broader Network focused on basic skills, reporting progress annually.

Recommendation 2
Whilst a broad European definition of basic skills exists, there continues to be a need for a shared definition of basic skills at the most basic levels. The Commission should encourage a clear and common definition of basic skills at basic levels of communication, literacy and numeracy, that can be understood and shared within the Community and among Member States.

Recommendation 3

Provision for basic skills should be a feature of all EU Programmes, in order to ensure that adults with basic skills needs are not excluded by the provisions and criteria of such Programmes. New EU Programmes should include measures to promote social inclusion and greater equality by:

- requiring bidding organisations to take account of, or report on levels of basic skills needs of their target groups and activities; and
- identifying clear criteria within Programmes that will enable organisations to provide basic skills support.

Recommendation 4

The development of a Community-wide policy should take account of the views of the potential beneficiaries of the programmes developed. Mechanisms should be developed to provide adults lacking basic skills with a clear voice that will inform national and community activity. With this in mind, a further phase of the REPRISE Network would seek to build into the Network representatives of target groups.

Recommendation 5

A continuing schedule of further research, data collection and analysis is needed to support the development of provision among participating countries. This research needs to be qualitative as well as quantitative. In particular, common instruments are needed, that can be shared across Europe, for measuring basic skills at the most basic levels. EU validation should be sought once such tools have been developed and adopted.

Recommendation 6

Trans-national cooperation and networking of basic skills providers and managers at regional and national level continues to be a priority. Particular attention should be given to assisting new accession and candidate countries to identify and meet basic skills needs, based on best practices.

Recommendation 7

Due attention should be paid to the language of official documents and reports, to make them as readily accessible as possible to the 'non-expert'. Training and awareness-raising of civil servants and other officials may be needed to encourage maximum inclusion for all.

Opportunities and issues from REPRISE

It is clear from the experience and research of REPRISE that there is potential in integrating literacy and social inclusion work, as it deepens the impact and effectiveness of initiatives, ultimately benefiting the target individuals. The multi-faceted nature of adult literacy and its contribution to enabling people to live full lives are most evident when examined through a social inclusion lens. Indeed, it highlights the importance of sharing practice and lessons between practitioners in adult literacy and those working in social inclusion areas. Providing spaces for different practitioners to meet also opens the way for the development of new and innovative approaches in these areas, as well as identifying areas for further research and evaluation.

Way forward

It is critical that we continue to build and distribute relevant learning opportunities for all people across society, with a particular focus on supporting the learning capacity of those most at risk, in ways that are appropriate to them. In order to achieve this, decision-makers must rise to the challenge to create public policy and subsequently deliver investment required to achieve wider engagement for cohesive socio-economic development and avert new risks of exclusion in the future.

The recent economic boom in Ireland has enabled increased investment in adult literacy and social inclusion measures. This rising tide has lifted some boats but not as many as is required or is feasible if all were making a concerted effort. Nothing less will do for the future.

1. The term adult literacy is most commonly used in Ireland, particularly in policy. There is concern however that adult literacy is often interpreted too narrowly and excludes numeracy. Some practitioners use the term adult basic education to overcome this difficulty and not to denote something different from adult literacy.

2. Further education is defined as "systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training" (DES, 2000, p. 12).

3. See www.eurobasicskills.org

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Young adults, gender and literacy: A UK perspective

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Introduction

The Young Adults Learning Partnership (YALP) is a joint initiative of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education(NIACE) and the National Youth Agency, based in England. YALP researches and develops effective approaches to learning and personal development for young adults aged 16 to 25 on the margins of education, training and employment, with the purpose of fostering their capability as young workers, parents and citizens.

YALP's previous work has included research and development projects exploring effective practices in working with young parents, young adults with mental health difficulties and young adults not in employment, education or training. YALP has also carried out extensive consultation with young adults[1] .

This paper will explore some of the themes in current debates regarding young adults and literacy, with a specific focus on gender. The discussion will be situated within the context of recent research undertaken by YALP, on behalf of the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC). This research project, "Success factors in informal learning: Young adults' experiences of literacy, language and numeracy", was completed in March 2005 and focused on the contribution of informal and non-formal education and learning to literacy, language and numeracy provision for socially-excluded young adults .

This paper will also seek to provide a picture of the education and training landscape for young adults in the UK. Much of the data cited relates to England, and whilst other home countries do not always take the same approach to the issues, a similar situation can be inferred. The paper will make brief mention of policy interventions from the English government, and paint a picture of some of the young adults who fall into the cohort we are concerned with. Crucially, the paper will examine 'the gender question' as it stands in England today, and explore some potential solutions raised in the NRDC research project.

Young adults - where are we now?

In England today, we are currently seeing a great divide between those learners who are called 'achievers' and those who are labelled 'non-achievers'. There are more young people achieving well at school than ever (as measured by the attainment of qualifications), but simultaneously more young people are leaving school at the end of compulsory education (and in many cases, before this time) with no qualifications, meaning that these two polarised groups of young adults are the largest groups. Consequently, a larger number of young people than ever before are making a smooth transition to adulthood, with an unbroken route through education and training, and on into employment and independence. However, there are also large numbers of young people whose paths to adulthood are fractured and broken, meaning a delayed entry to adulthood, employment and autonomy.

At present, one in four 16 to 18 year olds drop out of education, and England has the fourth highest dropout rate for education for any country in the OECD[2]. This dropout rate does not seem to be decreasing, despite numerous initiatives to tackle it, and remains a cause of ongoing concern within government, and the learning and skills sector. Latest figures show that there are approximately 750,000 young adults aged between 16 and 24 not in employment, education and training – around 13 percent of the total cohort[3]. Every year, 5.4 percent of young adults leave school with no qualifications, and 40 percent of this cohort goes on to be not in employment, education and training[4]. Certain groups, including young adults leaving care and young mothers, are disproportionately represented both among young adults leaving school without qualifications, and those not in employment, education or training. Further, 52 percent of young adults leave compulsory schooling each year without an exam pass in either maths or English[5]. According to the most recent Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Skills for Life National Needs and Impact Survey (2003), 57 percent of young adults are working below level one in literacy, and 77 percent are working below this level in numeracy. Level one qualifications recognise basic knowledge and skills, and are equivalent to the level that would be expected of an 11 year old.

The following graph demonstrates the distribution of skill levels across the age groups[6]. This graph focuses on those who have not reached level 2. This is the level that is expected of 16 year olds when they leave compulsory education, and referred to as 'the platform of skills for employability'[7].
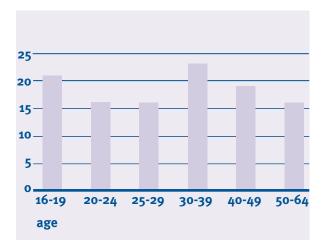
Table 7: Percentage of population working at below level 2 by age

From this graph, it is possible to see that over a fifth of 16 to 19 year olds are leaving compulsory education with lower level skills than nearly every other age group. Figures like these are causing great concern, not only to employers, but also to universities, particularly in relation to the productivity of the British economy in comparison to other countries in the EU and across the world.

Policy interventions

This widespread concern led to a variety of policy interventions, particularly since New Labour's first term of office in 1997. We have seen a continued expansion of learning programmes in colleges of further education, including developing vocational provision for young adults aged 14 to 16. It was hoped that a wider range of learning opportunities, combined with the opportunity to receive a training allowance, would encourage more young adults to remain in education post 16. However, further education provision is not traditionally the preferred option for socially excluded young adults. The government has also set high targets for the recruitment and retention of young adults on to the apprenticeship programme, including 22 percent of

young adults who should be starting an apprenticeship by the age of 22. Apprentices are employed for up to three years in sectors such as construction or tourism, and are released by their employer to study towards vocational qualifications. However, the pay received by apprentices is lower than that which can be earned in employment with no training attached, and consequently, they can be viewed as an unattractive option. Currently, only 50 percent of young adults complete their apprenticeship[8].

The year 2003 saw the national rollout of a new scheme, Entry2Employment, for all young adults aged 16 to 19 (may be extended to 25 in some cases), in recognition of the number of young adults not yet ready to enter employment or apprenticeships, and unlikely to remain in formal education or training. Entry2Employment provision is contracted out to private training providers, further education colleges and local authority youth services. Young adult learners are eligible to receive an allowance for retention and achievement. There have been over 60,000 starts on Entry2Employment programmes to date. Entry2Employment is being hailed as a success with consistently over 30 percent of young adult learners moving on to 'positive destinations' – employment, further education or employment with training (such as an Apprenticeship)[9].

Introduced nationwide in September 2004, Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was billed as an 'earn as you learn' allowance which would replace the 'culture of dropping out' with a 'culture of getting on'[10]. EMA is a mean tested payment made directly to the young adult, designed to encourage them to remain in education and/or training beyond the age of 16. Young adults receive a weekly payment of up to £30 (43 euros) dependent upon full attendance at learning programmes, and are able to earn bonuses for completion of courses and assessments. The national rollout of EMA has resulted in a small, but significant (approximately 5 percentage points), improvement in staying-on rates in post-compulsory education[11].

Underpinning all of the above initiatives is Connexions, a universal information, advice and guidance service for all young people aged between 13 and 19 (it may be extended to age 25 in some cases). The service is also targeted at the 'priority one' group__ young adults who are most at risk of social exclusion, including young parents, and young adults

who are homeless or unemployed. Unemployed young adults aged between 18 and 24 are referred to the New Deal for Young People, an intensive intervention programme designed to help them move into employment.

These policy interventions, and others, have had mixed success. Despite this, the number of young adults not in employment, education and training remains, representing a cohort of young adults untouched by such policy initiatives.

Characteristics of young adults

The young adult cohort represents a wide age range, and as such, a wide range of aims, aspirations and learning needs. In practice, learning programmes and initiatives for young adults tend to focus on the 16 to 19 age group, with young adults over 19 being amalgamated into the wider post 16 'adult' age group. Although it is important to acknowledge that young adults have very different experiences, needs and goals at different ages, this 'amalgamation' can mean that the specific needs of young adults aged 19 to 25 are overlooked in the focus on the 16 to 19 age group.

The aims and aspirations of young adults are very much like those of many others in society: 'nice job, nice house, nice car...'[12]. Significantly, most young adults are aiming for markers of adult status__ independence, autonomy, a family and a steady income. Research has shown that young adults who drop out of education, employment and training do not do so due to low aspirations, but that these young adults often do not know how to achieve their goals[13]. It is commonly believed that socially excluded young adults lead 'chaotic lives', and that this can make it more challenging to engage with and motivate them in the long term. However, it may be that their lives are not chaotic, but that competing demands mean that young adults' lives are not structured in a conventional way. Most socially excluded young adults do not experience indicators of exclusion in isolation: young adults involved with the criminal justice system are also likely to experience poor mental health, traumatic relationships, unstable housing and financial hardship. These experiences are often the determinant of the structure of learning pro-

grammes, and young adults are often unable to fully engage in learning with these issues ongoing.

Many young adults have strong (and often fixed) perceptions of education, based on their experiences at school. School, and by association, any type of formal education, are perceived to be 'difficult, boring or irrelevant', and subsequent education and training opportunities available to young adults tend to be judged based on their similarity to school/formal education.

The gender question in the UK

How does one situate issues of gender within the wider picture presented. Currently, and for some years, we have seen a gap between the achievement of girls and boys (and young women and young men) with girls and young women achieving higher than boys and young men. Throughout the course of their compulsory schooling, girls are better than boys at reading, and substantially better at writing[14]. Young women also outperform young men in Key Skills, which include areas such as communication skills, application of number and 'improving own learning and performance'. Young women are much more likely to remain in education post 16; of the young men that do remain in education initially, many drop out shortly after[15]. Young men are also much more likely to talk about wanting to leave school at 16; the main reasons cited are boredom and difficulties with literacy, language and numeracy[16]. Research conducted in 2004[17] showed that only two percent of young people aged 12 to 16 thought that boys work harder, do better and care more at school than girls, which suggests that this is a deeply rooted cultural belief. This opinion is only strengthened as young people begin to sit exams, when 16-19 year olds are even more likely to believe that girls are the higher-achievers. Young men in their teens are four times more likely to be excluded from school, and young men are responsible for 80 percent of crimes committed by under 21[18].

The following graph demonstrates the differences in achievement patterns at national targets for young men and women in education up to the age of 18[19].

Table 8: Achievements at national targets by age and gender

90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

English at age 11 | Math at age 11 | English at age 14 | Math at age 14 | Level 2 at age 16 | Level 3 at age 18

■ Female
● Male

Consequently, more young men than young women leave compulsory schooling each year with no qualifications. This is the biggest indication of later unemployment, and is closely linked with experiences of social exclusion[20]. Young men are much more likely to go into work at the age of 16, but this is often low pay and short-term, with no training attached. It seems that employment is prioritised over education. Research shows that young men value the traditional male role, but with no sense that to achieve it may no longer be possible[21].

The decline in the manufacturing sector has meant the loss of many unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, traditionally the destination of many young men, especially those with poor literacy and numeracy skills. This type of employment offers few opportunities for training.

It is important to note that these experiences are compounded for young African Caribbean men. Academic achievement for young men from every other ethnic background has risen in recent decades, apart from young African Caribbean men, whose situation has worsened. It has been argued that social class and ethnicity, interacting with gender, are the most

significant factors in 'underachievement'. The most significant educational gap is between learners from different social and cultural backgrounds, and in some measures, differences in attainment between girls and boys are actually smaller than the difference between particular groups of girls and boys[22].

What does this mean for young women?

The situation outlined may lead us to believe that young women are 'flying high'. However, this is not the case. Currently, there are almost as many young women not in employment, education and training as young men. The UK also has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe. Young women's' non-involvement in education, training and employment is often related to their over-representation in caring duties; young women are disproportionately likely to be involved in caring for family members, despite their involvement in learning activities. Young mothers can find it hard to locate and access appropriate learning opportunities with supporting childcare to enable them to continue in education and training[23] . And as young women progress into employment, they are rewarded less for their involvement in learning. The UK still has a significant pay gap, women are offered less training by their employer, and occupy posts with less access to ICT[24].

The overall picture for young men

The UK has large numbers of young men not in employment, education or training. The debate continues as to whether these young men are not being reached by provision and services, or whether they are choosing not to participate.

It is important to situate these issues within wider conceptualisations of masculinity. Attitudes to education are formed at an early age, and there is strong research evidence that boys perceive learning, and in particular school, to be irrelevant, boring and, crucially, unrelated to their future goals. School subjects are perceived to hold no relevance to the jobs that young men hope for. The labour market situation for young men has changed considerably in recent decades, and it is suggested that young men's attitudes have not adapted alongside. Peer group pressure is also an important factor, and it is claimed by a number of researchers that an 'anti-

education' and 'anti-intellectual culture' is emerging amongst boys and young men[25]. Certainly, dominant perceptions of masculinity do not tend to encompass learning, studiousness or academic success. Recent research with young men in England found that 'failure to do school work' was equated with demonstrations of masculinity[26]. 'Mental work', particularly reading and writing, is closely associated with femininity, and consequently, has little relevance to the development of identity for many young men.

Research from the UK in the 1970s found that a working class, masculine ideal of manual labour provided young men with a cultural belief that compensated for and contributed to educational failure. Schools and existing curricula were said to present a middle-class version of masculinity, and that working class young men institutionally resisted this curriculum, developing their identities but contributing to educational dropout[27]. Social exclusion and academic rejection can be seen to entice failed young men into a compensatory culture of 'laddism'[28].

It is important to note that none of the above theories denotes any innate lack of ability.

Towards a solution...?

It is clear that literacy (both definitions of 'functional literacy' and wider notions encompassing emotional literacy, for example) plays a key role in young men's integration into society and the labour force, supporting smooth transitions to adulthood.

Research has suggested a variety of ways in which young men may be attracted back into learning. Financial incentives (currently the preferred policy method) are important, but this is not the whole story. It is critical to listen to young men, and take time to build mutually respecting relationships. The development of identity is of central importance to young men, and it is important to support their identity as young adults, and as individuals. Literacy learning can support young men in their roles as citizens, workers, fathers...

Recent research[29] highlights young men's preference for kinaesthetic styles of learning, and in particular, work-related learning. Young men are much more able to see the relevance of literacy learning when it is contextualised, or embedded, in a topic of interest. It takes time and skill to identify these interests, but the process of learning from young men is valuable, and builds important relationships.

Lessons from The Young Adults Learning Partnership have taught us the centrality of an informal approach; young men are resistant to formal education, and associate formal education environments and curricula with childhood and a lack of autonomy. Involving young men in the development of provision, and ensuring that they have some ownership of their surroundings and learning programmes are 'critical success factors' in supporting them to achieve their goals and potential.

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Ensuring Quality In Literacy: Populations, Practices, Pedagogy and Professionalism

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This paper focuses on how to raise quality in adult literacy and numeracy: people, practices and policies beyond compulsory schooling. A critical starting point for looking at how to improve quality is to ensure that actions for positive change are based on sound research-based knowledge. It is significant that the current worldwide interest in improving literacy and numeracy and language skills is based on international research. In the UK, the English 'Skills for Life' strategy and the strategies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are a direct response to poor performance in the OECD's International Adult Literacy Survey (1998). (See Appendix 1 for a diagram of the four UK literacy strategies, their characteristics, aims and achievements). International surveys have become the currency of policy action, and if used properly, research can benefit organisations, teachers and learners.

A second key issue in a changing and shrinking world is to ensure that basic skills strategies are in tune across countries. As globalisation proceeds and people increasingly work in or for organisations based in different countries and continents, their skill and knowledge needs become higher and often more similar. International policy initiatives relating basic skills to economic health and social well-being are increasing. The EU's Lisbon goals envision Europe 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. Target 2015 and the Millennium Development Goals ask that every child in every country should have access to primary education by 2015 – just 10 years ahead. And that by 2005, girls everywhere should have the same opportunities as boys. This is a hard task when nearly one in five people in the world cannot read or write, and the vast majority of those are in developing countries and are female. Despite vast inequality, there is shared recognition that we are one community in Europe, and part of one world, mutually dependent and sharing, universally uncertain about the future.

This is paradoxical. On the one hand, business and industry are increasingly multi-national and operations cross national borders routinely; movements of people are also increasing – to find work, or because of the displacement of people resulting from war and social injustice. On the other hand, nation states are more fiercely competitive as economic units and in the educational standards they see as essential to their own success. Our partners are also our competitors. Our lifestyles also still rest on massive inequality, not least in access to basic literacy and numeracy and the technologies of communication.

The nature and uses of literacy themselves are undergoing transformation. Everywhere in the world, higher levels of skill are required for work and managing daily life, and new technologies are increasingly the media through which literacy, numeracy and communication are happening. Mathematics is also changing. Some areas, e.g. measurement, are becoming more invisible, while the need for maths or numeracy-based decision-making in many areas of daily life is becoming more visible and more complex. The pools of information and knowledge from which people need to draw get deeper and wider. Change is endemic and people's ability to live with and manage major external changes, which are not of their choosing, brings emotional challenges as well as intellectual ones.

Despite all these changes, the need for high quality literacy, language and numeracy learning stays a constant; there is no escaping the need for the basic skills of reading, writing and maths if we are to achieve a more just and a more sustainable world. Our definitions, policies, funding and programmes for literacy and numeracy, nationally and globally, need to reflect the enduring fact that the challenges and demands of the knowledge economy and information society only make it more important that everyone can read, write and do maths to a level which enables them to participate. If we do not stick to this basic human need and right, we will disenfranchise those with the greatest needs.

For these reasons, developing quality in adult literacy and numeracy is a many-faceted challenge. I suggest that there are a number of critical issues

which need to be addressed if we are to develop good teaching and learning opportunities for all adults, wherever they are. Quality means offering opportunities for adults to learn those skills and that knowledge which they have been denied, or failed to learn in the initial compulsory phase of education – if they had access to schooling. Quality should not be divorced from equality, since we start from a position of inequality across countries and between social and ethnic groups within countries. In developing countries, education is often short and sporadic, and the literacy challenges, especially for women, are massive, compared to those facing the developed world. However, relative inequality has marred over 100 years of compulsory education in industrial nations. In the UK, people are far more likely to have problems with literacy and numeracy if they are from lower social groups, live in poverty, are older, or come from some minority ethnic groups[1]. Some issues have changed hardly at all.

Equality

There are many issues to address to reduce inequality in adult learning. As I have mentioned, there is unequal access to good adult learning provision in the UK and across the world, the impact of low skills is unequally distributed, and those with the greatest levels of disadvantage are least likely to participate. Research from Adult Learners' Lives, a National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) project being carried out by the University of Lancaster, suggests that adults feel a strong sense of exclusion – they perceive concepts of normality which do not include them. They are excluded in a physical sense as well. Adults living in rural communities would like their learning to be local, by which they mean in a nearby village. The funding systems mean that learning is clustered across a region in which transport is sparse and infrequent and childcare is inadequate or not available. ESOL provision is concentrated in urban areas and yet more and more immigrants and refugees live in rural areas as a result of policy decisions or just because that is where the work is. However, in these areas cultural diversity is relatively new and unsupported in the local infrastructure[2].

It would appear from research that low levels of numeracy have a particularly strong impact and that social class is a key determinant of success. In the UK, adults living in households in social class 1 were roughly four times as likely as those in social class V to reach Level 2 or above in the literacy test, 67 percent compared to 16 percent[3]. The courses provided are often held at times and places to suit the organisation rather than the learner, and the curriculum and teaching styles do not necessarily follow learners' needs, but rather ask them to conform to the system, or 'learning infrastructure' on offer. It is a supply-side model. We need to rethink how we provide learning, and who should benefit most from funding: those in greatest need or those who have already succeeded or can easily reach the point of take-off for a successful future life. At present, we still provide better for the latter.

Motivation and persistence

Adult learners have multiple reasons for taking up learning, both formal and informal. These range from survival to the transformation of the life of a person, their family or community. Research shows that, in the US, a learner would need approximately 100 hours for a lift in level within the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). One hundred hours is a long time if you are a part-time learner. How does a learner find this time? In the UK system, colleges tend to be open on weekdays only. For a full-time worker or parent, free time all too often coincides with times when learning centres are closed. Other research from the National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) in the US suggests that adults who leave school with low or no qualifications do engage in self-study[4]. But that there is little to support them, such as flexible offers, ICT packages, and other means by which adults can stop and start attendance at college without ceasing to learn[5].

Another key finding from research on adult numeracy at NRDC is that adult numeracy maths programmes do not necessarily have to be purely functional or serve day-to-day needs. Many learners with low skill levels are managing their lives and their numeracy-related tasks skilfully enough. The work of Diana Coben, Jon Swain and Alison Tomlin at NRDC finds that learners' aims and desires are more complex. We will be publishing reports from two projects in 2005. The research is showing that there is a consciousness among adult learners of maths as an important and valued subject and one which is a 'gateway' to other learning and career development. People do not want to be defeated for a second time

by a challenging subject. This does not mean that maths learning should not be 'real' or 'relevant' to people: what makes the maths real is the quality of a person's engagement with a problem, rather than its immediate application to everyday life. Algebra may be more real than an artificial exercise, like measuring (as opposed to estimating) a room for wallpaper. For people in employment, relevant learning offered in the workplace seems to be right for many previously reluctant, non-traditional learners, the majority of whom are men. Once they have overcome barriers to learning, internal and external, they appear to persist, and are happy with their programmes[6].

Effective subject teaching.
In the classroom or other learning environment, quality is about the effectiveness of subject-specific teaching strategies and materials which encourage learning and achievement. NRDC is conducting five three-year studies (one each on reading; writing; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); numeracy; and ICT, carried out between 2003-06). These studies aim to correlate teaching strategies with learners' progress. We have conducted pre- and post assessments of skill levels with hundreds of learners: in colleges, adult learning centres, prisons, the army, at work, in family literacy programmes and other contexts. Early messages from work-in-progress on the 'Five Effective Practice Studies' seem to indicate that we do have to improve our programmes if they are to meet learners' needs effectively. The grid below shows some tentative findings from work-in-progress.

We will continue to report from these projects and we will be developing guidance jointly with practitioners to help improve practice by blending messages from research with knowledge drawn from teachers' experience and expertise.

Five Effective Practice Studies: Early messages from correlational studies using observations + pre- and post assessments:

1.	**Reading:**	• Teaching strategies do not sufficiently address individual learners' identified reading difficulties • Insufficient time is spent on reading activity in class sessions • There is significantly more individual than group work
2.	**Writing:**	• Learners value mastery of spelling • Teachers value self-expression more • The focus is on word-level skills
3.	**ESOL:**	• Emphasis on individual teaching and learning may not help adult ESOL learners – yet, "Talk is work in the ESOL classroom" • Learners need more social time and space to practise language
4.	**Numeracy:**	• Learners whose first language was not English made significantly more progress than people whose first language is English
5.	**ICT**	• Teaching should address the changing nature of literacy in the digital age + new genres of writing • ICT is not yet well integrated into teaching

Learning and assessment

Assessment has traditionally been an underdeveloped area of adult literacy and numeracy. Developments there have been mainly focused on externally-marked summative assessment. In the UK, a national test has been developed over the last few years, which uses multiple-choice items to test literacy and numeracy under timed exam conditions__ except at 'entry' levels, where learners can assemble a 'portfolio' of their work for assessment. This, however, has lower currency and does not count towards the national target for improving skills. There is evidence that many learners enjoy the test and feel a sense of recognition from achieving a qualification. However, teachers have been more resistant and would prefer efforts to be spent on formative and teacher-moderated assessment. Teachers' exclusion from assessment processes has become a crisis of trust and morale in the teaching profession.

Another key issue is whether assessment raises achievement and therefore quality, or simply measures it. The UK assessment regime is also relatively narrow, not only because of its reactive, multiple-choice method, but because it does not measure self-generated work__ e.g. writing, or numbers created in a math problem-solving exercise. The test is designed as the core evidence on the meeting of the national target for literacy improvement (for targets, see Appendix 1). It excludes the lower level learners. The test needs to become one of an array of assessment methods if all learners' needs are to be met. And assessment is now the focus of more expansive policy development: on-line e-assessment is proving popular; and ways the test can be used formatively are being actively explored, along with other assessment approaches, including how to assess writing skills.

But summative assessment is only part of the picture. Attention is shifting to formative assessment. The multiple activities and interactions between teachers and learners, and between learners as peers, are the subject of new research, drawing on the internationally respected work of Paul Black and Dylan William. Their 'Inside the Black Box' changed thinking about formative assessment in the school sector, led to an international OECD study of formative assessment in adult basic skills[7]. In addition, a major study of effective formative assessment

practice in literacy and numeracy for 14-19 year olds and adults is being undertaken by NRDC and a range of partners including the University of Exeter.

Another critical aspect of effective learning is enabling time and space for learners' mutual support and discussion as well as shared social time. We know that learners value these aspects of participation in learning. Teachers' and, more widely, educational institutions' full understanding of, and attention to, the social aspects of learning, including the political, institutional and cultural contexts in which learning takes place are important elements of a person's learning experience. This includes the social life in classrooms, as well as 'bringing the outside world into the classroom'. A major US study[8] showed that 'bringing the outside in' was the most important factor in determining the extent of a learner's progress.

Integrating or embedding literacy in learners' vocational and personal learning

Quality is teaching and learning which meets learners' own needs, purposes and their preferred styles of learning. It is often said that people failed by the initial education system are unlikely to want to return to 'school' and revisit that failure. However, if they do aim to learn work-related skills and gain qualifications, or learn a subject or skill for their personal or family development, they are more likely to drop out or fail if their numeracy and literacy are poor. So teaching literacy and numeracy as part of other programmes of learning is one way to provide learning which meets learners' motivation and help them to enjoy and persist with learning. In the UK, Skills for Life is now fully focused on what is called 'embedded learning'. This appears from research at NRDC to be particularly true of the young, disaffected adults and offenders, who want practical, informal, workshop-based learning and are prepared to address their basic skills needs as part of their real goals. Research is underway at NRDC on how to make this way of teaching and learning literacy and numeracy work best[9]. We have found that 'embedded' programmes are successful when vocational or recreational teachers work closely with literacy and numeracy teachers as one team. Taking plenty of time to plan jointly and learn from each other is also critical for the two different types of teachers involved. In this approach, it is also important to recognise that the specialist teacher, e.g. the vo-

cational teacher of engineering, or the recreational sports teacher will have natural legitimacy and authority in the process, particularly in the eyes of the learner. The basic skills teacher needs to accept and work creatively with specialists.

Developing high quality teacher education and professional development

Teachers are the key to raising quality in literacy and numeracy. They need to be qualified to a high standard, to have strong subject knowledge and the ability to develop appropriate teaching strategies, to facilitate strong classroom relationships and broker the right pastoral support for learners. Learners may have other issues to resolve to enable them to stay in learning. Teachers and other basic skills practitioners, certainly in the UK, need a stronger professional identity than they have had in the past. We also need to help teachers and others to develop new concepts and practices: to have access to the kinds of thinking and inquiry that create 'reflective practice'. How? NRDC's way is to engage practitioners fully in our research and development programmes. They are the most important users of research.

At NRDC, all projects which do field research or develop new models for learning, and evaluate new products pay colleges and adult learning centres to release teachers to be 'practitioner-researchers'. Some projects are led by practitioners and supported by researchers, rather than the other way round. We will shortly publish reports on how effective our efforts have been. Professor Mary Hamilton at Lancaster University, and Helen Casey at the Institute of Education have led different approaches to engaging practitioners in research and development. But we firmly believe that only by engaging practitioners in research, from identifying the research need, to designing the project, through fieldwork and data analysis, to communicating the findings to their peers, will we be able to ensure that research makes a difference to teaching and learning.

We have four models for engaging teachers in research. Through the apprenticeship model, teachers are trained in research methods and become members of a team of researchers, usually led by one of the NRDC universities. The second model is about enabling practitioners to conduct research or development projects as part of their profes-

sional development – including higher degrees and diploma courses. The third model is the creation of a programme of 'practitioner-led' research projects, with stand-alone funding. Groups of practitioners bid competitively for project funding on a theme chosen by a consultative national group of practitioners. Projects are supported by an experienced researcher to ensure reliability and validity of findings. Finally, the fourth model is a 'whole organisation' model in which a college or other provider of literacy or numeracy learning engages a research fellow or development professional to conduct work on a theme identified as essential to the success of the organisation.

At NRDC, we have trained and worked with hundreds of practitioners in our projects. We have developed networks of teachers and teacher-researchers, created practitioner forums, a website and on-line professional development materials and a research-based magazine focused on practice: Reflect. We have made a start. No more than that. But underpinning all our work is the belief that everyone has a right to learn to read, write and do the maths they want and need to do – not just to survive in the modern world, but to flourish in it. We believe that a buoyant, confident, knowledgeable and reflective teaching profession is the key to transforming basic skills learning for adults and helping people to realise their ambitions and transform their lives.

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Assessing Low Levels of Literacy: the Case of France
Jean-Pierre Jeantheau

General Background[1]

The European community, the OECD, UNESCO and most countries are currently trying to define the base of competencies required to guarantee to each individual conditions that are favourable to his or her personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social and cultural integration, as well as his or her professional integration.

The development of these competencies is intimately linked to the mobilization of aptitudes such as motivation, commitment, self-confidence, openness to others and autonomy. These essential pillars define one's identity, well-being and capacity to act. These aptitudes develop over time in professional, social and daily activities and are enriched in particular through cultural activities that foster expression, critical judgement, dialogue and exchange.

In addition to the traditional core, which includes language skills (reading, writing and oral communication) as well as numeracy and cognitive skills (logical reasoning, spatial and temporal orientation, the capacity to learn, etc.), we are seeing other basic competencies whose importance is growing as society changes. Among these, we can mention "competencies in information technologies, foreign languages, technological culture, the spirit of enterprise and social aptitudes". The capacities to communicate, to cooperate and to resolve problems are ubiquitous in all of the reflections taking place today.

Our society is deeply affected by the evolution of its traditional foundations through the shock of globalization, the rapid development of digital technologies and the increasing importance of the knowledge economy in our daily and professional life.

In this context, citizens are facing major changes in the ways of accessing knowledge and the emergence of a new learning culture: through lifelong learning projects based not only on activities in teaching and training establishments or in distance learning (formal training), but also through all the opportunities presented in daily life, work, places of social cooperation and cultural life (informal training). For this, each individual must be able to rely on a truly dynamic environment that can and must become a learning catalyser. Today, we talk about "learning organizations, learning companies, learning territories, etc.".

All citizens are facing these changes but people who are confronted by illiteracy must also face the challenge of accessing basic skills and mastering core communicative competencies required by their environment.

This is why the IVQ survey, even though it assesses all levels of literacy, focuses on lower literacy levels.

Defining what we are assessing

Assessing literacy, as well fighting illiteracy, requires clarifying the words used to discuss it. One must take into account a series of words that are often very close in meaning and all involve the same subject: the importance of the ability to read and write in daily life, and more generally, the importance of the basic skills. These words refer to an essential base that guarantees each citizen access to autonomy and encourages their active participation in their society. All refer either explicitly or implicitly to the risk of exclusion if this base is not acquired.

The terms like literacy, illiteracy, basic skills or key competencies, are heavy with meaning. They carry with them not only the history and culture of each country, but also the ideas of the stakeholders and their vision of present and future society. It is often the context or the choice of communication that determines their usage, more than the content itself.

By adopting the word "*illettrisme*" (illiteracy), France has decided to focus on the situation of native French speakers having attended school in French who have not acquired sufficient mastery of written communication. This is in contrast to "*analphabétisme*" which pertains to people who have never learned any written code (most of them are foreign people or people of foreign origin). While in both cases the ability to read and write in the French language is indeed absent or insufficient, the origins of the problem, people's background and the ways to help them all differ. People who learn "French as

foreign language" generally are not "analphabètes" and form another specific group within the French classification of people with basic skills needs in the French language.

This approach is more restrictive than the UNESCO definition (1978): "A person is functionally literate if he is able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for the effective functioning of his group and community and also to enable him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development"

This last definition and the level of requirement it expresses come close today to the notion of a basic skills "base" that every citizen must possess.

As evidence of the unstable definition of literacy, the last position paper for UNESCO's education sector is entitled "Literacy - A Plural Notion". It stated that "literacy is plural, i.e. the ways to acquire and use literacy are multiple in society, the community and one's own life. Individuals acquire, learn and use literacy with different aims and in different circumstances that are determined by history, culture, religion, language and the socio-economic conditions in which they live."

The debate about "literacy" continues...

French definition of illiteracy

In France, in spite of the growing use of the term "*littéracie*" (or "*littératie*") there is still no official word to refer to the skills allowing one to access the written word with enough proficiency to perform the tasks of daily life. The same is true when we wish to speak of the skills necessary for an autonomous, enriching and constructive life in any modern society.

The ANLCI definition of illiteracy was drafted with the active participation of over one hundred institutions representing national agencies, local authorities, companies, civil society and the scientific community, and it draws from their points of view and experience in order to establish a common definition useful to all.

The ANLCI 2003 definition of illiteracy is:

"The term illiteracy describes the situation of people over 16 years old who, although they have attended school, cannot read and understand a text related to situations in their daily life, and/or are unable to write in order to communicate simple information.

For certain people, these reading and writing difficulties are sometimes combined, to different degrees, with an insufficient mastery of other basic skills such as oral communication, logical reasoning, comprehension and use of numbers and operations, spatial and temporal orientation, etc.

In spite of these deficiencies, people facing illiteracy have acquired experience, a culture and a skills capital that are based very little or not at all on the ability to read and write. Thus some of them have been able to integrate into social and professional life, but the balance is fragile and the risk of marginalization constant. Others find themselves in situations of exclusion where illiteracy is combined with other factors."

The ANLCI module, in IVQ Survey, only takes into account the first paragraph of this definition. The notion of daily life is linked to the French context, which could be regarded as not very different from European contexts or OECD countries' contexts.

Assessing illiteracy

To build and implement a public policy, one must have elements for diagnosis and evaluation. Illiteracy, a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, can only be appreciated by linking qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The qualitative approach is generally based on the fabric of training organisations, associations and literacy resource centres. These stakeholders can evaluate the daily evolutions of illiteracy. The companies investing in the development of their employees' basic skills also have information and experience that can be useful to define the issues more clearly. The work carried out by scientific teams in varied fields of investigation also allows us to better understand the multiple facets of the phenomenon and the processes of the fight against illiteracy.

National studies

The national studies are generally framed to assess the national educational goals or to provide information on the competencies of the national population. By construction, the national study is closer to the specific context of the country, even if the national survey does not take into account regional contexts.

Because of this particular conception, it is not fair to propose, even after translation, the same survey to interviewees from another country. The comparability of those surveys is small, even if translated. There are many examples of bilateral surveys using half of the items proposed by one country and half of the items proposed by the other country. All proposed items submitted by one country have to be accepted by the other (Alison Wolf, JP Jeantheau[2]).

International comparative studies

Essentially, the survey submits to interviewees of a representative sample items, which are presumed to be representative of the tasks the designers of the survey wish to assess. In the case of IALS, the assessment goal was mainly Literacy. A statistical programme transforms the collected answers into global scores, which are presented as representative of the individuals' competencies. The same process is implemented in each participant country and the average scores of the countries are compared. All the comparisons between individuals, between items, between countries are possible because the scores are on a common mathematically built ladder (Rasch theory, Item Response Theory).

Those surveys can provide information on the development of educational systems if the national stakeholders consider that the educational goals are similar in all the participant countries. The goal of the educational stakeholders in each country will be to improve their score, from one survey to the next, especially in comparison with the other participant countries. To achieve this goal, the easier way is to train the students following the unformulated curriculum underlying the construction of tests. The movement to a world standardisation of the curricula, independently of local contexts, is engaged.

In terms of quantitative approaches, there are different perspectives on doing literacy surveys:

A different way to think about assessment: International Framework for Assessment Surveys

In the field of literacy, especially in comparison with low levels of literacy, the first challenge a survey has to face is the credibility of the information that it will provide. The national reference is clearly better than the international one, because national studies provide more information on the real level of proficiency of the population than international surveys even if it cannot provide useful international comparisons. However, each adult training system or educational system has to be able to benefit from the good practices and the good organisations settled in other countries. One way to benefit from foreign experiences is to compare the efficiency of those experiences with their own. This comparison will be more realistic if it is based on an assessment survey. The way to combine national and international advantages should be creating an international framework for the construction of national surveys. The recommendations have to be as precise as possible, but have to allow national teams to submit items relevant to their national context. One idea should be to propose items, which are based on real tasks, using real national materials. The success of the task will depend not only on the level of competence of the individuals who fill the task but also on the quality of real materials they have at their disposal. International comparisons on similar tasks chosen by the participants could provide information both on the population's skills and the conception of written materials designed in each country.

The case of France: the IVQ survey

To count and characterise people in situations of illiteracy, we can now use, in France, two studies:

- The assessment carried out among 17-year olds during the JAPD (Registration day for defence preparation). JAPD provides stakeholders with periodical data, which would allow understanding of the evolution of the phenomenon among French youth. (Foreigners living in France, even if they are born in France, do not attend JAPD).

 - The IVQ survey (Information and Everyday Life) carried out by the INSEE (National Institute of Economical and Statistical Information), in association with the main ministry statistics offices and public research institutes.

The following discussion focuses on the IVQ survey, with particular emphasis on the ANLCI module.

Historical Background of the IVQ Survey

In France, in the 1980s, surveys were conducted, but only on a declarative basis. In 1994, France took part initially in IALS international survey, but withdrew before its results were officially announced. The reason for this withdrawal was the finding that around 40 percent of the adult population of working age performed at level one, IALS lowest level. Such departure generated numerous comments, which we would rather not stir up, as well as reports criticizing the methods used by IALS.

Such critical comments prompted the main Statistics and State Departments involved in the educational process or the prevention of illiteracy to cooperate so as to plan and conduct a survey taking into account all the criticisms that had been levelled at IALS. Since then, in 1998, a group of experts bringing together (among others) the Statistics departments of the Ministry of Education and the Labour Ministry have worked under the aegis of INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economical Surveys) at the elaboration of a new survey known as the IVQ ("Information Vie Quotidienne") Information in Everyday Life[3].

In 2000, at the request of INSEE, the ANLCI joined the working group, with a view to finance and elaborate an evaluation test unit designed for people with reading problems. At the request of the ANLCI and with its collaboration, the Psychology Lab (PsyEF) of the Lyon 2 University took over the theoretical and practical issues raised by the development of the test.

Objectives of the IVQ Survey

The IVQ is typically a counting operation using a representative sample. The general purpose is seeking the best possible incentive for the people taking part in the survey. It is important not to reproduce a context too reminiscent of school exams.

The access to information and the capacity to actively communicate, both orally and in writing, are the keys to autonomy essential to each individual's success and to the progress of all. Therefore, IVQ

assesses the following:

- Comprehension of oral messages (Production of oral messages is not assessed because of technical difficulties)
- Production of the written language
- Reading of the written language
- Numeracy (defined as mathematical skills for everyday life).

In order to understand the results obtained in the tests, information on the interviewees is needed. A biographic questionnaire has been designed to collect useful data about one's personal life, family, schooling, literate environment, etc.

IVQ provides a broad assessment of literacy outcomes, which can guide both policy decision and resource allocations; it also provides insights into the factors that contribute to illiteracy. According to those objectives, IVQ determines the figures relating to the population facing literacy difficulties in everyday life, and describes the profiles of those people according to the types of difficulties they have to face and their social and biographic background.

IVQ 2004 was preceded by IVQ 2002. Even if the main purposes of the 2002 survey was methodological, it provided global outputs on the situation of illiteracy in France, and allowed the teams involved in the survey design to test it in good conditions and perfect the process and the instruments.

Characteristics of the IVQ Survey

The IVQ is a household, face-to-face survey, requiring mainly oral answers, lasting one hour and thirty minutes for each interview. The interviewer is computer assisted. Apart from the dictation, the interviewer marks all the answers in the lower and higher units. Computer assistance allows for the re-routing of people from one test to another, or from one question to another following the respondent's answers. For example, people who do not speak the language of the test are directly oriented to the biographic module. Then they can fill in the questionnaire with the help of a relative speaking both French and the language known by the interviewee.

The interactive face-to-face approach has enabled study designers to come closer to interview tech-

niques usually dealt with in academic psychology research work. For example, interviewers are professionals and have attended a three-day training session including a presentation of the goals of the survey, specific information about illiteracy and illiterates' psychology and the ways to develop confidence and motivation for those people. Psychologists could of course act more efficiently, but in the material conditions of the survey, we consider that the quality of the data collection is good.

IVQ sample was designed as a two-stage stratified sample (random sample of housing units in 21 metropolitan regions, and a randomised choice of the interviewees among the occupants of the house unit). Ten thousand four hundred (10,400) people, 18 to 65 years old, were assessed from October 2004 to January 2005; more than 2,000 of them were tested with the ANLCI module.

Nine thousand eight hundred (9, 800) interviewees answered the tests (others just filled the biographic module). The number of respondents is higher than 1500 in special marginalized urban zones, higher than 1,700 in the region Nord Pas de Calais, higher than 1,400 in the region Pays de Loire, and just a little under the 950 respondents in the region Aquitaine. Those three regions carried out a special extension of the survey. The specified numbers of respondents will allow us to produce specific results for those regions or areas.

IVQ general design

Assessment begins with the Orientation Module. It assesses, in generally less than ten minutes, global reading literacy level, using a TV program as printed support of oral questions. The orientation test begins with a set of questions meant to introduce the interviewee to the given situation (the task required is to identify the type of document provided), then it continues by the detection of words or "pseudo-words" of variable length. The test ends up with a few questions aiming at the simple comprehension of a simple text (a film preview). Depending on their scores (Reading words score, text cop), subjects are oriented to the high-level test or to the ANLCI lower level module. Those for whom the literacy orientation test is not clear, have to take a confirmation test, and following their scores they are oriented to a higher-level module or to the ANLCI module.

At the end of the orientation test, the interviewee has to answer questions on numeracy. The principle consists of stopping the questions after three wrong answers. Those questions have been ranged, progressively, from very simple to more complex questions. The first set of questions are called the "numeracy orientation test'" and this was administered to all the interviewees.

Depending on the results, and regardless of their performance in the literacy test, the interviewees are oriented to a high-level numeracy test or a low-level numeracy test, which are in fact two different entries in the same suite of exercises. Those tests are submitted after the high-level or low-level literacy test and prior to the biographic questionnaire. The interviewer ends the numeracy test as soon as the interviewee has given three wrong answers.

High-level items are not very different in conception from those found in IALS or ALL: a large range of items representing the kinds of reading literacy that an adult would require in his everyday life (reading material extracted from literature, economic statistics, maps, etc.). Nevertheless, they are more adapted to the French stakeholders' needs and French context.

The ANLCI module, which is devoted to the low levels of literacy, is very different from IALS.

The ANLCI module

The ANLCI module, using three tests, tries to explore oral skills, basic written skills and basic reading skills.

In the first test (oral comprehension test) one listens to two short messages (a female and a male voice) which are respectively a road safety advertisement and the weather forecast. One has to answer six listening-comprehension questions. The interviewees may listen to the same messages once more (this time being aware of the questions) and the interviewer can ask them the same questions, once again. Only the best answers are taken into account for the score. Six other questions testing oral comprehension do not need special memory abilities because the interviewer repeats, in the course of the questions, the words or sentences the interviewee has to explain.

The second test is close to a dictation. The interviewer draws a situation in which tested people have to write a message. Tested people have to write a list for shopping, including words and pseudo-words of variable length, and a short sentence. The key words given in the dictation are presented in the following table.

Table 1
List of words included in test 2 of the ANLCI Module

	3 phonemes	5 phonemes	7 phonemes
Pseudo-words	JOC DUXE	GOBAR SIRAPE	MICATOL PEVANORE
Phonographically regular words	SEL ANTI	TOMATE CERISE	EPICERIE AUBERGINE
Phonographically irregular words	PAYS RHUME	ALCOOL FIANCE	SOLENNEL PHARMACIE

Finally, a CD box is handed to the interviewee, who has to perform tasks similar to those of the orientation unit. As for the writing test, the key words the interviewee has to read are presented in the following table.

Table 2
List of words included in test 3 of the ANLCI Module

	3 phonemes	5 phonemes	7 phonemes
Pseudo-words	SAR BIX	TIPAC CHANGOZ	MOVONFUL JANDENOC
Phonographically regular words	MER AMI	NATURE SOUPIR	DOMICILE CAMARADE
Phonographically irregular words	FILS PAILLE	EXAUCE AIGUILLE	SOUPCONNER SUCCULENTE

The choice of the words was made to enable the testing of either the two ways of reading a word ("assemblage" or "addressing"), and the mastery of the difficulties linked to the words' length (memory).

This type of conception based on phonetic and semiotic characteristics makes it possible to build comparable tests using different words, even if the comparability is not completely guaranteed by the construction.

After the tests (that include a numeracy test), one answers a biographic questionnaire that takes about 30 minutes. Two biographic questionnaires are submitted depending on the orientation decided for the interviewee. The biographic questionnaires are mainly the same. Nevertheless, people who had taken the lower literacy test would take a personalized biographic test, of which a few questions on reading habits were suppressed, and replaced by questions on their abilities to solve everyday problems involving reading skills. That is the reason why the biographic questionnaire is known as the "untangle" questionnaire.

In addition to the collecting of classical personal data, such as gender, age, degree, the main inquiries of the test are about home languages and language used for learning how to read, family and one's schooling, professional status and activity, income and home comfort.

Main results of the IVQ Survey

Due to the size of the sample (larger than 10,000), IVQ 2004 has been able to provide more precise figures than IVQ 2002. Nevertheless, comparison between the two surveys is rather difficult because there have been a few changes in the tests and a more representative sample (all metropolitan regions vs. only 10).

According to the results of the test, the respondents considered to be facing difficulties in tackling daily written texts are those who have failed at the orientation test or at the intermediate test, attaining less than 80 percent correct answers in at least one ANLCI component score out of three (i.e. word reading, writing and comprehension). On the contrary, those regarded as literate (those who are able to tackle daily written texts without difficulty) succeeded in the orientation test or the intermediate test. Some of them (8.6 percent) obtained less than 40 percent correct answers to the questions of the high-level module, and their classification issue is not firmly resolved. Neither is such classification issue

resolved for those of the respondents who obtained more than 80 percent correct answers in the ANLCI module. That seems to be the typical problem with groups who are in proximity to the cut off point.

The ANLCI module has enabled us to highlight the fact that within the category of people with difficulties in front of writing tasks, there is a great variety of competence profile. The people facing difficulties (those who have obtained less than 60 percent correct answers) in all the tested domains (word reading, word writing and comprehension of small texts) are very rare. We should take into account the fact that some of those people have shown numeracy skills.
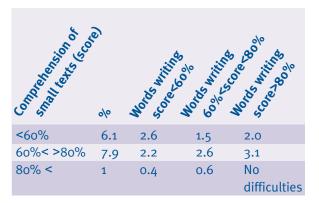
Literacy

First, 1.2 percent of the respondents refused to do the tests, stating that they were not able to perform the tasks required, usually declaring that they did not speak French good enough.

Secondly, 3.7 percent of the respondents obtained less than 80 percent correct answers in reading words tests. They are in serious difficulty, and their results in the other assessed domains confirmed this statement.

The following table shows examples of profiles, which we were able to build by taking into account the first results.

Table 3: Profiles

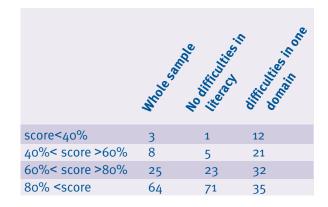| Comprehension of small texts (score)	%	Words writing score<60%	Words writing 60%<score<80%	Words writing score>80%
<60%	6.1	2.6	1.5	2.0
60%< >80%	7.9	2.2	2.6	3.1
80% <	1	0.4	0.6	No difficulties

Source INSEE

In fact, there is a great variety of profiles, which shall be detailed in future papers.

Numeracy

Numeracy tests were proposed to the whole population regardless of their orientation. The main results are: 32 percent of interviewees succeed in at least 80 percent of the questions, while 15 percent have poor numeracy performances and do not reach the threshold of 60 percent correct answers. Even if the link between the score in numeracy and the scores in other fundamental fields of reading and writing is rather strong, the percentage of respondents with poor numeracy performances represents 8 percent for the respondents with no difficulty in the main fields, against 42 percent for those who have faced difficulties in one of the three main fields. Still, among the latter, we notice that a significant percentage (9 percent) do succeed numeracy tests, in spite of the difficulties they face in writing tests.

Table 4: Numeracy scores

	Whole sample	No difficulties in literacy	difficulties in one domain
score<40%	3	1	12
40%< score >60%	8	5	21
60%< score >80%	25	23	32
80% <score	64	71	35

Oral comprehension

Like for numeracy, oral test was proposed to the whole sample. Most of the respondents attend to the group with higher scores (more than 80 percent of correct answers). The proportion of people with poor performances in oral comprehension (threshold set to less than 60 percent correct answers) represents 6 percent for the respondents with no difficulty in the main writing fields, against 33 percent for those who have faced difficulties in one of the three main fields. Thus, for some of the respondents, the writing difficulties originate in more general comprehension problems; however, one third of the people with difficulties in one of the three main writing fields succeed the oral test perfectly.

Gender differences

Previous national or international studies[4] of reading have shown that girls and women tend to surpass boys and men in their achievement levels in reading. IVQ confirms these trends at the lowest levels.

Table 5: Gender differences in literacy

	with difficulties at least in one domain	without difficulties
Whole sample	20 %	80 %
Females	17 %	83 %
Males	23 %	77 %

Source INSEE

In numeracy, males obtained better scores. The testing process itself has probably influenced the result, for the questions were oral. Thus, females could not value their better understanding of written messages as they usually do in numeracy assessments using written questionnaires.

Table 6: Gender differences in numeracy

	Males	Females
score<40%	6	9
40%<score<60%	6	9
60%<score<80%	50	56
score >80%	38	26

Source INSEE

Differences depending on the language used for learning to read

If gender differences are significant, they remain smaller than the differences that can be observed between the people who have learned to read in French and those who have learned to read in another language[5]. As expected after the 2002 methodological survey, the results in the reading tests are strongly linked to the languages used during child-hood, whether this relates to respondents' mother tongue or the schooling language. If we focus on respondents who attended school in France, the percentage of them facing difficulties decreases to 16 percent (that is, 5 percent face serious problems, 5 percent are facing rather serious difficulties, and 6 percent only face slight difficulties in the main fields of writing).

Table 7 :Results depending on the language used for learning how to read

	with difficulties	without difficulties
French schooling in France	16%	84%
French schooling abroad	30%	70%
Other language schooling	63%	37%

Source INSEE

Age-based differences

Reading proficiency decreases with age. This result is quite classical, even though the media have kept on claiming for decades that the school level is getting worse each year. However, it could be interesting to investigate if this result is linked, at least partially, to the fact that test questions, or test processes, are close to the formal testing used in formal education, even if the supporting material is representative of written texts used in daily life.

Table 8 :Results depending on age

	with difficulties	without difficulties
18-29	14 %	86 %
30-39	16 %	84 %
40-49	18 %	82 %
50-60	27 %	73 %
60-65	33 %	67 %

Source INSEE

It seems obvious that the performances do not decrease on a regular basis. We can pinpoint a threshold within the groups aged 40-50 and 50-60. We shall explore in future papers the possible reasons for this surprising performance decrease. Can this be put on behalf of some lack / deficiency of schooling, due to the immigration phenomenon in the 70s? Or can this be due to the increasing interval since the initial schooling?

Conclusion

The IVQ 2002 has provided us with data about literacy levels among the French population with a focus on low levels of literacy. However, the IVQ was fundamentally a methodological study. The main objective of this study was to explore the ways to increase self-involvement of interviewees in the test process; in other terms, to increase the motivation of interviewees.

The use of 14 IALS prose items for part of the sample showed a very big difference in the results obtained between the 1994 Survey and the 2002 Survey: Fifteen percent of interviewees performed at prose level 1 in 2002 against 42 percent of interviewees performing at level 1 in IALS Survey in 1994. Part of this very important difference could be attributed to the difference in motivation of the interviewees. This difference originates probably in the way the testing was carried out.

The IVQ enables large-scale testing in the field of literacy surveys and computer-assisted testing processes. This technical method enabled people lacking self-confidence due to past experiences in formal assessment (for example in school) to answer orally the reading comprehension questions instead of being faced straightaway with written questions requiring written answers.

The context thus created during the orientation test, even though it remains artificial, is nonetheless closer to real-life reading context than in most comparable studies.

Orienting respondents with low literacy levels towards better adapted tests within the ANLCI module allows for better involvement of such people in the survey (by limiting early renunciation) as well as investigating proficiency in literacy components. Finally, the ANLCI module offers oral comprehension tests, which provide useful data for the comprehension of other tests.

IVQ Appendix

Testing aids:

Literacy test for orientation: TV newspaper sheet
Oral comprehension: audio tape
Writing production: single sheet of paper
Lower Level Reading Literacy Test: an audio Compact Disc
Higher Level Reading Literacy Test: special booklet for each text

Time considerations
Suitable time limit for the test: one hour

Average times observed in November 2002:
Orientation test: (literacy and numeracy): 8 minutes
Lower level literacy test: 17 minutes
Numeracy test: 5 minutes
Higher literacy test: 30 minutes
Biographic questionnaire: 13 minutes
Untangle questionnaire: 15 minutes

Basic skills education for the Turkish Roma population
Maria Simion –
primary school teacher
Cultural Centre "Nicolae Balasescu
Nifon" BABADAG, Tulcea County

"There are some 15 million Roma dispersed across the world. Their history is one of suffering and misery, but it is also one of the victories of human spirit over the blows of fate. Today the Roma are reviving their culture and are looking for their identity. On the other hand, they integrate into the societies in which they live. If they are understood by their fellow citizens in their new homelands, their culture will enrich the society's atmosphere with the color and charm of spontaneity."

Former Indian Prime Minister Indira Ghandi summarized the state of the Romania people very nicely in her opening speech at the International Romani Festival in Chandigarh, India on October 28, 1983.

Officially, according to the 1992 census results, there are 409,723 Roma in Romania, comprising 1.8 percent of the total population. Self-preservation and widespread illiteracy, however, have affected this figure and Roma organizations put the real figure at somewhere between 1.8 and 2.5 million. The actual number of Roma in Romania at present is not known.

Members of the minority face problems in virtually every aspect of life. Historically treated as property to be bought and sold at will and then as second-class citizens, they have spent centuries struggling against oppression. Living standards are low; lack of hygiene facilities and awareness leads to the spread of disease and a high infant mortality rate.

The Roma in Romania are educationally disadvantaged. Discrimination, both within the system through which one must apply for a place in a school, and within the schools themselves, is widespread and discourages many children from attending. Education is also affected by the chronic poverty found in so many of Romania's Roma communities. Those children who do manage to begin school often fail to complete even the primary level and therefore face insurmountable difficulties when seeking employment. This tends to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and leads to rising crime rates.

During the Communist period, education was compulsory for all children up to the age of fifteen (the first eight grades), a policy that may have worked for Roma had there not been discrimination. Prior to 1989 there were numerous reports of teachers discriminating against Roma children because of the way in which they were dressed. Poverty was seen as being synonymous with stupidity, and many Roma were automatically placed at the back of the classroom and ignored.

Nevertheless, without a minimum of a Grade VIII education, Romanians cannot legally be hired by any employer and procure a work card (Carte de Munca), which theoretically entitles the holder to a pension, unemployment and health insurance as well as a median wage established by the government for that particular type of employment. There are some regulations that permit getting a professional qualification and work cards without having completed eight grades, the only condition is that they have to know how to read and write in Romanian.

Language can also cause difficulties. Roma children who speak the Romani language at home often find that they are unable to keep up with the class because they do not speak Romanian well enough.

There is a need for radical change, both within and outside the Roma community, in order to improve the situation. Non-Roma authorities involved in the field of education need to overcome prejudices, and have a deeper understanding of the particular problems of the minority. Within the Roma community, there is also a need for an understanding of the long-term benefits of education and the necessary assistance to make it possible, even if that simply entails a change of attitude. In cases of lack of communication between teachers and Roma parents, both should make the effort to bridge the gap in the interests of the child.

Summary of the project

Babadag, a community with 10,000 inhabitants, is one of the poorest town in the south-east part of Romania. Thirty percent of the population are Turkish Roma, most of whom are illiterate and unemployed. With no job opportunities available, most of them survive through garbage and live way below poverty line; they are perceived to be anti-social and are known as delinquents within the local community.

The Cultural Centre of Babadag, in collaboration with IIZ/DVV Project Romania, launched an education programme for the Turkish Roma population, to develop basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics by involving them in a 20-hour per week programme, for three school years (1999-2003).

The aims of the project are:
- To develop the capacity for oral communication in Romanian language;
- To develop the capacity for written communication in Romanian language;
- To know and use the basic arithmetic concepts in Romanian language.

The Muslim leader, the Imam, of Geamia, urged the Turkish Roma to attend the basic skills programme which was initially joined by 50 learners divided into two groups: one group of 10 to 17 years old and another group of 18 to 40 years old, each with 25 participants.

The basic skills programme was delivered by a team of three Romanian primary school teachers; two left the locality soon after the end of the programme.

At the end of the programme the learners should be able to:

- Distinguish the words and their meaning in a given sentence in Romanian language;
- Distinguish the sounds and the syllables (needed for the learning of reading and writing in Romanian which is a phonetic language);
- Read at their own pace;
- Extract the global meaning from a written and oral text in Romanian language;
- Elaborate short, correct written sentences in Romanian language;

- Write and read the numbers from 0 to 10000;
- Carry out different types of additions and subtractions;
- Carry out multiplications and divisions;
- Know the standard measure units for length, volume, weight, surface, time and monetary units.

Key activities

The participation in the basic skills programme was voluntary.

1. The selection criteria were the lack of the basic four years of education and the learners' socio-economic status. Fifty learners were admitted to the programme.

The main motivation of the learners was the expectation that after the attending the basic skills programme they will be able to improve their businesses, e.g. the buying and selling of animals and other goods from one region to another, and other personal gains such as getting a driver's licence.

2. Formal primary school curricula. The teachers adapted the division of the items with the allocated time as well as the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum for Primary Education (grades I-IV) while working with the two subgroups. The programme was implemented in three years, nine months per year, 20 hours a week, or a total of 540 hours.

3. Interim evaluation was undertaken after the end of each content unit and the final evaluation was also provided by the same teacher who delivered the training. Although the team teachers required assistance, monitoring and counselling, the Tulcea Territorial School Department was not interested in the training process. The cultural center is still negotiating with the school department for the formal recognition of the training certificate issued to the 14 graduates of the programme.

After the end of the training session, the learners were not provided further career counselling. Although there are attempts towards designing and implementing a national standard curriculum for basic skills intensive programmes addressed to the

adults, only few initiatives are carried out in practice, in a random and isolated manner.

Working methods

The teachers worked with the two subgroups using the formal primary school curricula, following the division of the items with the allocated time (55 minutes per standards lesson) and according to the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum for Primary Education (Grades I-IV).

The team teachers used the formal didactic materials and manuals and their role was the same as in the formal system.

The teachers had no initial or basic training in working with adult learners. After the demonstration and explanation done by the teacher, the learners work individually assisted by their teacher and did their work during the classes.

Group work was also used especially with respect to tasks related to the understanding of the meaning of a text or to problem-solving.

Examples from the learners 'real life and experience' were used within the learning process. The teachers paid visits to learners' home to learn more about their living conditions, and their cultural and religious environment, and to develop appropriate approaches while teaching.

The learners were involved in exercises about how to manage and exchange information and experience, especially those related to their daily life --- beginning with their rights, getting social assistance from the local council, and also their social and community responsibilities.

The evaluation methods used were:

- the observation of the learners' behaviour during the programme (in class and by paying home visits);
- the oral examination in Romanian language; and
- written papers in Romanian language.

The examination was conducted individually, each learner having different subjects at the oral and written examination.

The rate of graduation was low (35.7 percent) but significant within the context (50 persons enlisted and 14 graduated). Four of the 14 graduates of the programme said that they would have been interested to proceed to the 5th form. However, the programme was not further supported by any of the initiators or by any of the the local organizations.

At the Territorial School Department's level, there is a lack of attention to the implementation of the national standard curriculum for basic skills intensive programmes addressed to adults.

Perceived strengths

- Learners' significant progress from the BS point of view, in spite of the low graduation rate (35.7 percent);
- A good practice and encouragement for the Turkish Roma population who have not yet attended the basic skills courses, and a good example for the community in the sense of self-empowerment, active citizenship, etc;
- The learners acknowledged the values of the working and learning environment, based on mutual trust and respect (among themselves, between learners and the teachers);
- The opportunity created by the equivalent of four years of basic education certificates to find a job and obtain the driving licence or the skills and competencies helped them to improve their business;
- A significant social inclusion through learning basic skills occurred, which is a good practice for the marginalised Turkish Roma population in Babadag.

Social Integration through Literacy: The Example of Romas in Bulgaria
Maria Todorova, IIZ/DVV, Bulgaria
Based on the presentations of
E. Ilieva and A. Stoyanova e

According to the 2001 census in Bulgaria, 370,908 of the population are of Roma origin although unofficially, the number varies between 600,000 and 800,000. The Roma are internally subdivided into many groups, based on the way of living, religion, and occupation. About twelve percent of the Roma are considered functionally illiterate, and 55 percent of the Roma people are unemployed. The exact percentage varies from region to region.

A National Survey conducted in December 2004 suggests that 25 percent of young Roma are illiterate, and an additional 35 percent experience difficulties in reading. In this case, we may speak of functionally illiterate people, or groups of people, who have limited options and limited access to the labor market.

In the past few years, many programs have been started in Bulgaria with the aim of improving the situation described above. There are special preventive measures in place, including a strategy for the integration of Roma children in the school system. This includes compulsory pre-school education, which is aimed at preparing children from other ethnic communities for learning in Bulgarian in the first grade, and ensuring access to public transportation for smaller communities in order to bring children into ethnically integrated schools.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs continues to fund effective measures and programs. In 2004, the Ministry implemented several active and preventive measures for unemployed and disadvantaged people, including literacy and vocational and employment training (VET) courses. Other measures include stimulating employers to hire employees from these groups, and implementing laws and policies for integrating disadvantaged and discriminated groups and peoples.

For 2005, the main target groups of the active labor market policy are: long-term unemployed, young

people without education and qualifications, unemployed with low education and without qualification, people with special needs, and elderly unemployed (over 50 years of age). All these measures particularly concern the Roma community, because a significant proportion of people with the above mentioned characteristics belong to this community.

Beginning in 2005, there is a new program designed to coincide with the European Decade of Roma Inclusion. This program includes funding for projects in the field of education, health, infrastructure, etc. Some of these activities are already part of the EU-funded projects in the field of social inclusion. Last but not least, many NGOs working in the field of human rights and interethnic/multicultural education, largely financed by foreign donors, have implemented pilot projects for improving literacy and education in general.

**Support of educational activities
for marginalized groups.**

One of these organizations is the Bulgarian Office of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV). For the past five years, the institution has been working on a project entitled "Adult Education in South Eastern Europe", which is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Regional Cooperation and Development. Beginning in 2002, several "Second Chance Schools" aimed at providing basic skills education to marginalized groups have been put into operation. These "Second Chance Schools" have been in place across Europe, but they have different histories and institutional forms in different countries. Many of these schools involve support from the state, and the project is "institutionalized" as a part of the adult educational system.

In Bulgaria, IIZ/DVV–Sofia began the project in autumn of 2002, after visiting a similar school in the municipality of Neapolis, Greece. The project partners included the municipality of Plovdiv (who contributed space for the school in the Roma quarter for a period of three years), IIZ/DVV (who financed the infrastructure, the learning activities and materials), and the Coalition of the Citizens' Organization in Stolipinovo (who organized the classes). The combination of local government, local NGO, and international NGO proved to be very successful over the lifetime of the project.

During the first school year, two classes were educated and trained. These included:

- Sixteen people (8 men and 8 women) who graduated from a nine-month literacy course (including reading, writing, arithmetic) Sixteen people who took courses at the 7th
- grade level, and obtained a secondary school diploma, and hence improved their labor market opportunities.
- VET-related activities were launched for all students.

In the second and third school year, the literacy courses were reorganized into three-month courses. These have continued into 2005. In addition, instead of offering 7th grade classes, one group of 16 people took high school equivalency courses over two school years. All of them graduated in June 2005, with good results and a high school diploma.

The partners in the project can be proud of their students, as they have benefited educationally, and with improved job prospects (there are additional labor office programs in the area, which supported this program). Moreover, the students became more politically engaged as active citizens: two of the students were invited in the lists of the political parties for the national Parliamentary elections in 2005, and two of the students went on to be elected as council members of the municipality.

In 2003, a similar project began in the second biggest Roma neighborhood in Sofia (Philipovzi). This project involved a similar division of responsibilities among partners — the town council, local NGOs, and IIZ/DVV Bulgaria. Thirty Roma have taken part in educational activities.

The positive experiences of IIZ/DVV–Sofia in starting and implementing the first "Second Chance Schools" in Bulgaria stimulated the partnership to apply for a PHARE Social Inclusion Project. The new project, with additional funding, began a second phase in the activities of the IIZ/DVV in the field of literacy courses in Bulgaria. The pilot phase was self-financed, but 90 percent of the costs in the second phase have been financed by European Commission in Bulgaria, as part of its overall program of promoting European values.

The extended and expanded project took on the name, "A Second Chance: Social Integration

through Adult Literacy". It consisted of literacy courses targeted at Roma, and taught at six schools in six towns in Bulgaria: Sofia, Trun, and Breznik in the western part of Bulgaria, and in Plovdiv, Krichim and Boyantsi in southern Bulgaria. A large percentage of the population in these communities is of Roma origin, with disproportionately low rates of literacy.

IIZ/DVV-Sofia organized the literacy courses in cooperation with local elementary and secondary schools. They included 300 hours of reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with social and communication skills. One hundred fifty participants, mostly young unemployed Roma, achieved functional literacy, significantly increasing their overall professional prospects, and their ability to participate in modern Bulgarian society.

Twenty local teachers and assistant teachers, familiar with the local population and problems, received special training in order to conduct literacy courses. The partners— the informal community of teachers, coordinators, and students, worked together on teaching materials, improving and adapting teaching methods for adults, and preparing a short publication on the shared experiences and information on the project results.

The project has taught us that:
- Literacy courses for Roma should be conducted alongside training in skills for social integration.
- Literacy courses coupled with civic education give students additional ideas for social integration and civic participation, and are very well-received.
- Literacy courses targeted at social integration need to provide additional professional qualifications in order to increase employment opportunities.
- Acquiring professional qualifications act as an additional stimulus for achieving functional literacy.

Assuring the sustainability of the "Second Chance Schools" in Bulgaria as part of the general literacy and Roma integration milieu

There is still a need for NGOs to implement projects and develop activities in order to support literacy. Currently, some of them target educational issue in particular, while others work on employment sup-

port, advocacy and lobbying, or healthcare, where the educational tasks are present but not predominant.

These educational programs do have important advantages, as partners have been identified, models have been implemented, and results have been checked. In addition, public opinion has been sensitized, and people are aware of the importance and need for these project activities.

However, there are disadvantages as well. Different donors, through different NGOs, have started many smaller or bigger projects, leading to replication of services, and inefficiencies. In some cases, both the project and the results were well-publicized, but in other cases, there was a lack of publicly accessible information. In the latter case, the lack of information and transparency made it difficult for others to learn from the project. A few cases of mismanagement and poor financial results also served to create the popular misconception that these projects are aimed at distributing financial resources among the projects managers and the direct beneficiaries, mainly coordinators from the Roma elite. Some people use the examples of wealthy Roma, without any evidence that their wealth is   connected to the projects (many Roma have become wealthy from working abroad). Finally, the use of huge financial resources distributed through dozens of projects, with little coordination and synchronization, and with only slight state engagement, has a very low rate of efficiency and a very low rate of integration. Hence, many donors, including the EU, and a substantial portion of Bulgarian society, are not content with the present situation and the current method of implementing projects.

One solution could be a common donor-state initiative, where all the main stakeholders could be involved. This would allow for the elaboration of a general plan, centralized financing, good planning, communication, harmonization, and coordination among all involved. The key here would be to increase effective management, control, and evaluation. Creating a National Action Plan for the Decade of the Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 was an important step in this direction. There is a suggestion within this plan that the "Second Chance" project could be involved.

The National Action Plan is tied to the second option, of further disseminating and implementing existing good practices. There is a possibility of incorporating a model of a good project in a state-funded program. IIZ/DVV has had positive experiences in this field, including implementing the "Second Chance School" in the "Alphabetization, VET and Employment" project, within the framework of the National Employment Action Plan for the year 2005.

The sustainability of all these models and projects could be found through institutionalizing good models and projects. In this case, it can be argued that support and good will from the state administration and the decision-makers is very important. There are examples in this direction from other countries: Within the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, there is the Institute for Continuing Adult Education, and one unit of the institute is the "Second Chance Schools".

One Roma organization and its activities of Roma inclusion through education: The Ethno-Cultural Dialogue Foundation (Bulgaria)

The focus of the foundation is to provide educational and health programs to the representatives of the Roma communities, which will support their integration.

Some examples of its activity:
- 2001 - A literacy course + professional qualification (assistant chef) to 15 Roma youth deprived of parents care; supported by OSF
- 2001 - A literacy course project, supported by IIZ/DVV–Sofia; 15 Roma people achieved functional literacy
- 2002 "Support and Self-support to the Roma Community" project in partnership with the Bulgarian Red Cross; professional qualification was given to 40 women (tailors) and 20 men (construction workers)
- 2003/2004 "Second Chance School" project, supported by IIZ/DVV–Sofia; 32 Roma people achieved functional literacy and were trained in social skills and basic civic education
- 2004 "New Social Services for Integration" project in partnership with "Civic Education" Foundation, supported by the PHARE program of the EC; 32 Roma people received professional qualification as bakers and drivers.

- 2004 – "Second Chance: Social Integration through Adult Literacy" in partnership with IIZ/DVV– Sofia and Coalition "Stolipinovo;" 150 Roma people achieved functional literacy
- 2005 Literacy courses and qualification courses in partnership with IIZ/DVV–Sofia, Sofia municipality and National Employment agency; 30 Roma people will achieve functional literacy and will be trained in social skills
- Additional activities include meetings with representatives of the Roma communities to discuss: how to prevent ourselves from the danger of drugs; family planning & birth control; and how to become responsible mothers.

Conclusions:
- Literacy courses are most useful when offered together with courses on professional qualification.
- In providing educational programs to Roma people, a larger social consensus is needed with employers, national and local municipalities etc. so that the employment opportunities are realistic.
- "Second chance school" model has proved to be very successful in Bulgaria.
- There is a need to assess the knowledge and skills of the students at the beginning of the course, during mid-term and final stages.
- A handbook for teachers on Roma Literacy is needed.
- European best practices are useful in Bulgarian context when adapted to the Bulgarian reality.

Roma Voices

"My work within Roma community is my mission which brings me true moral satisfaction. I am convinced that education is the way towards the integration of the Roma community into the European house of the capable and knowledgeable!"

Adela Stoyanova
Adela Stoyanova, Direktor Ethno-Cultural Dialogue Foundation. Adela Stoyanova belongs to the group of "Horahane Roma." She is a Muslim whose mother-tongue is Turkish and her identity is Roma.

"When I heard of the Stolipinovo programme and the Second Chance School I did not hesitate to apply for it. I covered all the requirements and what was more, I was very strongly motivated. I received an approval and was a student again. I wondered why I had not gone to school before when I had to do nothing else but study. However, I was grateful for being given the opportunity to finish my primary education. I did not notice how the school year passed. The teachers were very patient with us. They helped us very much in our individual schooling. Many times they stayed with us after the lessons. When the time of the first exam came I was very scared. I was sure I would not cope with the task and my hands were shaking. Then I saw my mark was the highest one and this encouraged me. I passed all my exams successfully and got a primary school certificate. I immediately started looking for a job but I ran into difficulties again. It turned out that my employers' criteria were quite a bit higher than my expectations were. So I continued my secondary education at The Second Chance School. I am already in the eleventh grade. All my classmates are laughing at me because I am always sitting at the front desk writing down everything and always asking a lot of questions. I know I can finish the school and I have the ambition to make up for the missed time. Thanks to the scholarship which I have for the time of my schooling I can buy more books. At first I bought food for my son, but soon I realized that if I finished school with enough knowledge, I could buy more things. Thus each time, when I got my scholarship, I started buying a book. Soon, I bought a reference book from the Plovdiv University. Next year, after I have finished school and have my school-leaving certificate, I want to continue my education at university. I would like to be an example for my son who will soon start going to school; I want to prove to myself that the missed time can be made up for. "

Ivan Karagjozov
A former student of "The Second Chance School" in Stolipinovo, Plovdiv

Literacy for Migrants:
The Nordic Example

Qarin Franker,
Göteborg University, Sweden

"It is hard to live in Sweden without being able to read and write. In Cap Verde and in Portugal there are a lot of illiterate people. There you can manage, but not here. Here you feel ashamed and many doors are locked.
It is important to be able to write your name, your social security number and address and this you have to learn fast, very, very fast."
Maria, 38, from Cap Verde[1].

Background

In many societies, the ability to read and write plays a crucial role when an individual is being looked upon as a competent adult. Not only certain social or labour associated roles require reading and writing skills but also political issues demand this. Being literate is often a part of daily life. Quite obviously, different countries have varying demands concerning the level of literacy required in fulfillment of citizenship. When persons, e.g. refugees, move from a country where they feel competent to a new country, the transition can make them feel incompetent.

Many refugees experience this sudden loss of personal and social status when they migrate to a highly technological society. For majority of migrants lacking basic education, life in the new country is often confusing.

"First of all I did not know anything about the school here in Sweden. The whole Sweden is different. This is very strange. Even Sweden is new. Everything is new."
Annette, 36, from Lebanon.

The three processs of 1) understanding the new society; 2) learning a new language; 3) learning to read and write have to be undertaken as soon as possible to address three corresponding demands for inclusion in the majority society.

Three demands
- Simplify cultural orientation
- Provide oral-based language education
- Facilitate literacy programs

Tutors and educational providers need to develop their expertise and field of specialization in adult migrant literacy for a more comprehensive and effective education that will facilitate migrants' integration into the new society. Two features for success are an education or instruction based on mutual respect in the relations between learner-teacher and learner-learner, and meaningful and useful learning situations dealing with authentic materials. The main requisite is an independent and active learner.
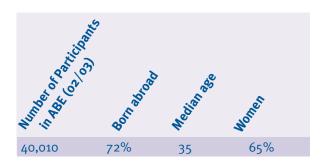
Adult migrant literacy in the Nordic was examined from three perspectives. A policy perspective highlighted the need for basic adult education in view of low levels of literacy. A research perspective gave some examples from studies carried out in Sweden and in the Nordic context, and a didactical perspective gave examples of learner-centered activities in Denmark. One could also consider questions concerning second language literacy for adults and ways of implementing current knowledge on adult migrant literacy.

Aspects concerning policy frameworks
The public school system for adults is financed by the government and it includes municipal adult education (Komvux) including adult basic education (ABE), education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux) and Swedish for immigrants (Sfi).
 Sweden has developed a national curriculum called "Swedish for immigrants" (Sfi) aimed at persons older than 16 years. It consists of four courses (A, B, C, D) and three different starting points according to earlier school experiences. The courses include social studies but not literacy and numeracy. Every level ends with a test. The duration of the courses is flexible, depending on the competence of the learners, and it is possible to leave the course after each level.

Not only immigrants but also many Swedes are in need of basic education to be able to function as a satisfactory member of society. Illiterate immigrants can study Sfi and at the same time get literacy provision through the basic education system for adults. Every municipality is responsible for the provision of basic education for adults; learners' participation

are financed by study grants. For persons whose mother tongue is not Swedish, the instruction may be given in his or her first language.

The education gives adults the basic skills necessary to live and work in the community and also prepares them for further study. Compulsory school equivalence for adults is a final grade with a passing grade in the four core subjects: Swedish (or Swedish as a second language), English, Mathematics and Social Studies.

Number of Participants in ABE (02/03)	Born abroad	Median age	Women
40,010	72%	35	65%

Municipalities are also responsible for Sfi and for determining how this instruction is organized. Sfi provides knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish society. The purpose is to provide adults with the tools to enable them to exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations as citizens in Sweden.

Number of students in Swedish for immigrants (02/03)

		School Background (years)			
		0-3	4-6	7-9	10-
Total	43,851	4,301	5,007	7,142	27,401
Women	25,494	3,069	3,226	4,188	15,011
Men	18,357	1,232	1,781	2,954	12,390

Aspects concerning methodology:
Several literacy provisions have been identified. It is crucial for the teachers to take the perspective of the learner and to be sensitive to their culture. The curricula should be developed taking into account the cultural context of the learner. For the good quality of the provisions, teacher training is very essential. In this context, the issue of mother-tongue education was raised. Mother-tongue education was strongly applied in Sweden in the 1970s, and then it disappeared; it is now being taken into considera-

tion again. One of the reasons why it disappeared for a while is that the quality of the provisions suffered due to the lack of competent trainors in the mother-tongue.

Concerning the methodology of migrant literacy courses in the Nordic countries, there is a strong tendency to use visual material (photos and posters, linking images with writing) as this has been successful as a starting point for oral and written practice.

For example in Denmark the students work with *charteques* containing photos from the UNICEF's annual calendar. The students use Danish as a common language. Their skills are on a breakthrough level. The picture helps them carry on a conversation in spite of limited vocabulary. The teacher provides support by supplying necessary words and expressions.

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The students produce a common oral text, which tells about the situation and the persons shown in the picture. In the process, they discuss the identity of the persons and other symbols or images shown.

When there is agreement on the oral text, it is written on the blackboard. The teacher provides support by reading aloud and pointing out the letters to be used. All students contribute to the written text, and the teacher helps, whenever necessary.
The students copy the text from the blackboard into their notebooks. When the script is finished, it is read aloud.

The text is encoded using a personal computer. The students get a good practice in resetting handwritten letters to printed letters. The students learn to correct mistakes and to get a printout. The text is printed in 14 points letter size and is mounted in the student's picture-charteque , which is used for reading exercises. The teacher prints the text in 26 points letter size, laminates and cuts it out into word-cards, which are to be used in training on reading and spelling in the literary workshops.
The students in the literary workshop learn using cards with words put together into a script. At first the students reads, together with the teacher, the text in the picture-charteque. After that, the students work alone with the text by reading a sentence, cover the text by reading a sentence, and

cover the text and finding the word-cards.
The student can work at his/her own pace, inde-
pendently so for example, he or she decides, how
many times to look at the picture-charteque.
Most of the students find that it is fun to challenge
one self to make it better each time.

When the all the word-cards are in the right place,
the student can start to practice spelling. The stu-
dent turns a word-card and then writes it as from a
dictation. In this practice the student decides which
challenge is appropriate – one word, two words or
several words at one time. The student controls
whether a word is spelt correctly, and therefore the
student is totally independent from his/her teachers
in this exercise.

When the students have some practice in writing
common texts on the blackboard, they can begin to
write on their own in the literary workshop. When
needed, the student can always find another stu-
dent to come to help. When the student has finished
the script, the teacher gives feedback in three
phases— 1. Context, 2. Syntax and morphology, and
3. Spelling. Finally, the student writes the script on a
PC, and then the script is used by other students in
practicing reading and spelling.

Aspects concerning research
The definition of literacy applied in this workshop
was not the technical definition, but a more "ideo-
logical" view, defining literacy as a socio-cultural
practice and acknowledging many different litera-
cies according to different contexts. Theories about
literacy by Street (1993, 1995) Freire (1976), Heath
(1983), Scribner & Cole (1981) and Barton(1994,
1998) are essential here. People are taking differ-
ent literate roles connected to different literacies as
shown by Kell (2003).

The workshop presented the quantitative adult
literacy surveys IALS and ALL carried out by the
OECD and qualitative studies carried out in the
Nordic context. These studies aim to understand the
literacy competencies of migrants, using different
approaches drawn from sociology (Carlson, 2003),
anthropologyl (Sachs 1986), psycholinguistics (Kur-
vers, 2002, from the Netherlands), and education
(Hvenekilde 1997, Lundgren 2005).

An ongoing project at the Institute of Swedish as a
second language in Göteborg is named "Linguistic

and cultural aspects on integration and democracy.
A study of adult immigrants with limited formal
literacy training encountering text and images."[2]

The project deals with the ways the Swedish lan-
guage and literacy programs for adult immigrants
prepare them for an active differentiated participa-
tion in society according to the participants' indi-
vidual needs, wishes and plans in their social lives
(Fingeret 1983; Norton 2000).

Today, more than 20 percent of the adult immigrants
participating in Swedish language courses for im-
migrants, (Sfi), have less than six years of formal
schooling in their countries of origin. There is limited
knowledge about how these participants experience
their situation in society and in their educational
contexts (Söderlindh-Franzén 1990).

Departing from a socio-cultural and critical perspec-
tive, this research project focuses on a group of im-
migrants with limited experience of formal literacy
training, and their reading and writing practices
inside and outside classrooms (Fairclough 1995;
Pennycook 2001). The concern of the study is how
these participants act upon information, text and
images in different literacy practices in their educa-
tional contexts as well as in daily life (Barton 1998;
Kress and van Leeuwen 1996; Kress 2003; Martin-
Jones and Jones 2000).

The current studies are:
1. Images as modes of communication
How are different types of images understood and
how can visual communication be facilitated, in
school as well as in society?
What kind of pictorial/multimodal materials do
literacy teachers choose? (Franker, 2005 work in
progress).

2. The election posters
To what extent are persons with limited formal
literacy training able to understand and interpret the
political messages conveyed through election post-
ers (and other information materials)?

One short example from research
Some preliminary research results show that logos,
symbols, pictures and intertext relations provide
some helpful "clues" in approaching a text. How-
ever, the written text remains the "key" material in

the perception of the learner. There seems to be a very strong expectation that the written text is more important than the picture. This research situation took place in a school setting; the participants __ Somali women with little or no formal schooling, probably felt the importance and the power of the written word in that environment.

Do you get the message? Who is the sender? How do you know that?

These were the questions in one of the election posters shown in the experimental focus group settings. Although the Somali women could not read and understand the text, they understood that the word "*klyftan*" held much of the clue. They could also recognize the cards but they did not have any previous experience of playing with cards, and this "message" in the picture could not help them. The blue colour was used as a symbol for men and the red one for women for some reasons not fully disclosed to them [3]. One insight that can be drawn from this is that functional literacy is not enough, you have to have social and cultural knowledge to facilitate appreciation and interpretation of the text, to get the real "message" contained in both the picture and the written text.

Some issues
- We are in great need of bilingual researchers with working knowledge of some common "migrant" languages such as Somali, Dari, Kurdish and Arabic.
- The process of interpretation and transcription is very tedious and costly.
- The "low-literate" migrants are not a priority "group;" "easier" informants tend to be chosen as respondents or subjects for research.

Some important research questions for the European migrant literacy research are:
- How do migrant adults in a European context develop their literacy/literacies?
- How does the majority society communicate with people who cannot read "ordinary texts"?
- How do migrant adults without formal schooling experience their own linguistic and cultural prerequisites?
- How will the demands for literacy change when the focus moves from the book to the screen?

These are questions for further discussion:
What kind of research is most urgent to initiate to facilitate and develop adult migrant literacy education and literacy practices?
How can we share and cooperate on questions about adult migrant literacy?

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WEB ADRESSES:
www.lhs.se/sfi Nationellt centrum för sfi och svenska som andraspråk
www.unesco,org UNESCO
www.ets.org/all/survey.html Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey

Interventions for the Imprisoned Populations in Greece
Dimitrios Bekiaridis-Moschou, Arsis Association

Types of educational programmes in the prisons of Greece:

1) Educational programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education.
These are programmes for primary and secondary schools, and the programmes of the Institute of Continuous Education of Adults. These programmes award an acknowledged title of study.
2) Vocational training programmes financed by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection. These programmes also provide psychosocial support for the detainees.
3) "Informal" educational programmes implemented mainly by Non-Governmental Organisations and the Church, in some cases.
4) Social education programmes such as those addressed to drug addicts.
In Greece, these programmes are implemented by the Therapy Centre for Addicted people, having as its objective to inform, support and help those who attend them.

ARSIS' Intervention

The ARSIS' educational programmes in the prison of Diavata, Thessaloniki belong to the third category. At present, there are four different programmes being implemented.
A. Courses in the Greek and in the English language. The latter is preferred by the migrants and refugees who are detained in prison.
B. A workshop in painting and a workshop in jewelry-making.
C. Psychological services, which include one-to-one counselling and communication in groups. The latter is conducted by a psychologist. The session entails group discussions, focusing on issues of interest to the detainees. Occasionally, an expert is invited to talk on a specific subject of interest (e.g. legal issues).
D. A 20-session one-to-one counselling programme, focusing on employment issues and professional skills, is also conducted for female detainees. After their release, and if they have completed the

programme, they are entitled to government subsidy for their promotion to employment.

In the implementation of the programmes, where there has been no developed specialized method of education, the instructors have relative autonomy to develop teaching methods based on their own experience, given the particular conditions and dynamics in prison, the particular activities that they want to apply and what the detainees are interested in. At the same time, their work is supervised by a psychologist, a sociologist, and a lawyer with specialisation in the forensic field. The objective is to keep an emphasis on the detainee's desires and interests.

The educational methods vary; they may include class teaching, work training and group discussions. The courses are given mainly to groups in order to save time, money and space that are not sufficient. Also, group-learning offers various benefits, such as developing social skills and fostering a spirit of collaboration among the detainees.

The detainees have at their disposal 2.5 hours per day for studying either in the morning or in the afternoon. Studying in cells is not prohibited by the prison administration, however, the conditions inside do not encourage something like that. The usual problems are overcrowded cells, noise, the lack of proper furniture for study, etc.

Important Issues

Throughout our experience in education in prison, there are three main themes that tend to define and guide our work.
(i) No matter what the content of educational intervention in prison, what appear to be important to the detainees are human communication and the development of relationships, on the one hand, and the learning process and materials that can stimulate their minds, on the other. The detainees are thirsty for, and are driven by these two dimensions of the educational programmes. In this context, in implementing our programmes, we try to put the emphasis on human relations and the enrichment of the learning process.
(ii) Education in prison is not only about education-

al intervention. Prison is a very special context with very particular dynamics between the administration and guards, on the one hand, and the detainees on the other. As an NGO, while implementing programmes for educational interventions, we have the freedom to go in and out of prison and communicate with all parties in equal terms. Although there are times when we find ourselves caught between or pressured by both sides, often we are able to function as facilitators of communication between the detainees and the prison employees, and between the detainees and the outside world. We have found that this role can be of great benefit to everybody involved in the prison context.

(iii) Finally, in implementing interventions in prison, we have been satisfied by the outcome in terms of the feedback that we get from the volunteers and the detainees, and the high level of participation. On the other hand, there is a nagging sense that what we do is just not enough for the rehabilitation and social inclusion of the detainees. Although by law, the detainees are only denied their right to freedom and not the rest of their human rights, their level of exclusion and isolation is very high. A much more elaborate and organised effort needs to be developed.

On a more general note, educational interventions in prisons seem to receive less attention than needed. Certain efforts and recommendations need to be developed for the enrichment of the field:

(i) Illiteracy in the prison is an overlooked issue. The number of illiterate people among the imprisoned populations is usually quite high and although there are certain efforts to combat illiteracy there appear to be difficulties in implementing sufficient and well-developed intervention programmes.

An international survey on education in prison that has collected data from 70 countries, among others, concludes that education in prison is not a priority at the moment.

Although there are organisations that implement interventions for the education, social rehabilitation and vocational training for imprisoned individuals, there is no organisation specialising in this field.

One possible reason is that such interventions appear to have a low credibility in society. Working with excluded individuals can in a way render the work with them excluded as well. Somehow, in trying to work towards the social rehabilitation of excluded groups, there is often the problem of having to justify the work to the broader social context. This raises the issue of respect for our job, and underlines the importance of the communication of such efforts to society at large.

(ii) Education is a medium through which the person develops social roles and becomes incorporated to society. Often, professional and economic deadlocks are partly responsible for illegal acts and behaviours. Thus, education can help the
imprisoned individual to broaden his/her choices and discover alternate routes for his/her survival. In general, education can be considered as a tool for freedom.

The field seems to be relatively unexplored, thus research is needed on the profile and needs of the imprisoned populations and the organisation, management, implementation, and efficacy of relevant interventions. There appears to be a gap between practise and research so far. Thus, the notions of research- informed practice and practise-based research need to be used and developed to guide such efforts.

In terms of enriching and developing the field, the empowerment of existing interventions is considered as more important than creating new ones. Organisations and interventions that already exist need to be strengthened in their development, establishment and inter-connection. This way, what is already there will be utilised and the way forward will be set.

Finally, the need for networking is considered vital. Building a network of organisations that implement interventions on education in prison would help to clarify the picture of the detained populations, their issues and needs. Networking would help the organisations develop each other, to become more enriched in the process, thus, making it possible to communicate their work more effectively to the broader social context.

Professional Development of Training Staff in Austria
Antje Doberer-Bey
VHS Floridsdorf, Vienna

Background Information

- First literacy courses in Vienna, Volkshochschule Floridsdorf, 1990
- From 1995 – 1999: ISOP Graz, VHS Linz,abcSalzburg
- 2003 : "Netzwerk.Alphabetisierung.at",funded by these four institutions

The strategy of the Ministry of Education (after PISA 2000) was to further develop

- Networking
- Teacher training
- Research and
- Course design

i.e. to set initiatives on a broader basis, that are interrelated with each other and which constitute the basis for further development and implementation on a national level.

The Teacher Training Course

Philosophy behind the concept
- Cooperative model of learning
- Builds upon the experience of the trainees
- Gives an opportunity to deepen knowledge on issues of interest
- Developed through evaluation and
- Supported by international experts (UK)

Target group
Adult educators + literacy workers GFL + GSL teachers, social workers, counsellors and those with a background in pedagogy, psychology or philosophy and other fields with teaching experience.

Points of discussion in Austria: Introduction of early retired teachers from primary schools to literacy work with adults

Aims of the Course
Towards:
- understanding of the historical dimension of literacy and the changing labour conditions in a society with developed information technology
- planning know-how for the implementation of training schemes (needs analysis, concepts, finance)
- understanding of the implications of literacy difficulties on adult's lives
- knowledge about their background and reasons for functional illiteracy
- matching abilities, to recognize the resources of the learners
- competencies in piloting learning processes
- analytical ability for the evaluation of learning progress and processes during the course
- self-reflexive abilities regarding attitudes and their implications
- clear concept of role assignment and limits
- planning of learning sequences
- development of materials
- competencies in methods: from beginners to advanced learners in literacy and numeracy, implementation of IT as well as learner-centred methodologies – enhancing self-directed learning, autonomy and communicative competencies of the learners

Certification
- Portfolio and 'diary'
- Written reflections on the contents of the modules
- Practical experience, its reflection and evaluation
- Written work at the end and
- Presentation of the project

Experience

- Trainees have been able to start working in different projects and to deepen their experience.
- The projects of the trainees, as documented in their final written works, constitute an important resource for practitioners and interested persons in the literacy field.
- The network "Netzwerk.Alphabetisierung" organizes further training programmes according to the needs of the trainers twice a year.

- The networking between practitioners, training staff and institutions has proved to be of advantage for programme development on all levels, through information transfer, reinforcement and support to new ideas and concepts
- The Teacher Training Course is constantly adapted and improved.
- Quality Standards for Trainers, Learning Schemes and Institutions will be developed within the EQUAL-Project "In.Bewegung" (7/ 2005 – 6/2007).

General education and adult education

What makes the difference? A few remarks:
- General Education focuses on teaching plans and examinations.
- The traditional role of teachers is to transmit knowledge.

- The role of literacy trainers for adults is a different one: a facilitator/supporter in an interactive learning process, and one who is able to recognize the resources and needs of each learner. The adults we learn with did not succeed in the prevailing school system, so negative experience must not be allowed to happen again __i.e. we cannot submit them to the same methodologies and un-reflected attitudes.
- Adults in literacy classes can build upon a wide range of experiences from a life without literacy.
- Traditional teachers are not used to build upon the resources of the learners.
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Ensuring Learners' Participation: The Experience of Frontier College
John O´Leary

Learners' participation depends upon learner inclusion. This means involving the learners at each stage of the literacy program,and respecting the learner as an equal partner with the teachers in the program.

Canada's Frontier College

Frontier College was founded in 1899 by a group of young university students and graduates of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Their aim was to make education available to isolated workers in logging, mining and railway camps. Most of these workers were European immigrants with little or no formal education. Many of them could not speak either English or French, the official languages of Canada.

The students began by setting up large, circus-like tents at the workplace. At the end of day, or in the evenings or on weekends, the workers would come to the tents in order to study and learn. The Frontier College instructors taught voluntarily and stayed in the camps for six to eight months.

The president of the College, Alfred Fitzpatrick, believed that all people, including workers, have the desire and the ability to learn but that social circumstances and political and economic inequities prevent all people from having the opportunity to attend school. He also recognized that everyplace is a learning place, not just the classroom. Fitzpatrick noticed how working people taught and learned from each other while working together and he saw how this reality would make it possible to include academic instruction as a part of everyday life at the workplace. Fitzpatrick trained his young volunteers how to listen and respond to the strengths and abilities of the workers in the camps. This meant having the ability to teach everything from basic literacy to high school and college level courses in the arts, sciences and literature.

In 1911, one of the university instructors, decided to work on a regular shift with the workers in his camp rather than wait for them to finish work. This was the beginning of the Labourer-Teacher program. Labourer-teachers took a regular job in the camp as a miner, logger, railway worker etc. They were paid the same wages as the other workers, and they lived in the same bunkhouses. In this way, they got to know the workers and they shared in their day- to -day experiences. They also discovered that they had a lot to learn from the workers__ how to work safely, how to do various tasks, how to work efficiently etc. In this way, the Frontier College instructors and the workers developed a relationship based upon equality and shared experience. The instructor had something to offer the workers in the evenings, e.g. literacy courses, while the workers were able to teach and mentor the instructors during the working day.

In these early years, some of the enduring principles about learners' participation at Frontier College were developed:

- All people are capable of learning.
- Every place is a learning place.
- People are learning everywhere and at all times, not just in school.
- Workers can be teachers as well as learners.
- The teacher and the learner must develop a relationship based upon common understanding and respect.
- The learner must be involved in the content of the instruction; it must be meaningful for him and relevant to his life experience.

From 1899 to 1923, Frontier College teachers and volunteer instructors lived, worked and taught in hundreds of worksites and camps across Canada. In 1923, Frontier College was granted a charter by the Parliament of Canada, giving the College the right to grant university degrees. Frontier College instructors were able to offer courses ranging from basic literacy to university level philosophy, literature, history and political science; it all depended upon the needs and interests of the workers. The Frontier College instructors were trained to provide those courses that the workers needed, wanted and were most interested in learning. In this way, the learners were involved in setting their own curriculum; they had an equal role to play in determining what they were to learn.

At Frontier College, our commitment to learners' participation in our programs and in our organization is rooted in our history and in our heritage.

Frontier College – Learners' Participation Today

Frontier College works to ensure learners' participation in a variety of ways, depending upon the situation.

Literacy programs

Frontier College teachers and volunteer instructors use a student-centred approach in all of our literacy programs. The key features of this approach include:

- The learner and the instructor set the content of the instruction together.
- There are many ways to learn – the instructor will use the methods best suited to the particular learner.
- Instruction is based upon the learners' strengths not upon their weaknesses.
- The learner is involved in the measurement and assessment of the program.
- The learner is involved in setting the goals or objectives of the program.

This student-centred approach works well in one-to-one and in small group settings. It is particularly effective for learners who are studying literacy or basic skills as it builds confidence and makes rapid improvement more likely. We appreciate that this kind of teaching approach is not possible in large, classroom settings nor is it appropriate for the learner to select course content in formal instruction or in technical training. But as an approach to literacy and basic skills instruction the student-centred model is particularly effective.

Beyond our actual literacy programs, Frontier College has found other ways of ensuring learners' participation in our work.

Program promotion

Most of our adult learners hear about our programs by word of mouth, particularly from other learners. This is an effective way to recruit new learners. When we do use other means to promote our work__ through posters, media events, radio and TV spots

etc.__ we involve learners in the development of key messages and images. Our goal is to create messages that will attract learners and focus on their abilities. Frontier College often uses learners in conference presentations, tutor training workshops and in political lobbying and advocacy efforts for the same reasons.

Learner recruitment

Frontier College goes to where learners gather in order to recruit new learners. These places include:
- community sites
- public housing neighbourhoods
- social, cultural and recreational sites
- the workplace
- the family

In these sites, learners are more comfortable to talk about their learning and literacy needs than in a formal, institutional setting. We use conversation and non-formal discussion rather than a meeting or interview process.

Learners are also effective recruiters of new learners. Peers are trusted and can speak and communicate with new learners more easily. They can also speak practically about how literacy programs work, what is expected, how outcomes are measured etc.

Plain clear language must be used in any written materials about a literacy program. And it is a good idea to return frequently to the same site for learner recruitment in order to generate interest.

Learners in the organization

At Frontier College, learners are able to participate in organizational activities in several ways.

Tutoring
Some learners are able to mentor/coach newer learners who are just starting the program. This kind of peer-tutoring is particularly effective at the workplace.

Special events
Frontier College organizes many kinds of promotional and advocacy events each year. Many of our learners are able to participate in planning and organizing such activities. These include public information booths, Literacy Day events on September

8th, volunteer recruitment activities and our Annual Meeting.

Literacy advocacy
Frontier College learners often participate in meetings with political leaders, educational leaders and policy makers about literacy programs, policy and funding matters.

Board membership
Frontier College, as a not-for-profit charity, is governed by a volunteer board of governors. At least two members of our board must be learners. In this way, the people we teach have a say in the governance of the organization.

Frontier College staff and volunteers provide assistance to the learners in preparing and participating in board meetings.

Learner participation in society

Beyond their role in Frontier College programs and activities, learners who are gaining literacy skills are also able to become more involved in their community.

Literacy makes participation in a democratic society easier as learners are able to read newspapers, columns, political books, campaign materials etc. and so become less reliant on the brief, and often superficial, radio and television commercials that are used in political campaigns. In Canada, the government agency that manages federal elections, Elections Canada, has prepared easy-to-read materials about elections and voting. Frontier College tutors use these materials in our classes during election periods.

Literacy also improves each person's quality of life in many ways. Improved literacy enables people to read information about personal and public health matters, parenting (including reading-aloud with children, understanding school reports and helping older children with homework) and everyday community events. And literacy skills enable a person to read for personal development or simply for pleasure, one of the greatest benefits of all.

Ensuring Learners' Participation Workshop Skills for Life in England
Andrew Nelson
Department for Education and Skills
-UK (England)

Key Facts

- In England 5.2 million adults aged 16-65 years old have literacy levels below Level 1 (the level expected of a capable 11 year old)
- In England 15 million adults aged 16-65 years old have numeracy skills below Level 1.
- We exceeded our first target to help 750,000 adults to gain a first qualification in literacy, language or numeracy. Between the launch of the strategy in 2001 and July 2004, 839,000 adults achieved 1,273,000 qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy. From April 2001 to July 2004, 2.6 million learners took up 5.5 million learning opportunities.

Overview - The Stages of Delivery

It is possible to identify four stages of delivery in any government policy initiative.

- Policy development
- Implementation
- Embedding change
- Irreversible progress

During 2001-04 a great deal of the policy has been developed for Skills for Life as a 'discrete' strategy and considerable implementation has taken place. In 2005 we are trying to ensure that Skills for Life are embedded in all post-16 learning programmes and that organisations embed Skills for Life in their organisational practices by adopting a 'whole organisation' approach to adult literacy, numeracy and language. Our aim is to demonstrate that by improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills an organisation or business will improve its ability to meet its targets. In this way we hope to create a momentum towards irreversible progress.

From the Margins to the Mainstream

We have also successfully embedded Skills for Life principles into other Department for Education and Skills policies including a new strategy for 14-19 year olds and a new policy on adult skills. Tackling the problem is a common goal for both strategies. There is coherence between the offer made in the 14-19 White Paper and the Skills White Paper with respect to getting the basics right. This means that the same standards will be applied at any age in studying English, Mathematics or ICT, working towards a vocational diploma, or following an apprenticeship programme.

14-19 White Paper - February 2005
The 14-19 White Paper emphasises the importance of functional skills in English, Mathematics, and ICT. The emphasis on functional skills for all young people is to set parameters to ensure that young people have mastery of the skills that they need for life and work.

The White Paper states that there is a need to 'work with employers and universities, as well as teachers and subject specialists to describe clearly what is to be understood as a functional skill'. The paper also acknowledges that there is already a framework to work with as 'level 2 Skills for Life standards for adult literacy and numeracy set out the kinds of things we would expect functional English and Maths to cover.

Skills White Paper - March 2005
This policy is designed to improve the skills of the workforce in order to help businesses create wealth and help people realise their potential. There is a strong emphasis on adult literacy, language and numeracy skills.

Tackling the legacy of poor adult literacy, language and numeracy skills through free tuition to help adults develop their basic skills is reaffirmed as a top priority. The difference is that the additional support and qualifications offered to adults will be aligned with the developments for 14-19 year olds which will be based on those developed under Skills for Life.

The Get On Marketing Campaign
The Get On campaign seeks to motivate adults with poor basic skills to enrol in free courses to improve their skills. It aims to:

- Reduce the stigma attached to people admitting to having low literacy/numeracy skills
- Put the issue on the nation's agenda
- Boost demand for literacy and numeracy learning amongst low skilled adults.

People with poor basic skills tend to become motivated to learn when they feel pressured due to significant challenges taking place in their lives – such as not being able to help their child with their homework, or not being able to deal with new work tasks. The campaign therefore seeks to confront the audience with their problem head-on, forcing individuals to do something about their poor skills. The Gremlin is the personification of the voice in a person's head telling them that they cannot do things. Everyone has his or her own Gremlin. For people with basic skill needs, externalising their feelings in the shape of the Gremlin makes it easier for them to deal with their problems.

In the last two years, we have seen a significant shift in attitudes – our audience no longer claim that learning is not for them, they now list a series of emotional and practical excuses for not taking action. Last year, the campaign focused on challenging the excuses people put up for not taking up a course. Among the excuses cited are practical (i.e. they have not the time or they think they cannot afford it) and emotional (i.e. they feel they are too old, or that they are not good enough).
This year the campaign focuses on destroying the Gremlins!

Key Facts

The campaign is considered one of the most successful government campaigns in recent years. In the course of the campaign, consistently high numbers of people who have called the helpline (between 84% and 94%) say that they intend to improve their basic skills.

- The advertising reached an excellent peak recognition rate of 91 percent amongst the target audience.
- Most recent follow-up research shows that around half of callers to the helpline have taken action to improve their skills. And of those who had not yet taken action to improve their basic skills, 91 percent still intended to do so in the future.

- The national multi-media and high profile campaign has generated around 300,000 calls to the national learning advice line, encouraging many thousands of people to improve their skills

Working with government departments

We are working with those departments with responsibilities for these groups to ensure that improving literacy and numeracy skills is embedded in their policies. The Adult Basic Skills Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, oversees the development and implementation of Skills for Life across government units.

We continue to work closely with government departments to encourage engagement with the Skills for Life. Main departments and many small departments demonstrated their commitment in action plans submitted to the Skills for Life Cabinet Committee in February 2004. As a direct requirement of the 2003 Skills White Paper, 21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential, these action plans have now been embedded in Skills Development Plans (SDPs) along with other Skills Strategy priorities, including Level 2 Qualifications, Apprenticeships, and Foundation Degrees.

We are meeting with larger (employing over 500 staff) government departments and agencies to provide support in writing SDPs. We have been able to provide one-to-one consultancy and given individualised advice on writing a robust plan. These meetings were scheduled until May 2005 when 2005/2006 plans were due to be submitted.

Progress has been varied in terms of engagement with Skills for Life. However, in July 2004, as part the Year One Progress Report, details were provided on the advances made. Projects include:

- A pilot project in 2003 led by the Public and Civil Service (PCS) trade union involving Department for Work and Pensions and Inland Revenue (Tax Department) was very successful in using Union Learning Representatives to screen volunteers. Following the success of the pilot project, PCS continue to work with DWP and IR and are in the process of broadening the involvement across government.

- The Ministry of Defense's work with the Army is an exemplar of how Skills for Life has been introduced and how both employer and employees can benefit. In the last year the Army have begun screening new recruits and deferring entry for those screening below entry Level 2.

We have developed generic marketing materials for use specifically in the Civil Service; these include scratch cards; everyday teaser quiz; poster and a fact sheet for practitioners. These materials were used on Learning at Workday 2004 with very positive feedback; we intend to reproduce them with additional materials.

Over the next year we will continue to offer support to government departments in embedding Skills for Life in their learning cultures. We plan to improve our range of marketing materials and offer them as both generic and contextualised products. Our main priority is to work with larger government organisations that have yet to address Skills for Life and offer them support in developing a strategy.

Employers and employees

The Government works alongside key partners to engage employers in the Skills for Life campaign and outline the benefits of workforce skills development. This aims to ensure increased productivity for business as well as better life choices for the individual. The Government recognises that learners are motivated by the need to achieve vocational qualifications in order to progress in life and at work, and that many learners are held back because of their literacy, language and numeracy skills. This is why we are promoting programmes of embedded learning which combine the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills with vocational and other skills. To support this, we have published resources that develop the literacy, language and numeracy skills needed for specific vocations such as Trowel Occupations, Social Care, Nursing and Horticulture. We are also supporting employers in developing the skills of their workforce through the free Employer Toolkit. This, along with a free training programme, helps employers to develop their own workforce development strategies

Employer training pilots

Work is underway to close Britain's skills gap by expanding the highly regarded Employer Training pilot schemes across the country:

- The new Employer Training programme will give every employee the right to free training in order to improve their employability by gaining vocational qualifications. Employers still have to agree to sign up to the project in the first place.

Business in the Community (BITC)

- We are working with Business in the Community to recruit Employer Champions in major companies. The role of Employer Champions is to use their own experience of the value of businesses supporting training to inspire and galvanise other businesses into action, switching them on to the economic and personal value of basic skills training. BITC are working with KPMG to support major employers address Skills for Life. BITC refer companies such as SERCO to KPMG who broker solutions with the LSC and other providers

Trade unions

- We are supporting the activities of Union Learning Representatives to raise awareness and implement workplace basic skills programmes funded through the Union Learning Fund
- TUC Learning services have agreed to recruit and support over 50 senior union representatives and advocates for Skills for Life. We want the unions and employers to work together to promote Skills for Life in the workplace.
- TUC Learning Fund report highlights: 8,984 basic skills learners in projects running in 2003/4 784 Union Learning Reps trained in the basic skills module

Family programmes

Family programmes aim to encourage family members to learn together. They encourage adults to learn for their own personal development and for the benefit of their children. Family programmes offer opportunities for intergenerational learning and wherever possible, lead both adults and children to pursue further learning.

Good programmes involve a high level of partnership working with appropriate organisations, including schools, colleges and the voluntary sector, in order to engage learners, provide quality provision, and to enable progression.

Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes aim to:

- Improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents
- Improve parents' ability to help their children
- Improve children's acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy.

Conclusion

The Skills for Life strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills in UK - England has sought to ensure learners' participation using a range of different strategies. In particular, the Get On campaign has successfully sought to use innovative ways to motivate adults with poor basic skills to enrol on free courses to improve their skills.

Workplace Basic Education in Ireland
Inez Bailey and Helen Ryan
National Adult Literacy Agency

Literacy/numeracy: a problem in Ireland?

- Five hundred thousand (500,000) people or about 25 percent of the population have difficulties with basic reading and writing.
- There are 573,219 persons aged 15 years and over in the workplace with less than lower secondary education.
- Ten percent of the population are leaving primary school with learning difficulties; these will be the workers of the future.
- There are 34,000 people in VEC adult literacy schemes.
- The range of options necessary include distance learning and workplace basic education.

The cost to business

- In the UK, estimated potential benefit to industry of improving literacy, language and numeracy to level 2 is £10 billion (Ernst and Young).
- In the UK, estimated annual cost of poor basic skills is EUR 9.5 billion.

Cost to business: An example
- A bakery worker was able to work out the amount of ingredients she needed for making doughnuts, as long as it was for round numbers, like 3,000. When there was a different quantity, like 3,500, she baked 4,000 and threw the remaining 500 in the bin.

The need to address the issue

- Better communication
- Increase quality, output and productivity
- Better team performance
- Better health and safety record
- Lessen errors and mistakes
- Increase ability to handle training on the job and quicker training results
- Increase retention of employees
- Improve labour management relations

Research with employers

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) commissioned research to contribute to the development of Policy Strategy and Guidelines for Irish Employers on Workplace Basic Education (WBE) provision to benefit low-skilled employees who are at risk of future unemployment[1]. This research involved consulting with a number of Irish-based companies and other key stakeholders to seek their views on the need for, and relevance of, Workplace Basic Education in Ireland. The findings showed that many employers were unaware of adult literacy difficulties and ways of responding to this problem in the workplace.

The key research findings were as follows:
- Employers had very little or no awareness of literacy difficulties amongst their workforce.
- Where the company encountered the problem, they managed the issue rather than dealt with the causes.
- All companies would welcome advice about how to best identify and handle the issue.

Top basic skills in the workplace

- Reading: Understand health and safety information
- Writing: Complete personal details (name, address etc.) on forms
- Numbers: Arrive at work on time and plan the use of time effectively
- Speaking and listening: Respond to questions from colleagues and customers

Spikiness

People's abilities tend to be 'spiky' …
Good at reading, for example, but have difficulty with writing
Good at reading in one context (for example, reading a newspaper) but have difficulty in another (for example, reading a technical manual).
Gaps in basic skills do not mean that the person is unable to carry out any of the basics of reading, writing, verbal communication and numeracy.

For example, a construction worker may be highly skilled at his/her job, can read manuals but finds writing difficult; he/she may have excellent verbal communication skills but lacks confidence in spelling

Solutions
- Awareness
- Identification
- Solutions
  - Dedicated workplace training programme
  - Trainers for trainers
  - Plain English

Two national projects have been established at the workplace

A. Model for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in development including screening tool and workplace curriculum Skillnets special activities to address low basic skills

Background

Skillnets is an enterprise-led, partnership-based support body dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of learning as a key element in sustaining Ireland's national competitiveness.

The Skillnets Training Networks Programme allows private enterprises to access flexible, innovative and cost-effective training and learning programmes by either forming or becoming part of a Training Network or 'Skillnet'. To date over 5,000 companies have improved business competitiveness by upskilling over 30,000 trainees through Skillnets.

Objectives of initiative

The purpose of this initiative is exclusively to stimulate and support network activities which specifically target workers with low basic skills. The following are the primary objectives, and networks may apply for funding under some or all of these:

1. Provision of low basic skills training activities
2. Promote awareness of low basic skills / literacy and numeracy issues in the workplace
3. Train trainers (internal and external) and staff on dealing with low basic skills / literacy and numeracy issues
4. Identify and develop case studies on low basic skills / literacy and numeracy issues in the work place
5. Others (as identified by networks)

Networks could apply for funding. The maximum project grant available to networks under this call was € 50,000. The closing date was September 2004 and activities had to be completed by end-March 2005.

Activities

Fifteen projects were approved by Skillnets, from all of the specified areas above. NALA worked closely with many projects in the development of their activities. In particular, we facilitated awareness raising, designed and delivered training for trainers programme and provided support and advice to networks.

Evaluation

Skillnets contracted support and evaluation from external expertise. The evaluation report should be ready in summer 2005.

B. Return to Learning project with Local Authorities

Overview

The Return to Learning Project is a partnership initiative between the Local Authority National Partnership Advisory Group (LANPAG) and the Department of Education and Science (DES), supported by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

Programme details

The programme consists of four hours per week over a 20-week period (80 hours in total) on work time. It is designed and delivered in a flexible and adaptable way to meet the needs of the participants. It is estimated to run the course for 7-8 people for 20 weeks, costs € 8,900. This includes 80 hours of promotion/awareness and recruitment by the Project Coordinator.

The local VEC literacy service sources and employs the Coordinator and tutor(s) who liaises with the local Partnership Facilitator and other relevant parties. The programme is run by this Coordinator, who is usually the core tutor.

The Partnership Facilitator plays a central role in the establishment and development of the programme. They introduce the Coordinator to relevant parties in the Local Authorities and are involved in the promotion of the programme, recruitment and release of the participants. They also liaise with the VEC literacy service throughout the programme.

Stages of development

1 Local Authority and VEC linkage
2 Local Authority Partnership Process
3 Recruitment of Project Coordinator
4 Induction process
5 Awareness of Return to Learning programme
6 Recruitment of participants
7 Designing the Course
8 The Return to Learning Course
9 Support

Current developments

The project began in 2000 with five pilot sites. Following the successful evaluation it was extended into the remaining 29 Local Authorities in 2001/02.

The evaluation report including implementation guidelines, written by an external evaluator Patricia Conboy, was published in February 2002 – see www.nala.ie to download a copy.

Case study: Local authorities

Identify needs through:

• Job or role change within the company
• New equipment and technology
• Low participation in training
• Low engagement in activities, for example, trade union, social committees.

Return to Learning initiative

• Began in 2000/01 in five pilot sites and expanded to other 29 Local Authorities in 2003 with over 350 participants
• Outcomes of programme include:
  – increased self-confidence;
  – literacy skill development and
  – a reawakening of an interest in learning.

VEC Adult Literacy Service

The Adult Literacy service is organised and delivered through the VEC Adult Literacy Schemes throughout the country. At present, there are 34,000 people participating in these schemes. The schemes provide learner-centred tuition on an individual and/or group basis to adults with basic education needs. This service is free of charge to individuals through funding from the Department of Education and Science Adult Literacy Development Fund.

Adult Literacy Schemes provide:

• choice of individual and small group tuition;
• free and confidential learning;
• curriculum based on the adult learner's needs and goals;
• option of accreditation;
• flexible duration, depending on learner's needs and goals;
• advice and assistance on progression routes.

In relation to the workplace, the adult literacy service is not resourced to deliver training through its current funding. Recently the Government saw through the establishment of a Workplace Basic Education Fund (WBEF).to be administered by the FAS (a national state training body) The fund allotment for 2005 is €2 million.

The Role of Municipalities in Literacy
Rosa M. Falgàs i Casanovas
ACEFIR

ACEFIR, or the Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research, is a social initiative that brings together a team of professionals from different fields with the common interest of working for education, training and research related to youth, adults and older people.

In the last three years, it has developed a project, within the framework of GRUNDTVIG 2, on Management, Organization and Program of the Municipal Learning Centers (GLOP's), in collaboration with the City Lit in the UK, Odysee and Stichting voor Volkshogeschoolwerk in The Netherlands, Swedish School of Library and Information Science and Vuxenutbildningen i Hylte in Sweden, and Sistema de Lectura Pública of Catalonia in Spain.

In the first year, we familiarized ourselves with the different systems of adult education in each participant country. We also had the chance to know "in situ" all spaces that each country brings to adults for lifelong learning.

During the second year, we went into how ICT can help to make lifelong learning a reality. Trainers and learners communicated by e-mail and by video-conferences. At the same time, we had the chance to learn new experiences where spaces of the non-formal field__ e.g. libraries and museum, can be a resource for lifelong learning.

Toward the end of the project in the third year, we organized an International Conference to facilitate dialogue on lifelong learning. In this Conference, apart from the partners, other people from other regions in Europe were able to participate, thanks to the GRUNDTVIG 3 grants. The Conference allowed us to extend and strengthen the vision that we were reaffirming along the three years.

It is necessary to optimize resources and coordinate efforts of those who have something to offer about adult learning in different public spaces:

civic centers, libraries, cultural centers, museums, social centers, "casals" and "aules" for older adults, vocational centers – workroom schools, neighborhood associations, cultural associations and trade unions.. A strong coordination body may be established by the Municipality as it is in the best position to address the needs of its inhabitants.

Given all these considerations, we submit that:

- Actually, there are many spaces that could be used to carry out literacy programmes, but they are not considered as such.

- Municipalities are the appropriate institutions to develop the necessary learning programmes for its inhabitant...

- The Civil Centres (multifunctional) are the key to offer full learning programmes and that they can supply the best materials and people.

- 'Education for All' means that the small municipalities must have the same opportunities for learning as the bigger municipalities.

- 'Lifelong learning' for the inhabitants of small municipalities means that they must have the access to the use of technology, education and a training centre to open windows to other possibilities.

- The acknowledgement of Adult Education must go further than formal education; it should also include non-formal and informal education so that there can be full learning programmes in these three fields.

- For every citizen, informal learning, being the only free possibility to learn not completely mediated by the labour market, has to be given support to motivate adults to get access to formal and non-formal learning. For this reason, public libraries, next to their task of providing information and basic skills in ICTs, should implement programmes in the field of adult learning. The museums, next to the educational programmes they have, should also serve as one of the principal instruments to develop adult learning.

- Informal learning, as an instrument of social cohesion and integration, is being carried out, thanks to the way the local organisations – educational, cultural and social – are able to establish a chain of measures and facilities for adult learners.

- The importance of this chain of cooperation between adult education centres and schools, museums, libraries and social services finds its basis on the commitment and the full support of the local authorities.

From Adult Learners' Week to Local Education Plan
Lidwien Vos de Wael
Dutch Platform Non-formal Adult Education & Foundation for Folkhighschoolwork

In the Netherlands, adult education has become more and more the responsability of the local government. Municipalities are supposed to develop an education policy in the widest meaning of the word, including formal, non-formal and informal education. Formal adult education is very familiar to local politicians, which is certainly not the case for non-formal and informal learning. Generally, there is lack of knowledge about these two learning-areas. And as we know: 'unknown means unloved'. This gives adult educators the great challenge to inform their municipalities about the broad sprectrum of adult education and to show the importance of lifelong and lifewide learning for their adult citizens.

Since 2000, we celebrate the Adult Learners' Week (ALW) in our country. The main accent of the ALW lies on activities at the local level. The Dutch Platform Non-formal Adult Education considers the ALW not only as a national campaign to motivate adults to learn, but also as an instrument to stimulate local providers of adult education (and others) to work together, to form local networks and to develop Local Education Plans, in order to realize effective and exciting local learning environment for adults in general and for specific (disadvantaged) groups in particular. Several regions in our country are experimenting with this idea which already led to some first results.

Local education platform

Within the Dutch context, an Education Platform should involve the following as main local actors: the regional (vocational) adult education centre, public library and folkuniversity. The municipality should play an important role in stimulating and facilitating the platform. Other important partners are 1) socio-cultural centres, cultural centres and museums, neighbours associations, etc. and 2)

employers organisation, job office, etc. These partners may join the platform to share a common responsability: to provide quality adult education, accessible for every adult in town, including specific target groups.

An example: Lelystad

Since December 2004, education providers who originally formed the ALW-initiative group in Lelystad, the provincial capital with 70.000 inhabitants, started a structured process that should lead to a more permanent local education platform. The participants are several education centres, public library, cultural centre and the older adults centre. This process has been initiated by the municipality and is conducted with the help of an external consultant. The management staff of these local providers discuss about the 'ideal picture' of local adult education in 2008 and the measures to take to get there. They used drawings to clarify their ideas.

I want to share with you the drawing of a river landscape that illustrates the way some partners see their working process.

The story of the river landscape

The river Lifelong Learning crosses the landscape. Different kinds of boats are sailing, cruiseships with a large crew, cosy second hand-ones, speedboats etc. all in their own direction. Every boat needs to find passengers in order to keep their head above water. This story starts when some boats decided to coordinate their efforts. They all came in a dock, where the water was relatively quiet, and boatcaptains and crew visited each other. They used the period in the dock to get to know the other boats (with their specific products, services, needs, targetgroups, strong points, organisation, culture, etc.). Captains and crew discussed possible areas of cooperation, possible shared directions, they also discussed differences among them. On the riverside was a considerable group of people who would like to join the rivertrip with them, but did not do so. These possible passengers did not know what kind of journey each boat was offering, they were probably wondering where and how to enter the boat or simply did not trust the crew. Crewmembers decided to leave

for a while to ask these people about their wishes and dreams. They were rather surprised that these possible passengers could explain very clearly what they want, how to reach their destination and which kind of support they would need during their voyage. Many things were happening in the dock: boats were clashing, sometimes gently and other times more severely. Some boats started a joint venture, others even a beginning lovestory. A dock-keeper took care that all boats would feel as comfortable as possible. Before the doors opened, the majority of the boats decided to form a common fleet: they shared the same goal and agreed upon a way to get there. These boats left the dock as a group and sailed in a more coordinated way together to the bright horizon (and a new dock for a next time-out). The boats have more passengers now because they also know better how to offer them a nice and attractive itinerary….

This riverstory is not a romantic story, far from that. It also means, amongst other things, hard work toward cooperation and shared goals given conflicts and differences. The partners in the Lelystad-process defined some key-goals to reach:

- they want to know each other: their products and services, target groups, strength and priorities, organisation, culture, etc.
- they will construct an overall view of adult education in town and analyse it: which courses or study possibilities are offered at this moment, what is missing, what are the strong and weak points.
- they will analyse the needs and demands of the target groups they want to reach, which certainly requires a more profound action.
- many issues have to be figured out, e.g. how to work together to address better the needs of specific target groups, how to handle competition among providers, etc.? A school director said: 'for me competition is a challenge: it keeps my organisation sharp'.

Finally, within one school year the participating organisations want to realise a more permanent Education Platform and maybe start to write a Local Education Plan.They will negotiate this Plan with the municipality in order to get support and facilities.

The following are needed to make this process successfull: managements' clear will to work together (also important for continuation after a staff-change), a growing mutual trust, creativity, open ears-eyes-mind, a fine balance between a certain 'quietness' in education-land and at the same time some external pressure to cooperate, an active municipality that stresses the importance of the process, and an external consultant during some parts of the process.

Analysis of the local situation

The key part in this whole process is the analysis of the local situation and the formulation of a strategy on how to reach the main target groups (e.g. illiterate people). This requires, besides available statistical data , a real 'investigation'. What are the actual problems and barriers that (e.g.) illiterate people confront in joining a course or study? You will get the best answers by talking to the people themselves, by interviewing them, by meeting them in their own surrounding, by talking to people who meet them and/or work with them, (intermediaries from community centres, social wellfare, job offfices, churches, etc.), and by cooperating with their organisations. All these people are experts in the materials.

Chain cooperation

The knowledge that providers gain with this 'exercise', will enable them to define better strategies to reach the target groups and to increase the quality-level of the education in town. It will show the value of providers working together in a co-called chain cooperation and offer flexible programmes to the target groups. As an educator said: 'only a coordinated fleet can win the battle against illiteracy and exclusion'.

Starting point in policymaking

There is a significant risk during the process of building a local education platform. Organisations can focus too much on themselves and the other partners, on the institutional part. However, the starting point of all policymaking in adult learning has to be the learner.

The target groups must be the focus of attention.

Literacy and Numeracy in Local Communities
Jan Eldred
National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

The National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE), is an advocacy organisation which promotes more, better and different learning opportunities for adults. We conduct research and provide development activities as well as organise conferences and courses and publish books and journals.

In the UK, it is estimated that there are 5-7 million people whose literacy is underdeveloped and 10-15 million people whose numeracy skills are not appropriate to the demands of living and working in 2005. The government has developed an ambitious strategy called Skills for Life with far-reaching goals for 2004, 2007 and 2010.

In the first period of the strategy, many people were encouraged to get involved in learning; increases in participation and achievement were recorded. However, many people do not see that learning is relevant to their circumstances, abilities and interests. Research projects have been established to identify ways of reaching people, supporting them to engage in learning and sustain involvement to upgrade their skills. Projects were designed to reach 'the hard to reach'. However, many providers quickly saw that it was the provision of learning opportunities which was hard to reach and not the learners. One of the initiatives was called Basic Skills in Local Communities.

Basic Skills in Local Communities

The project was initiated by the National Learning and Skills Council. This organisation is answerable to the government for funding, planning and provision The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) managed the fund. Organisations from across England were invited to suggest how they could use some funding to reach and work with more and different adults.

Many ideas and projects were approved and from their work, lessons were learned about engaging more and different learners, through community-based provision.

Locations

A wide range of locations was used, including faith centres, health centres, cafés, community centres, libraries and museums. They planned their learning opportunities with partners and learners. These discussions included the programme style, pace, content and duration. Some courses were short 'tasters' of three hours, others were organised over a weekend of up to 15 hours and others ran for up to 60 hours. Longer courses were often built up in 'modules'.

Support

Another feature of many learning activities was the support offered to learners. This included crèches, books, equipment, and refreshments. However, staff support in offering sympathetic but stimulating learning environment, and making available information and guidance to encourage access and progression, were also considered important.

"You're listened to and encouraged; at school this wasn't the case. I feel very supported". (learner)

Recruitment

Projects used a wide range of strategies to encourage people to get involved in learning. Partnerships with organisations that are regularly in touch with groups of people who are not usually found in learning centres were successful. Many of these were voluntary organisations working with, for example, older people, people with disabilities, families or those experiencing mental ill health.

Some organisations trained local 'champions' or 'ambassadors' to promote learning amongst their own communities and neighbourhoods. Outreach

work was actively encouraged and a wide range of publicity strategies used. Meeting people, offering information on their own, visiting familiar locations, sharing food and targeting particular areas or neighbourhoods proved successful.

The most popular contexts for learning were those developing literacy, language or numeracy embedded in or alongside IT' Health and Safety, Food Hygiene, Driving Test theory, First Aid and Arts and Crafts. Some learners took national qualifications while many more reported that they gained confidence and self-esteem. Many tutors reported that they designed programmes, which helped individuals to see that they can learn; they wanted them to develop positive identities as learners.

What helped success?

By analysing what many projects did and by asking organisers and learners what seemed to work best, a number of success indicators emerged.

These included:

- The venue – a local, familiar location
- The teachers – sympathetic, understanding of the barriers faced by learners, but interesting and challenging
- Timing and duration – negotiated with partner organisations and the learners
- Planning – with those who know the learners best as well as the learners themselves.
- Popular subjects – responding to learners interest and demand
- Support – for the learners as well as the learning process

What were the biggest challenges?

By focusing the initiative on attracting new and different learners to basic skills activities, lessons about what stops participation were learned alongside what seems to lead to success. Project participants were asked what they found most difficult.

The following areas of concern were identified:

- Time for different partners to get together and build trust to plan, recruit and support learners; Screening and initial assessment procedures, which are sensitive to learners' needs and situations, to develop relevant learning opportunities;
- Recording learning outcomes to indicate achievements where no qualification or accreditation is used;
- Supporting progression from community to more 'mainstream' activities; Stop- start funding.

Outcomes

The Basic Skills in Local Communities initiative achieved many outcomes:

- New learners were attracted to learning literacy, language and numeracy.
- More learners achieved national qualifications and many obtained local recognition of their achievements.
- New partnerships were formed to help create a firm basis for future growth.
- New, different and better ways of delivering learning were developed and delivered.
- A greater understanding of what works, when trying to take learning opportunities to more and different learners, was developed involving providers and their partner organisations.

So....

Having reported on some action research undertaken offering basic skills in local communities, the conference workshop was asked to consider:

"How do we convince the policy-makers and funding agencies that there must be lots of community-based learning activities to develop fulfilled individuals, learning societies and successful economies?"

Libraries as an Open Space for Further Education
Barbora Horavová
Multicultural Center Prague

The Multicultural Center Prague (MKC Prague) is a Czech civic association founded in 1999 with the following goals:

- Demonstrate that multicultural coexistence is possible and enriching on all levels;
- Promote a society that is tolerant, open to differences and makes the most of cultural diversity within the Czech Republic and beyond its borders, while promoting the values of social integration and cohesion;
- Advocate intercultural dialogue and learning among diverse cultures within and outside of the EU by engaging in a wide range of activities,including the organization of cultural and educational activities, public discussions, publishing, research and collaboration with other organizations and individuals at home as well as abroad.

Diversity in Libraries

In 2002, the Multicultural Center Prague launched Diversity in Libraries, a project aimed at making available to users of Czech public libraries books that provide information about the past and present, as well as the customs and traditions of different cultures, ethnic and national minorities, or books that deal with the topical issue of multiculturalism. Another goal of the project is to educate librarians and information officers working in libraries using regional training sessions and international seminars.

As an innovation in the Czech Republic, the project's main assumption is that public libraries play a major role in developing the country's civil society and it is therefore necessary to strengthen their role as information, educational, and cultural centers for people from all walks of life. Libraries are not just "bookshelves" anymore: they can and must carry out a broad range of activities, from organizing courses for children and adults, cultural programs for children, students and the general public, to function-ing as a meeting place for various groups of people. Today, the role of libraries is undergoing a profound change.

Information literacy in libraries

At the end of the 1980s, libraries became greatly interested in the issue of information literacy. Librarians and information professionals decided to take part in the process of improving information literacy levels during the conference "Libraries and the Search for Academic Excellence" held in the United States in 1987. Conference participants agreed that university libraries should be involved in the process of education and should help prepare students for lifelong learning. Two years later, the Presidential Committee on Information Literacy of the American Library Association established a definition of information literacy; it is not just searching for information, but also understanding and evaluating it and being aware of one's own informational needs.

Libraries in the Czech Republic have taken first steps in the area of information literacy during the 1990s. Since then, information literacy is the focal point of interest for information professionals, especially in universities, who have become very active in this area. Libraries are trying to define their own strategies, and are setting up organizations in order to co-ordinate and shape the educational process towards information literacy. These organizations include the University Libraries Association of the Czech Republic, the School Libraries Association, and the Working Group for information Education and Literacy in Universities. These efforts are in line with lifelong learning process standards since everyone must go through the information literacy system[1].

At the same time, reforms are underway in the area of education dealing with various issues including the question of incorporating information literacy into the formal Czech curriculum. So far, there are three key documents covering the concept of literacy: the State informational Policy (Ministry of Information Policy, 1999), the Concept of National Information Policy in Education (2000), and the National Program for Development of Education (Ministry of Education, 2001). However, the definition of information literacy in these documents is far from adequate and the documents are not in direct relation to one another.

Challenges

Apart from the lack of a succinct definition of information literacy in the Czech government's documents (something that is without doubt essential for any and all future efforts on the part of educational institutions in this area) and the lack of materials/experience/funding, there exist the following problems as regards the role of public libraries: 1) the changing requirements on librarians and informational professionals in libraries; and 2) the sheer diversity of the potential target group of information literacy policy.

Contemporary society calls on librarians to play new roles, including the role of a teacher or a consultant. For the past few years, the educational role of libraries has been debated by the society, in general, and by the staff of libraries, in particular. One group of librarians and information officers claims that libraries cannot substitute the educational role of schools. Another group sees the openness of libraries to the general public (thanks to their basic rules, libraries are open to all) as an opportunity for libraries to become a 'multifunctional' meeting point. MKC Prague is interested in the latter group of librarians. However, it is necessary to recognize that librarians have no training in pedagogy and this should be taken into account when the curricula for students of information and library sciences are (re)formulated.

Pedagogical skills of librarians must correspond to the needs of all potential users__ i.e. the target group of library activities aimed at increasing the level of information literacy. The target group may be very diverse and may include children, students, parents, professionals, public officials as well as disabled people, foreigners and members of minorities. If libraries wish to be active in pursuing information literacy, they need to know how to reach out to the different user groups, how to communicate with them and how to attract them. Otherwise, there will be no response to any of these efforts.

MKC Prague has organized several training sessions for librarians covering, for example, library services for minorities and foreigners, multicultural education in libraries, acquisition of multicultural literature or practical tips about organizing cultural events about minorities. The next phase of the project will aim at the best possible local integration of immigrants in different EU countries through education and dissemination of information by public libraries. The overall objective of all project activities is to create in public libraries a unique space for diverse cultures to meet.

The issue of information literacy is closely related to educational activities in libraries. The more diverse the services provided by libraries, the better the level of literacy all library users will achieve.

Illiterates Online! Learning reading and writing via internet?

Ralf Kellershohn
APOLL / Deutscher
Volkshochschul-Verband e.V.

Since 8th September 2004 "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" (I want to learn how to write) has been online. The web-based E-Learning-Portal has been developed as part of the APOLL project (APOLL = Alfa Portal Literacy Learning) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" has been specially designed for adult functional illiterates and provides individual daily learning units.

In June 2005, the Association for Education and Information awarded ""ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de"" the prestigious COMENIUS medal for best practice in terms of content, didactics, design and technical implementation

1. Introduction: Why combine new media and basic education?

Having functional illiterates in mind, the idea of using a web based e-learning portal seems odd. How could functional illiterates learn with the computer? Why should we confront them with a media that mainly requires literacy skills? Why is the integration of media skills into literacy useful or even necessary? I propose three answers.

The growing competition on the job market leads to an increasing demand for qualification.
Jobs that do not require literacy skills have become rare. Due to economic reasons, low qualification jobs are being transferred abroad (the textile industry shifts to Asia, suppliers shift to low-cost Eastern Europe). Moreover, the computer's extension reduces the jobs with little qualification, as robots take over the work at assembly lines.

This means that the number of jobs that do not require technical skills are becoming rare, too: nowadays, the computer basics and the operational functions of display, keyboard and mouse have nearly become a prerequisite as the driver's license.

However, companies do not employ unskilled workers for the assembly line anymore, as the employees need to control the robots. In the "United Nations of Microsoft", Excel, Word and PowerPoint nearly have become additional basic languages or competencies respectively.

Horst Uhrig, for example, a 47-year-old course participant from Ludwigshafen, worked as a labourer for the pharmaceutical company ROCHE. The warehouse administration switched to computer-controlled forklift trucks. All of a sudden, he had to supervise a computer and had to read (and write) reports dealing with a computer. He had the choice: dismissal or learning how to read and write. However, he needed both__ literacy and IT skills.

The increasing presence of computers in our everyday lives
The fact that communication and information are more and more processed with computers and the internet make it essential to provide people with the skills required for the use of all ways of information, communication and orientation. This has something to do with participation and citizenship. (E-government, e-paper, WM Tickett, Bahn)

The computer and the internet are more than just tools to make a living
They are main instruments for information and communication. The ability to use these tools decides whether one belongs to the "information avantgarde" or to the new "information proletariat". The digital divide already segregates people with little possibilities for participating in computer-based processes.

An integration of media skills into the concept of literacy is indispensable for providing people with the required skills "to meet tomorrow's job market demands, to access future bodies of knowledge, for evaluating its value and usefulness, for participating in society formations and for determining and expressing themselves." (UNESCO Definition)

In the first place, the availability of the Internet is growing rapidly. Radio took 30 years, and television 14 years, to reach a level of nationwide use comparable to that currently enjoyed by the Internet. The Internet is thus on the way to becoming a mass medium. It is only logical for literacy work to make use of this technology in future.

2. The APOLL project

The APOLL project was launched to respond to these challenges. It was launched in 2002, in collaboration with the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V.) and the Federal Literacy Association (Bundesverband Alphabetisierung e.V.), with funding support from the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).

APOLL aims to improve basic education using the potential of new media, to support the work of the literacy coaches, to enhance the target group's media skills and to raise public awareness of "illiteracy". In order to fulfil these goals, APOLL put several activities into practice that address these different groups of literacy tutors, adult functional illiterates and the public.

As E-literacy can only use technology as a tool, the key factor in the success of the new e-learning provision is networking between trainers. It cannot become a practical reality without constant cooperation among literacy course tutors. One of the main aims of APOLL is therefore to strengthen communication among trainers, who — in Germany— frequently work alone.

www.apoll-online.de is an information platform for literacy coaches. It offers daily updates on news and events pertaining to "literacy" and "education and training." It includes a protected networking area for literacy trainers to share learning materials, find people to talk to within the region and in other parts of the country, to discuss the particular problems of individual learners, and to ask for help from colleagues who may be facing similar problems. Additionally, Germany's most comprehensive literature database on "literacy" can be accessed free of charge, together with the course finder and "Germany's easiest newspaper", the APOLL Newspaper.

The APOLL Newspaper is a one-sheet newspaper, with news on politics, society, culture, sports, and every day life, using easy language. It has become a huge success and an integral part of literacy courses in Germany. The demand for a weekly publishing program led to an obvious solution: the APOLL Newspaper is now being published every week alternately by the APOLL Team and by a literacy course.

In 2005, APOLL conducts a literature competition, called "we write" (wir schreiben) for the second time, inviting course participants to write their own texts describing pictures. In 2004, more than 230 texts were handed in. A compilation of texts was published in the book "Wörtersehnsucht" (Yawning for words). In 2005, course participants contributed more than 350 texts. The winners of the competition will be awarded on world literacy day (8 September 2005) in Berlin.

All these and a lot more activities promoted "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" successfully. Moreover, APOLL's activities created a comprehensive set in support of literacy work in Germany — a set in which the e-learning portal presents the main "tool".

3. Use of ICT in literacy courses in Germany today

Besides a few CD-based learning programs or text processing programs, the computer has hardly been used in literacy courses until today. The use of computers in literacy courses depends on the facilities' equipment. But also the qualification of the literacy trainers and their general attitude towards computers have an influence on whether a computer is being used and even considered as a supportive tool in the literacy work or not.

One might think of literacy and media skills as separate areas, that one must learn reading and writing before trying to use a computer. If we consider an unspecific competence level as criteria for the media's integration into literacy course work, we will postpone the acquisition of media skills to some indefinite future date.

We should not be demand-oriented but be supply-oriented: The question must not be "Which competencies are required from a user in order to operate the programme properly?" but "What is required from a computer program in order to make it work appropriately for an adult functional illiterate?"

If we offer functional illiterates a useful computer and/or a web-based tool, we can work on literacy and media skills at the same time. In Germany, the e-learning portal "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" is a huge step towards integrating media skills into basic skills.

4. The development process of "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de"

The big question when the project began was where the target group of "functional illiterates" would acquire the necessary media equipment, and how they would react to it. Together with the Volkshochschulen (adult education centres), the APOLL project surveyed over 1,000 participants in literacy courses at 29 Volkshochschulen in 13 federal Länder between March and May 2003. The LuTA Study (on the Circumstances and Technical Equipment of Functional Illiterates) reveals the trends in this area for the first time: 43 percent of the participants questioned stated that they were willing or very willing to learn at a PC, and twenty two percent already had private Internet access. Other results of the survey show what educational careers and social consequences are associated with illiteracy: sixty one percent of those questioned had no formal school-leaving qualifications, while seventy one percent had completed no vocational training. As a result, forty one percent of the functional illiterates were unemployed and probably stood little chance of finding jobs in the future, given the increasing use of technology at the workplace. (A summary of the LuTA Study in English is available on apoll-online.de)

To develop a successful computer-based tool for literacy course work, we needed to meet the target group's special requirements in terms of technical usability, content and didactics. To ensure quality and usability of "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" for illiterates and to ensure the literacy trainers' acceptance of the learning portal, it was indispensable to leverage the trainers' expertise and to include them into the development process. Therefore, APOLL informed literacy experts about the project, the idea of the learning portal and the conditions of its development in various meetings. Thus, numerous contacts could be attached and valuable feedbacks incorporated in preliminary stages.

5. What "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" is

On 8th September 2004, "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" went online.

Learners at all levels receive individual learning packages with daily practice units matching their individual level of competence. Besides audio ma-

terials supporting the exercises, a large number of pictures, symbols and animations provide additional help in understanding. The learning progress is recorded and assessed automatically, and the learning calendar is adjusted individually in response. As the project is completely funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the E-Learning-Portal is accessible for free.

In the first few days alone, the hits on the site totalled well over 250,000. Since then, 18,000 visitors have expressed interest. Five thousand five hundred (5.500) anonymous users are regularly learning via the portal, with six online tutors supporting them. (As of June 2005). Additionally around 900 people learn via PC in Volkshochschule courses, supported by 245 course tutors (as of June 2005).

The e-learning portal will provide a total of over 17,000 individual exercises (right now there are 2,000 exercises integrated) arranged in six -stepped levels. There are 25 different types of exercises. The exercises in "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" were written by ten very experienced literacy trainers, guaranteeing a portal conceptualised for the practice.

The content of each exercise is taken from one of 11 everyday life's areas (banking, the home, public authorities, friends and relationships, nature, etc.). "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" can be used both as a learning aid complementing the students' reading and writing courses, and as a first step towards the written word for anonymous users not yet taking part in a literacy course. "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" was tested on its functionality in a complex usability test conducted at the University of Bremen with adult functional illiterates.

6. How does "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" work?

The different levels of learning
"ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" covers the full range from functional illiterates with little writing skills to advanced learners who mostly can write but want to work on their orthography. "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" therefore distinguishes six different levels of writing abilities.

First, the user is asked to assess himself/herself whereupon a composition of exercises fitting the correspondent level is compiled and evaluated. If

the result lies above or below the self-assessment, "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" assorts a few additional exercises on a higher or lower level. According to these, the user's competence level is determined.

The learning calendar
Between one and four learning units are provided in the learning calendar daily. Learners may postpone individual days, thus defining their own learning process.

Reference to areas of everyday life
The individual learning units' vocabulary is taken from so-called "areas of everyday life": language topics (such as end-doubling of consonants, capitalisation, etc.) are practised using word examples drawn from topics relevant to practical living (at the bank, in the supermarket, at home, etc.). Thus, users not only learn a language topic, but also acquire enhanced active skills through this reference to everyday life (using a bank ATM, filling in forms, writing applications, etc.).

In addition, the learners can alter the different areas to match their own interests. (Thus, the learner can exercise the same linguistic topic with various word materials from different areas of every day life.)

"ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" gives an automatic feedback and additional help on the linguistic topic (also audio supported). The learner also can set up an individual learning file with exercises or words that he wants to practise or background information on linguistic topics.

Evaluation and progress
The weekly progress is recorded automatically and assessed linguistically, whereas the following week's learning unit is adjusted accordingly: If language topics have been mastered successfully, the learner moves on in the curriculum. If exercises were not solved correctly or were not even approached, the same linguistic topics are arranged in new exercises in the following weeks. The system is also capable of identifying mistakes that recur from earlier language topics, and provides appropriate supporting exercises.

Additional offers
"ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" also offers News (with audio support if wanted), the APOLL Newspaper, Radio play, e- and voice-Mail, Forum and templates

for job application, curriculum vitae, etc. "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" thus provides all the typical offers of a web- based environment with learning supplies, information and communication.

Tutorial support
Their course tutors, who administer their courses on the learning portal, correct exercises and monitor learning, support learners in reading and writing courses. An online tutor, who corrects exercises, keeps in contact via e-mail and voice mail, and gives feedback on the learning progress, and supports anonymous learners not taking a reading and writing course.
To achieve a sustainable implementation of ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de in literacy work in Germany, it is necessary to train literacy trainers. Therefore, APOLL provides continuous training free of charge.

(Dis)Advantages of using the internet
To use the Internet and not a CD-based solution has certain disadvantages and advantages: Only few adult functional illiterates have a private access to the internet as it is not available everywhere and/or not at a sufficient speed.

On the other hand: Radio took 30 years, and television 14 years, to reach a level of nationwide use comparable to that currently enjoyed by the Internet. In Germany, 55 percent of households are now online and the figures are increasing. Also, high speed Internet connections are becoming readily available. The Internet is thus on the way to becoming a mass medium.

The web-based solution offers the advantage to improve "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" continuously: Exercises can easily be corrected, changed or added, new items (like the "Chat module" or the possibility to save difficult words out of the exercises to the personal file for later practise) can be implemented at the push of a button. As "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" is using a complex content management system (CMS), the literacy tutors writing the exercises for the E-Learning-Portal can do so accessing the CMS via internet from home. This limits the costs and offers more flexibility in terms of staff- and time-management.

The future
Besides ""ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" for Literacy, the APOLL project will develop content for numeracy

"ich-will-rechnen-lernen.de" (I want to learn how to calculate) and basic english.

7. Summary

If we concede the increasing role of computer-based technology for information and communication, the growing importance of media skills for illiterates in order to confront the increasing demands on the job market, the importance of these skills for personal self-determination, social participation and citizen-ship__- does that mean that "ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" is an additional step towards the virtual society? Is a virtual classroom where learners work anonymously and alone in front of their computer screens our future vision?

"ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de" does not want to replace direct teaching. No ICT-based solution can claim to substitute direct teaching. It would not make any sense. Anyone who ever tried to learn a foreign language with CDs, or CD Rom agrees that these can be valuable supplementary tools to sup-port the learning process, but they will never replace immediate feedback from a teacher or the encour-aging backup from a learning group. Especially in literacy, the co-students are more than a learning group. For illiterates it is important to realize that they are not alone, to gain confidence.

ICT and distant learning can be very helpful in reach-ing certain target groups that have potential access to the internet (with help of their family, neighbour, colleague) and do not have yet the courage to participate in a literacy course or do not fancy the idea of working on an item they already have made negative experience with. ICT and distance learning can be helpful in motivating them to learn, initiat-ing a re-entry in the learning process, supplying an additional learning environment including the media possibilities.

If we limit our expectations concerning distance learning and ICT, and do not expect ICT to offer an all-embracing solution for literacy, but understand both as helpful and supportive tools, we will not be disappointed. The first results are encouraging.

Links and further Information:

www.ich-will-schreiben-lernen.de
The web-based E-Learning-Portal for adult functional Illiterates.
Accessible for free

www.apoll-online.de
Information on the APOLL Project, News and events to do with "Literacy" and "Basic Skills"

www.wir-schreiben.de
Literature competition inviting literacy course participants to hand in texts

www.apoll-zeitung.de
"Germany's easiest newspaper". A one sheet Newspaper, with news on politics, society, culture, sports, every day life and uses easy language.

Literacy through ICTs
Helen Ryan
National Adult Literacy Agency
(NALA)

In 2000 NALA, the Department of Education and Science (D/ES) and RTÉ began to explore and develop literacy through television. The process evolved from devising learning objectives to a tendering process, from balancing the entertainment agenda with the educational aspect and creating a blended format where learning can take place; resulting in five highly successful TV series and two radio series.

Television: Read Write Now

Read Write Now is a distance education initiative for adults who want to brush up on their reading and writing skills in the privacy of their own homes. It is a highly innovative and successful distance education initiative, held in high esteem by other western industrialised countries as it was a ground-breaking project in the adult literacy field, both in its development and partnership approach and its format and content structure.

The main elements of the Read Write Now project are:
- TV series: 12 half-hour programmes;
- A learner pack consisting of a workbook and support book;
- A freephone support line;
- A website (only in Series 5);
- Evaluations undertaken after each series.

Television series

The television programmes evolved over five years, from content elements to styles of presentation. Some areas dealt with in recent years include learning to learn and the introduction of information communications technology (ICT). The structure of the series consists of the following:

- The learner's story: a profile of an adult literacy learner. In the 5th series a learner prepares for and does a task;
- Learning points in reading, writing and spelling are built into each week's programme and featured in the workbook; and
- Learning to learn elements integrated into the series through input from experts.

The learners featured in Series 5 organised and took part in an activity of interest and were met by the presenter, Derek Mooney. Learning points included filling in forms, writing letters, working on words and improving spelling.

Learner packs

There are learner packs that go with each series, which consists of a workbook and a support book. These packs are free and are available from the freephone tutor support line. All TV series are now available on video and more recently on DVD. The local VEC Adult Literacy service and local libraries have copies available. Copies have also been sent to other groups such as Community Training Workshops (CTW), National Training and Development Institutes (NTDI) and Youthreach. Some copies are available through the NALA resource room.

Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65

During the broadcast of each series the freephone was staffed by experienced tutors who helped learners with queries about the learning programmes and learner pack. The freephone line was open Monday to Friday from 10am – 4pm. Outside of these hours there was an answering machine service. The freephone is still in operation through NALA. It is a free and confidential service.

Website (only in Series 5)

Series 5 looked at the area of information communications technology (ICT). As part of the series we developed a website (www.readwritenow.ie) where learners could order their workbook or complete exercises from the workbook online. The exercises had the answers given so learners could get direct feedback.

Success of the television initiative

Series 1
The first series was broadcast in autumn 2000 on Tuesday nights (11 pm) and repeated on Wednesday mornings at 10 am. It had on average over 136,000

viewers tuning in Tuesdays with a peak audience of 192,000. The repeat had on average 19,000 viewers. Over 30,000 learner packs were distributed during the series, including 11,000 calls from independent learners to our freephone service.

Series 2

In 2001, the second series was broadcast three times a week, first on Wednesday evenings (7.30 pm) and repeated on Sundays (10am) and midnight on Tuesdays. There were on average 250,000 people watching the programme over the three broadcasts, with 190,000 on average tuning in on Wednesday evenings. Over 20,000 learner packs were distributed so far with over 5,500 sent to independent learners. There was a marked increase in the number of support calls received this year. .

Series 3

The third series was broadcast in autumn 2002, at the peak time slot of 7.30 pm on Monday evenings and repeated on Thursdays at approximately 12.10 am. In Series 1 and 2, there were lifestyle topics while in Series 3, the focus was on the learning process. The average audience for the whole series was 130,000. A total of 7,140 of the learner workbooks were distributed to independent learners who called the NALA freephone support line. Adult literacy centres received 8,800 of all workbooks distributed and the remaining 6,811 were sent to 606 other groups.

Series 4

In 2003, the fourth series was broadcast at 7.30 pm on Wednesday evenings and repeated on Tuesdays at approximately midnight. Series 3 continued the focus on the learning process. The average audience for the whole series was 124,000, nine percent of the TV audience for that time. On average 33,000 or eight percent of the audience share for that time, tuned into the repeat broadcast. A total of 7,000 learner workbooks were distributed to independent learners, 10,400 to VEC adult literacy schemes, and 7,835 to 578 other groups.

Series 5

2004 saw the fifth series being moved to RTÉ 2 for its main broadcast at 7.30 pm on Monday evenings. It was repeated on Saturday mornings on RTÉ 1 at 8.35am. The series was broadcast from 4th October. The average viewership was 49,000 per week, 35,000 people on Mondays and 14,000 on Saturdays. These ratings are lower compared to our previous

series. We received 4,100 phone calls from independent learners. We sent out approximately 20,000 learner packs to independent learners, literacy schemes and interested groups.

Evaluation

NALA continues to monitor and evaluate each TV series. The evaluations are tendered out to external consultants. The reports outline the outcomes of the series based on the feedback from independent learners and literacy providers. They also make recommendations for future developments. These reports are available through the NALA website www.nala.ie under publications or from NALA directly.

Some key elements that have been identified through the evaluation process include[1]:

A Good Practice Model

The Read Write Now (RWN)Project is a good practice model of an integrated approach to literacy provision through the broadcast media. Read Write Now responds to the challenge in the white paper on adult education to develop a flexible model for the outreach delivery of adult literacy. RWN is a suitable scheme for the Irish Broadcasting Commission to submit to the Minister for funding under the Broadcasting (funding) Act 2003.

A Successful and Effective Model

When compared to a similar initiative in the New York City area which has a population of 8 million, RWN is by far the more successful model. It reached 198,000 people while TV411, the New York model reports:
'On one afternoon alone in the New York City area, TV411 was viewed by an estimated 53,600 people – more than all the adults served by the city's adult literacy programmes in a full year.'

Value for Money

It represents good value for money in that it reaches the target group and independent learners report significant progression[2]. Progression is confirmed by VEC adult literacy organisers who report increased uptake in the Adult Literacy Services (ALS).

Future developments
At the moment proposals are underway to develop a multi-media project that builds on the learning and experience from Read Write Now. The new project will incorporate not just television and print materials but also other elements such as DVD, mobile technology, CDROM and website.

Radio: Read Write Now and Time 4 Learning

In 2000 NALA began work on two radio series for broadcast on our national broadcaster, RTÉ radio 1. Read Write Now radio literacy series was broadcast from March 2001 (Tuesdays at 11.10pm) and Time 4 Learning radio numeracy series was broadcast from October 2001 (Thursdays at 8.30pm). Both series aimed to develop and deliver a distance learning programme in adult basic education which will help adults improve their reading/writing and numeracy skills in the privacy of their own homes. Both series consisted of a series of ten radio programmes (half hour each) supported by a printed study pack.

Read Write Now radio literacy series aims to develop and deliver a distance learning programme in adult basic education, consisting of a series of ten radio programmes supported by a printed study pack, which will help adults improve their reading and writing skills in the privacy of their own homes. The series is designed for basic learners. It is more

basic than the TV series and caters to those learners who find the Read Write Now TV series too difficult. A specific learner workbook goes with the series. It is divided into ten sections, corresponding to each radio programme. The ten themes include: Starting off; Valentine's Day; Gaelic Football; TV; Cars; Breaks away; Health and Fitness; Shopping; Memories and Work-related topics. There are six worksheets in each section. Each programme uses a tutoring session between a tutor and learner, to cover the literacy learning points. There are three learning points each week. The learner listens to the tutoring session with their workbook open. Where appropriate they fill in the workbook as they listen to the session. Some worksheets can be done in their own time.

Time 4 Learning radio numeracy series aims to develop and deliver a distance learning programme, consisting of a series of ten radio programmes supported by a printed study pack, which will help adults improve their numeracy skills in the privacy of their own homes. The series is targeting learners with basic number skills. A specific learner workbook goes with the series. The workbook is divided into ten sections, corresponding to each radio programme. It covers three numeracy areas: numbers for living; time and money. The ten themes include: Planning a day; Bingo; The Workplace; Travel; Shopping; Eating in or out; Telephone; Cinema; Calculator and Bus. There are nine worksheets in each section. Each programme uses a tutoring session between a tutor and learner, to cover the numeracy learning points. There are three learning points each week— on numbers, time and money. The learner listens into the tutoring session with their workbook open, so they can follow the session. Where appropriate they fill in the workbook as they listen to the session. As only around three worksheets are covered each week, the remainder can be completed by the learners in their own time.

Current developments
In 2003 the Read Write Now and Time 4 Learning radio series were piloted with a small number of local community radio stations, in partnership with local adult literacy providers. These series are now available for broadcasting on local community radio stations, in conjunction with the local adult literacy providers, the VEC Adult Literacy Service (ALS). The radio stations and ALS can work together to initiate a partnership approach in supporting learners.

Websites:

Literacytools website

The development of the NALA learning and tuition website, www.literacytools.ie, in 2002 was an important addition to the adult literacy sector and was seen as a timely response to the increasing use of ICT in all aspects of everyday life.
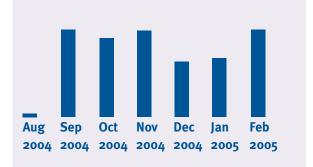
Stages of development:
- Development stage: August – June 2002
- 2nd stage: evaluation of website in pilot mode by external consultant (October 2002 – February 2003).
- 3rd stage: accessibility studies (through University College Cork and WAMMI - Web Analysis Measurement Inventory 2004)

Literacytools is designed specifically for the Irish-based learner and this is reflected in the choice of material on the website. As an interactive website, the learners can engage in exercises and get answers to them. The website is designed so that it can be updated and added to easily, allowing for a fluid and adaptable tool for learners and tutors.

Literacytools was evaluated by an external consultant, who concluded that the website 'has the potential to become an effective distance learning tool, attracting adults who are not able, or choose not, to access literacy learning through the national network of schemes'[3]. A study on the uses of the website by University College Cork (UCC) noted that users 'found the site easy to use and well-suited to their particular needs. The majority of users found the educational value of the site to be quite high. They enjoyed the type of questions provided and appreciated the fact that the topics were "adult-oriented." In particular, the speech feature was found to be helpful when navigating the website.

Literacytools was launched in September 2004. A drop off was noticed in visitors to the site in December 2004, which coincides with the Christmas break. On average there are now over 1000 visitors to the site per month, despite the lack of significant national promotion of the site.

| Aug 2004 | Sep 2004 | Oct 2004 | Nov 2004 | Dec 2004 | Jan 2005 | Feb 2005 |

Month	Unique[4] visitors	Number of visits	Pages[5]	Bandwidth
Aug 2004	497	814	14891	307.18 MB
Sep 2004	1167	1680	27593	648.27 MB
Oct 2004	996	1465	26313	578.01 MB
Nov 2004	1068	1624	30503	670.54 MB
Dec 2004	694	1030	15300	400.88 MB
Jan 2005	789	979	19113	400.67 MB
Feb 2005	1122	1503	28767	629.98 MB
Total	**7294**	**10949**	**181950**	**4.24 GB**

Read Write Now website

As part of the fifth Read Write Now television series we developed a website (www.readwritenow.ie) where learners could order their workbook or complete exercises from the workbook online. The exercises had the answers given so learners could get direct feedback. The initial evaluation shows a positive response from learners.

In 2004, a website was developed to complement the Read Write Now television series, with the introduction of multi-media materials. Four hundred forty visitors have used the site in the last three months. A drop off was noticed in visitors to the website in December 2004, which coincides with the Christmas break.

Month	Unique[6] visitors	Number of visits	Pages[7]	Hits	Bandwidth
Dec 2004	125	159	1961	7706	33.74 MB
Jan 2005	215	246	2378	10746	57.04 MB
Feb 2005	215	298	2599	10781	38.71 MB
Total	**440**	**659**	**12084**	**45678**	**176.17 MB**

Distance education principles for adult literacy learning

- variety
- suit different levels
- relevant
- enjoyable

REFERENCES

1 Westmeath Employment Network (2004), Read Write Now 4 TV series Evaluation Report, NALA, Dublin

2 This statement is based on evidence from the four RWN evaluation studies.

3 Kellehy, J (2003), Evaluation report of NALA's first website resource initiative www.literacytools.ie, NALA

4 Unique visitors tracks the number of individual computers that have been used to access the site per month.

5 Pages tracks the number of pages that users have accessed per month. This does not include the individual pages of PDF documents on the site, or levels of games, of which there are many.

6 Unique visitors tracks the number of individual computers that have been used to access the site per month.

7 Pages tracks the number of pages that users have accessed per month. This does not include the individual pages of PDF documents on the site, or levels of games, of which there are many.

discourses and effective practices