

INTEGRATING L T E R A C Y

*NALA Guidelines for
Further Education and
Training Centres*

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We hope these Guidelines will be useful: that they will help centres to phase in systems and practices which will address the literacy needs of learners in Further Education and Training. In the course of working to apply them, centres may identify ways in which the Guidelines can be modified and improved. Feedback on this will be welcome.

The Guidelines were compiled by Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide, Integration Coordinator at NALA.

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A note on terminology

Centre:	Refers to any setting where planned and purposeful learning programmes take place, other than initial schooling. It is interchangeable with 'college', 'training centre', 'project', 'community centre', and so on.
Learner:	This term refers to participants on an education or training programme or users of a particular centre. It is interchangeable with 'student', 'trainee', 'participant', 'client' depending on the setting.
Group:	Refers to any group of learners (outside of initial schooling). May be interchangeable with 'class'.
Literacy tutor:	The person whose main role is to provide tuition in communication skills – oral and written – and in numeracy. May be interchangeable with 'teacher', 'communications tutor'.
Subject teacher/trainer:	Staff whose main role is to help learners acquire knowledge and expertise in a particular subject or skill, other than literacy. It is interchangeable with 'instructor', 'facilitator', 'course tutor' depending on the setting.
Literacy facilitator:	The staff member responsible for promoting the integration of literacy support into all aspects of the centre's programme.

Introduction

Context

NALA is publishing this document at a time when the extent of literacy difficulties among young people and adults in Ireland is being widely acknowledged. The International Adult Literacy Survey carried out in the mid-nineties revealed that almost 25% of Irish adults had significant difficulties with everyday literacy tasks. Government has responded with a range of policies which prioritise literacy. The White Paper on Adult Education, ('Learning for Life', 2000) specifies adult literacy as a top priority and outlines the key elements of a National Adult Literacy Programme.

In the field of Further Education and Training, literacy development is increasingly seen as a crucial element of quality provision. The YOUTHREACH 2000 document, for example, highlights the need for all providers of YOUTHREACH to develop a comprehensive literacy strategy. Providers of Post-Leaving Cert and VTOS programmes are increasingly building literacy support and tuition into their programmes, as are training agencies such as Teagasc.

NALA welcomes these policies and initiatives and is working to help ensure that they are implemented in a way which reflects the core values of adult literacy work.

NALA's Mission Statement is

'To ensure all adults with literacy difficulties have access to a range of high quality learning opportunities.' (Strategic Plan 2002-2006, NALA)

This involves supporting the provision of direct literacy tuition options, available through the VEC Adult Literacy Service. It also involves extending literacy learning opportunities to as many people as possible, in a variety of settings and contexts. For example, distance learning programmes (such as the 'Read Write Now' TV series) and workplace literacy programmes provide adults with literacy learning opportunities in their own homes and places of work.

It is also necessary to support adults and young people with literacy difficulties who are on – or would like to be on – Further Education and Training programmes, so that they can have access to high quality learning opportunities both in literacy *and* in the subjects or skills of their choice.

Who are these Guidelines for?

The Guidelines are intended to encourage and assist centres of Further Education and Training to embed literacy support into their programmes. They are intended to apply across a wide range of settings, *including*:

Adult and Community Education centres
Bord Iascaigh Mhara
CERT
Community Employment Projects
Community Development Groups
Department of Justice Training Centres
FAS Community Training Workshops
FAS Training Centres
Post-Leaving Cert Colleges
Senior Traveller Training Centres
Teagasc
VEC YOUTHREACH Centres
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

Some of these programmes were specifically established to address the needs of people who left school with no qualifications and often with poor literacy skills. They include literacy development as a core aim and in many cases employ a literacy tutor as a key member of staff. Frequent, consistent access to such specialist tuition is crucial in enabling those with basic literacy needs to progress.¹ In an integrated service it is complemented by a systematic partnership between the literacy tutor and other staff, providing daily opportunities for the learner to acquire and practise literacy skills in the context of their core programme.

The need to integrate literacy support applies not just in these settings, but across the entire range of Further Education and Training programmes. Participants in programmes at any level, in any setting, may have difficulties with some of the literacy requirements of their course.

Spelling difficulties can cause problems with coursework and assignments. Difficulties with *handwriting* can compound these. Together, they can lead to a situation where written work submitted by the learner does not do justice to their grasp of the particular subject.

¹ See *Improving literacy and numeracy: A fresh start* - The report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser, 1999. (UK). The report quotes US research as showing that 'between 550 – 600 hours of instruction are needed to become fully literate and numerate.'

Note-taking from lectures or other spoken information may be very difficult and stressful for learners whose spelling and writing is not automatic.

Particular *writing skills* may be needed for the course, for example, essay-writing or report-writing.

Particular *reading skills* are needed to deal efficiently with course texts. Learners may also require support in developing the associated skill of *taking notes from texts*.

Most courses involve learners in *language development*, acquiring and internalising new, course-related terminology and developing the skills to communicate effectively with staff and fellow-learners.

Particular *numeracy skills* may be associated with the course.

The fact that a person is competent and skilled in the particular subject area does not mean that that he or she will be comfortable with all the reading, writing and numeracy demands of the course.

Equally, the fact that a person has a literacy difficulty does not mean they should be denied access to education or training in an area which interests them and for which they have an aptitude.

Literacy skills are best developed in the context of meaningful, relevant and purposeful activity. In pursuing a course which is interesting to them, and which has built-in literacy support, people with literacy difficulties can successfully complete the course *and* develop transferable literacy skills.

NALA believes that:

- No young person or adult should be, or feel, excluded from Further Education and Training programmes because of a literacy difficulty.
- Effective literacy support, specifically tailored to the needs and interests of the individual, the demands of the course and the requirements of the job, should be built into *all* Further Education and Training programmes.
- The most effective literacy support is based on an integrated, whole-centre approach.

What is 'Literacy'?

'Literacy', as used in this document, includes the skills of *reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy*.

Literacy work with adults and young people starts with the needs and goals of the individual. It encompasses aspects of personal development and is concerned with building confidence and self-esteem.

Literacy contributes to the ability of individuals and communities to reflect critically on experience, explore new possibilities and initiate constructive change.

What does 'Integrating Literacy' mean?

Essentially, 'integrating literacy' means that within a Further Education and Training programme the needs of people with literacy difficulties are recognised and addressed. This is seen as the responsibility of the whole centre, not just of the specialist literacy staff. Subject teachers/trainers, management, administrative staff, guidance and counselling staff – all have a role to play in ensuring that learners with literacy difficulties are appropriately supported.

A whole-centre approach to literacy ensures that

- management and staff build literacy support into each course and each phase of the programme;
- learners have access to dedicated literacy tuition according to need and within the core timetable;
- learners have access to specialist supports as the needs arise, such as diagnostic assessment to identify any specific learning difficulties, specialist tuition, examination supports, learning aids.

To provide such an integrated literacy support service, the centre needs to have

- an appropriately-trained staff member who has responsibility for promoting the integration of literacy support throughout the centre;
- the services of trained adult literacy staff;
- a system for accessing specialist supports as required;
- links with the Adult Literacy Service and with other Further Education and Training providers to facilitate progression for learners;
- management and staff who are literacy-aware and who integrate literacy support into their work.

Literacy Awareness

Literacy Awareness Training is available through NALA and may also be provided by the local VEC. It is a crucial first step in developing a strengths-focused, respectful and effective model of literacy integration. Management and staff need to be aware of issues such as

- the causes of literacy difficulties in young people and adults;
- the effects on the person, both of the literacy difficulties themselves and of prejudiced, ill-informed responses;
- the effects on the person of his or her experience of initial schooling, where their learning strengths may not have been identified and affirmed;
- what 'literacy' is: the range of skills involved as well as the personal and social dimensions.

Why integrate literacy?

Building literacy support and development into all Further Education and Training programmes will help to:

- **combat exclusion** by ensuring equal access to and opportunities within Further Education and Training for young people and adults with literacy difficulties;
- **increase the effectiveness of skills training and subject-teaching** by ensuring that teaching methods respect the learning styles of those who are not comfortable with text-based methods and that learners are helped develop the reading/writing/number skills necessary for the course;
- **increase the effectiveness of separate literacy tuition within a centre** by providing a meaningful context, relevant materials and daily opportunities for application and practice;
- **enable progression from the course** by helping learners develop the literacy skills necessary for their next step in education, training or work;
- **increase retention rates** by ensuring that people with literacy difficulties are respected and supported from induction through to progression.

Integrating Literacy:

Guidelines for Further Education and Training Centres

Strategic Management and Planning

1. A strategic plan for literacy
2. Staff development and training in literacy
3. Resources
4. A literacy analysis of the centre's programmes
5. An inclusive access policy
6. Communication and timetabling systems

Values

Programme Design and Delivery

7. Integrating literacy into learners' induction programme
8. Literacy assessment and an individual learning plan
9. Integrating literacy into teaching and training practice
10. Progression

Values

Being clear on shared values and principles is an important step in building a whole-centre approach to any issue. Before starting out on this process in relation to literacy, centres might like to revisit the basic values underpinning their work generally, as well as considering those put forward here as the basic principles underpinning these Guidelines. They are as follows.

The learner's right to attend on a voluntary basis and to set his/her own goals will be supported by the organization.

An ethical code of confidentiality, respect and trust will inform all aspects of the organization.

Cultural differences will be respected at all levels of the organization.

Particular attention will be paid to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of social interaction, informality and enjoyment within the organization.

Learners will be enabled to participate in all aspects of the organization, including evaluation of the scheme/centre.

Teamwork among staff is facilitated within the centre. This involves allocating specific time for literacy staff and subject teachers/trainers to communicate with each other about learners' literacy needs and to plan and prepare appropriate responses.

There is a learner-centred approach to programme planning, delivery and evaluation.

The first five of the above are the Guiding Principles of the NALA Quality Framework for Adult Basic Education.

Pages 13 to 37 present ten Guidelines, indicating key elements of a whole-centre, integrated approach to literacy within Further Education and Training.

They are organised under two main headings:

- Strategic Management and Planning (Guidelines 1-6)
- Programme Design and Delivery (Guidelines 7 – 10).

How they are applied will vary between centres according to their particular circumstances. The intention is to provide a framework to help centres develop integrated literacy action plans rooted in the needs of their learners.

Integrating Literacy

Guidelines 1-6

Strategic Management
and Planning



1. A strategic plan for literacy

- A strategic plan for literacy in the centre should be agreed annually, through a *process of consultation* involving all the stakeholders: staff, learners, management. Such a plan would be set in the context of the centre's overall strategic plan. Its purpose is to provide a practical guide for the centre as it develops the integrated literacy programme.
- The literacy plan should start from the needs of the learners.
- It should specify timebound, measurable, realistic steps towards an integrated literacy service, where learners have
 - literacy support built into their core subjects/skills;
 - access to specific literacy tuition should they so wish;
 - access to specialist supports according to need (such as exam supports, specialist assessment, specific learning aids).

Literacy facilitator

- The plan should designate a staff member who would take on the role of *literacy facilitator*. This staff member will be responsible for promoting a literacy focus in the centre. He or she will be
 - an integral part of the staff team;
 - trained in adult literacy principles and practice;
 - allocated adequate time and resources for the duties involved.

Monitoring systems

Internal:

The plan should specify systems to involve management, staff, learners and other stakeholders in ongoing review of the integrated programme. These might include

- a system for recording literacy work done, in the literacy session itself and in the core subject/skill;
- periodic review meetings with learners individually and in group;
- periodic staff meetings to review the integrated literacy programme.

External:

A supportive external monitoring system should be agreed. This might involve periodic meetings with relevant personnel from the centre's national or regional agency and with the Department of Education and Science or the local VEC Adult Literacy Service.

Evaluation criteria:

Review and evaluation should take place in the light of

- recorded assessment of learners' literacy needs and goals;
- individual learning plans;
- the centre's literacy plan.

2. Staff development and training in literacy

Adults and young people on Further Education and Training programmes are entitled to work with management and staff who are

- literacy aware;
- sensitive to the needs of young people and adults with literacy difficulties;
- conscious of the literacy components of their subject/ vocational area and able to help learners deal with those;
- conscious of the role of relationship and respect in the learning process and what that means in practice;
- aware of the cultural norms of the particular group of learners.

Appropriate staff training and development is crucial to building an effective, whole-centre literacy service.

NALA recommends that

- management and all staff undertake the Literacy Awareness Training programme organised through NALA or the local VEC;
- induction procedures for management and staff should include Literacy Awareness Training and information and training related to the centre's Literacy Strategy;
- subject teachers/trainers undertake training in integrating literacy (see Appendix 1: NUI Integrating Literacy Certificate Course). The learning from this course could be shared with colleagues, through in-house peer training planned and delivered in cooperation with the centre's literacy tutor or facilitator;
- literacy tutors, and teachers of English, Communications and Maths who work in Further Education and Training centres, undertake training in adult literacy principles and methods.

See Appendix 1

3. Resources

Personnel

- To effectively integrate literacy the centre should have a management and staff which is literacy-aware, appropriately trained and includes a designated person responsible for promoting the integration of literacy.
- The centre should have access to the services of trained adult literacy tutors.

Time

- Staff need to be allocated time to plan and review integrated programmes and to source or develop literacy and numeracy materials related to their subject area and the needs of their learners.

Premises

- Each classroom or training room should be equipped to facilitate course-related literacy work. There should be storage and display space for books and materials related to the subject; an appropriate space for learners to carry out reading/writing activities; and access to a computer and printer.
- The centre should have an appropriately-equipped, accessible literacy room, which is
 - safe, hygienic and comfortable;
 - removed from noise and external distractions;
 - 'adult' in layout and furnishings;
 - suitable for one-to-one and small group tuition;
 - equipped with a range of literacy and numeracy materials, computer and printer, and with access to photocopier, TV/Video and phone.

Literacy materials

- Each classroom or training room should have literacy materials related to the particular subject or skill. These might include:
 - *glossaries* of key terms related to the particular subject;
 - *writing templates* or *scaffolds* to provide phased practice of key writing tasks within the subject area;
 - *models* of correctly completed writing tasks;
 - *worksheets* to enable practice and reinforcement of key reading, spelling, writing and numeracy components of the course;
 - *simplified versions* of course instructions / notes / handouts, to ensure inclusion of people with literacy difficulties and to use in phased reading instruction.
- Materials for the dedicated literacy sessions should
 - be age-appropriate;
 - cater for various reading abilities and allow for phased skill development;
 - be in good condition and kept updated;
 - include materials created by the learners themselves;
 - cater for a range of interests;
 - include materials specifically designed to address the literacy skills needed for the courses on offer in the centre;
 - be culturally appropriate.

NALA Resource Guide can be obtained by writing to NALA, 76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1; or visit the NALA website www.nala.ie



4. A literacy analysis of the centre's programmes

In working towards an integrated approach to literacy, an important step is to identify the key literacy requirements of the courses and programmes on offer in the centre.

In relation to each course, *identify* and *record* the specific language, reading, writing and numeracy skills learners need to develop. The following questions may help you do this:

- What language, terminology or jargon do learners need to know, understand and use?
- What verbal communication skills do learners need?
- What do learners need to be able to read and understand?
- What do they need to be able to write and spell?
- What specific numeracy skills – estimating, calculating, measuring – do learners need for the course?

The answers to these questions will help provide the centre with *checklists of key literacy and numeracy skills* related to each course.

These will be useful in helping learners assess their course-related literacy needs, in planning the learning programmes and in developing literacy support materials for the various courses.

5. An inclusive access policy

Promotion and recruitment procedures should facilitate access by people with literacy difficulties who meet the entry requirements for the course. A 'literacy-proofed' or inclusive access policy would contain the following elements:

- Printed promotion materials are in plain language.
- Promotion methods include non-text-based media where possible (local radio, for example).
- Promotional content includes information on the literacy support provided on the programme.
- Open Days, Registration Days and other promotional events include information on literacy support and a prominent role for the literacy support staff. This will not only let people know that literacy support is available, but will help put people at ease about the type of service it is and the adult-learning relationship involved.
- Application/Registration Forms are in plain language, clear and user-friendly.
- All administration, reception and registration staff are trained in literacy awareness and inclusive practices.



6. Communication systems and timetabling policies

Effective communication about learners' literacy needs and about appropriate responses is a necessary element of an integrated literacy programme. Systems need to be in place to facilitate this.

- Timetabling policies and practice can ensure that *management, staff* and *learners* are allocated specific periods for meeting to review literacy needs and progress and to contribute to the centre's literacy strategy.
- Allocate time for the centre's literacy facilitator to liaise with subject staff and with literacy staff. This will enable cooperation on identifying literacy needs, and on adapting course material and teaching strategies appropriately.
- Allocate time for subject staff to plan, prepare and review lessons which integrate literacy into the core subject.
- Ensure that learners with basic literacy needs have access to dedicated literacy tuition on a *consistent, regular and frequent* basis throughout the week, in one-to-one or in group according to need.
- Timetabling of learners' dedicated literacy sessions should be flexible, negotiated and based on learners' needs.

Integrating Literacy

Guidelines 7-10

Programme Design
and Delivery



7. Integrating literacy into learners' induction programme

The work of motivating and encouraging learners with literacy difficulties to avail of literacy support and tuition begins at induction. This is where new participants on the course can begin to

- get to know the literacy facilitator as a support and resource person;
- find out that literacy support is both built into the core subject/skill by the course teachers/trainers *and* that there is access to separate literacy tuition;
- understand that this is not a 'remedial' service, but a learning support service available to all participants as they grapple with the particular literacy and numeracy demands of the course and its accreditation system.

Induction programmes can integrate literacy by ensuring that:

- the literacy facilitator has a central role in induction;
- learners are helped to assess their literacy needs, particularly in relation to the course they will be following, and to identify the supports available to them in this;
- induction materials and activities are literacy-proofed:
 - Codes of Conduct, Health and Safety Regulations, Disciplinary Procedures and other information documents are in plain language;
 - activities are included to ensure that these documents are fully understood by *all* participants; literacy materials are developed to support this;
- learners are helped acquire the reading, writing and numeracy skills necessary for dealing with the 'business' of joining the programme – for example, pay slips, banking records, clock cards and attendance records.

8. Literacy assessment and an individual learning plan

Initial assessment

All new participants on Further Education and Training programmes should be helped to assess their literacy needs on entry to the programme – particularly in relation to the specific literacy requirements of the course they will be following.

Literacy assessment is a process, not a once-off event, that takes place in the context of an active learning relationship. It is motivational in nature. It respects the learner's current level of interest in addressing literacy needs and enables ongoing informed choices to be made on this. It is a joint undertaking between tutor and learner - a facilitated process of self-assessment.

Initial assessment takes place in the course of the first few weeks of tuition. Its purpose is to identify literacy needs, including those related to the learner's core programme, and to agree an **individual learning plan**.

Individual learning plan

An individual learning plan should be negotiated and agreed between the literacy facilitator and the learner. Account should be taken of the person's needs and interests around literacy generally *and* the literacy elements of his/her course.

The learning plan should:

- specify realistic, achievable literacy goals, both general and course-related;
- specify methods and activities for working towards those goals – including direct literacy tuition and literacy support integrated into the core subjects;
- identify 'performance indicators': how will we know that progress is being made?
- say how literacy work will be recorded;
- set an early date for staff and learner to jointly review progress and renew the learning plan.

This learning plan for literacy may be part of an integrated plan negotiated between the individual learner, the subject teacher/trainer and the literacy facilitator. This would specify goals and plans in relation to literacy *and* to the learner's overall subject or skill area.

The individual learning plan is not a static document. It is an aid to ongoing joint planning and review. It should be renegotiated regularly and frequently.

Assessing progress

- Regular times should be allocated to review progress. This review is carried out jointly by the learner, literacy staff and subject staff as appropriate.
- Progress is assessed in the light of the individual learning plan, and with reference to records of work done both in the literacy session and in the learner's core subject/skill area.
- The purpose of this ongoing assessment is to
 - identify and affirm progress;
 - renew the individual learning plan to ensure it stays in tune with the learner's needs as the programme develops;
 - provide information for accountability purposes, within the bounds of confidentiality.

Further, specialist assessment

- The centre's assessment process may indicate a need for further, specialist assessment – for example, the services of an Educational Psychologist. The centre should put systems in place to ensure learners have access to these services.

Assessing for accreditation

- Subject –related or vocational accreditation:

In a Further Education and Training centre where an integrated approach is taken, learners with literacy difficulties should have access to:

- the support and tuition necessary to prepare them for the literacy demands of their course's assessment and accreditation system;
- exam supports if required, as sanctioned by the Department of Education and Science and the relevant examining body. This will ensure they can undergo fair and objective assessment in their chosen subject.

- Accreditation in literacy:

Many Further Education and Training centres, in addition to providing accredited courses in a range of subjects and skills, also provide the opportunity to gain accreditation in English, Communications and Maths.

- NALA supports and encourages the provision of these options, in the context of prioritising the needs of learners with the most basic literacy difficulties.
- Accreditation is an appropriate way to affirm achievement in literacy and basic education, and can be an effective tool in sustaining motivation. For those not yet ready to undertake assessment for accreditation at or above FETAC Foundation level, there is a need to put systems in place to record, acknowledge and affirm their progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The NALA Assessment Framework may be useful to centres in devising ways of affirming learners' progress in literacy.

NALA Assessment Framework for Literacy and Numeracy

- The NALA Assessment Framework for Literacy and Numeracy is currently (2002) being piloted. We recommend that Further Education and Training centres adopt the Assessment Framework when it is mainstreamed.

9. Integrating literacy into teaching and training practice

The main job of a subject teacher or vocational skills trainer is to help learners acquire confidence, knowledge and skill in the particular subject or vocational area.

The main job of a literacy tutor is to help learners develop confidence, knowledge and skill in literacy according to the learners' needs and goals.

An integrated, whole-centre approach to literacy within Further Education and Training does not change that. It does not mean that the subject teacher/trainer takes on the role of literacy tutor, or that the literacy tutor becomes an expert in every subject or skill on offer in the centre.

It means that *both literacy staff and subject staff are conscious of the course-related literacy needs of the learner* and address these within their sessions.

Below are some *examples* of what this might mean in practice. Not all of these will apply in every centre, or will suit every teacher/trainer. What is relevant will depend on the particular situation, the nature of the course, the teaching approaches already in use, the needs of the particular group of learners and so on.

Guidelines for subject teachers and skills trainers

Awareness and preparation

- The most important point, as you plan and deliver your sessions, is to *be aware* of the likelihood that there will be some people in the group who have literacy difficulties. This does not indicate any lack of ability on their part to engage with the course content. It does mean that teaching methods need to
 - ensure the course content is accessible and understood by those who are not comfortable with text-based methods;
 - help learners develop the literacy skills they need to succeed on the course.
- *Take part in staff training* and development in literacy. (See Appendix 1). This will help you develop skills and confidence in integrating literacy into your subject area.

- *Identify the specific literacy requirements of your course.* What language or terminology does the learner need to know and understand? What specific reading, writing and numeracy tasks are required and what are the key skills needed to complete them? Make checklists of these, to help your learners assess their course-related literacy needs, and to help you build literacy support into your teaching.

Materials

- *Develop literacy support materials* related to your course. These would aim to make key texts and handouts more accessible to people with literacy difficulties, to familiarise learners with the vocabulary associated with the course, and to help them acquire and practise the literacy skills needed. Support materials might include:

glossaries of course-related terminology: learners can refer to these independently to check the meaning or the spelling of new vocabulary;

templates (or frameworks) of the key writing tasks involved in the course: by completing these learners become familiar with the structure of key writing assignments;

models of correctly completed writing tasks;

summaries of, or guides to, key course texts;

summaries of the main points of lectures or talks, which will help those who have difficulties with note-taking;

worksheets: e.g. cloze, word-blending, sentence completion, comprehension to give varied practice in the *writing and spelling* needed for the course; wordsearches, flash cards, word-matching, words-within-words, cloze, comprehension at various levels, to help learners *recognise, read and understand* the course terminology;

numeracy materials to help learners understand the basic language of numeracy, the key numerical operations, to practise the particular calculating, estimating, or measuring skills required by the course and to be able to record and describe these appropriately.

- While it is possible and advisable to develop a supply of re-usable support materials, keep in mind that worksheets are most effective when they are *based on the needs arising in learners' own current work*. Familiarise yourself with the *range of methods and exercises* which might be useful, and share that knowledge with your learners so that you can work on specific literacy needs as they arise.

- Literacy support materials should be laid out clearly, in reasonably large font and with good spacing between words and lines.

A variety of methods within the core subject

- In teaching the core subject, take account of the fact that we all learn differently. It is likely that some members of the group may not learn best through methods which are heavily reliant on written texts, or on listening to and taking notes from talks. Therefore, include a variety of methods and activities to convey the key learning points of the lesson, to *address a range of learning styles* in the group. In addition to talks and texts, methods might include:
 - video, demonstration and other visual aids;
 - structured discussion, debate;
 - quizzes, problem-solving games;
 - art;
 - projects;
 - peer education and training;
 - role play and simulation;
 - excursions, site visits;
 - use of computers.
- *Discuss the process of learning with your group.* Explain that we all have different learning styles, that some learning methods work well for some and not for others, and so on. This awareness is important particularly for learners who may have had negative experiences of initial schooling, where their learning styles may not have been accommodated.
- Using a variety of methods within the session helps include those who are uncomfortable with text-based work; it makes repeated successes possible and builds confidence; it also reinforces learning and enjoyment for the whole group.
- Not all Further Education and Training courses rely heavily on text-based methods. Some are mainly experiential, practical and hands-on. 'Integrating literacy' in these settings does not mean replacing experiential methods and imposing pen-and-paper activities on people! It means *including reading, writing and numeracy work in a way which arises naturally from the practical work, and which is directly linked to it.* Remember that literacy skills are more easily developed in a context and for a specific purpose. In helping learners acquire and use literacy skills related to the vocational area, trainers can *provide successful experiences of literacy* and help erode any fear or anxiety learners may have brought with them from previous experiences.

Language development

- Introduce new course-related terminology systematically and explicitly. Do not assume it will be understood and remembered after one explanation. Check out understanding of new terms; ensure learners have opportunities to *hear*, *see* and *use* new vocabulary in a variety of contexts.
- In giving a talk to the group – even a short talk – be aware of the needs of learners who may have language processing difficulties. It will help to *preview* the overall content first, naming the *key points* you are about to present. *Break the talk up* into manageable sections for the listeners – stop after each key point to *encourage questions* from learners and to *ask questions* to check out understanding, before moving on.
- Encourage confidence and skill in oral communication by including, for example,
 - structured discussion and debate;
 - role-play or simulation related to the course content;
 - peer presentations (for example, individuals can give an account of a task successfully completed)

Reading

- Encourage learners to keep a *personal dictionary* of key terms as they arise. This will reinforce recognition and spelling of course-related vocabulary. It will also familiarise learners with the layout of a dictionary and the use of alphabetical order.
- To help learners deal with texts, *preview the text* with the group first. Give an overview of its content, point out how it is structured and where key information can be found. Explain any new terminology or vocabulary it may contain. Check out understanding. It would help to have summaries of key texts available.
- The same basic process applies to any *handouts or written instructions* distributed to the group: do not assume that everyone will be able to read them easily. Give an overview or summary of the main content and purpose; explain the structure or format, and check out understanding of key terminology. If necessary, take time to help learners familiarise themselves with the terminology, using activities such as cloze, word-matching, wordsearch, flash-cards, sentence completion, quizzes, discussion.

- Some handouts, or forms or written instructions may need to be simplified in order to be more readily used by people with literacy difficulties. *Simplified versions of course materials* not only make the information more easily accessible: they also help learners practise the reading skills needed for the particular course material. Versions of key handouts, forms or instructions at various levels of difficulty provide a scaffolding for learners as they progress towards being able to deal with the standard format.
- Take opportunities to point out how reading skills used on the course can be used in other contexts. For example, using a personal course-related dictionary involves skills which can be used to get information from other sources (e.g. telephone directory). Reading a graph of operating instructions for a pottery kiln is a skill which can be transferred to many other situations (e.g. bus and train timetables). Encourage the transferability of skills by explicitly making those kinds of links.

Writing

- Encourage learners to keep a *learning journal* or diary. This will reinforce the subject learning and it will give useful, relevant practice in writing and help overcome the 'fear of the pen'. It will also help learners to take increasing control of their own learning.
- Discuss strategies for learning spellings with the group: e.g. look-cover-write-check; cloze; word-completion; sounding-out; visualising; mnemonics. Explain that what works for one person may not work for another: the important thing is to try a range of strategies and find the ones that work best for us.
- Suggest that learners make and keep a personal spelling dictionary.
- If learners present written work related to their core subject which appears untidy or is difficult to read, do not assume that this is carelessness or laziness. Often, it can be the result of several attempts and can represent a lot of effort. *Respond respectfully to learners' written work; focus on the content*, while giving practical guidance on presentation, spelling and so on.

Numeracy

- Many courses require learners to acquire and apply numeracy skills of various kinds, for example:
 - catering courses require learners to be able to weigh accurately, to calculate quantities and proportions, to calculate costs;

- woodwork, metalwork and construction courses require learners to understand and accurately use linear measurement, to calculate area, to calculate costs of materials, to estimate the cost of a particular job;
 - horticulture and agriculture require learners to be able to carry out a range of calculations – what quantities of seeds, plants, fertilizer are needed for a given area; what area should a farm building be if it is to accommodate a given number of animals in accordance with regulations?
 - interior design, fashion design and home furnishings courses require similar skills of measuring, estimating, calculating, costing.
- Learners need to be skilled at the practical, applied numeracy needed for the job; they *also* need to understand the written description of those operations and to be able to make appropriate records of their own calculations, costings and measurements.
 - To do this, they need to be helped acquire *the basic language of numeracy*. Do not assume this is understood or easily used by all. Check out understanding of the basic terminology and signs (e.g. plus, minus, division, multiplication, equals) in the same way as you would with any other key terminology on the course. When necessary teach the reading and understanding of numeracy terminology in the same way as you would teach the reading of other course terms.
 - Erode fear of maths by providing practical demonstration of and practice in the numeracy involved in course tasks; combine that with work on the written description of the operations involved.
 - Help learners identify ways in which they already use maths in their everyday lives, and link new learning to that.

Motivation

- Be aware of your ability to motivate and encourage learners to address their literacy skills development.
- Show a positive approach to developing your own literacy skills.
- Show a high regard for literacy tuition. Share information on how this can be accessed. Over time, encourage learners to avail of the literacy service. It might help to share your understanding that
 - people's literacy needs vary over time, according to the tasks or roles they take on in life;
 - people undertaking Further Education and Training, at all levels, often need to brush up on their literacy skills or develop new ones to meet the demands of the course;

- the literacy tuition sessions are based on the learner's own needs and goals, rather than on any pre-set curriculum;
- it makes sense to avail of the specific literacy support on offer.
- Successful experiences in carrying out practical literacy tasks can be a powerful factor in motivating a person to undertake literacy tuition. Build in opportunities for your learners to experience success in literacy. Perhaps some of the routine tasks you do yourself could be carried out by group members – e.g. preparing written orders for materials, ingredients, equipment; making telephone enquiries from suppliers or using the phone to arrange a class outing or visit.

Whole-centre literacy strategy

- Meet regularly with the literacy facilitator in your centre, to discuss your learners' needs and progress. This will help you in integrating literacy into your coursework; it will also help ensure that specialist literacy tuition includes an informed focus on the learners' course-related literacy needs.
- Take part in staff meetings to plan and review the centre's literacy strategy.

Guidelines for literacy staff

- Within the specialist literacy session, an integrated approach means that the tutor will
 - be aware of the key literacy demands of the centre's programmes and courses and include work on these according to the individual learner's needs;
 - liaise with subject staff – either directly or through the centre's literacy facilitator – to keep abreast with course-related literacy requirements and with learners' progress;
 - ensure that materials available within the specialist literacy session include course-related materials.
- In order to provide an effective integrated literacy service, the centre should have a designated staff member whose responsibility it is to promote a literacy focus in all aspects of the programme and to facilitate staff in integrating literacy.

The role of the literacy facilitator: *some examples*

- Contribute to the development and review of the centre's strategic plan for literacy.

- Promote literacy awareness among management, staff and learners. Facilitate the literacy strand of staff and learner induction; design relevant in-service training.
- Cooperate with subject staff to *identify the literacy elements of the courses* available in the centre and of the various phases of the programme. Ensure these are recorded and are accessible to subject staff, literacy staff and learners.
- Cooperate with subject staff and learners in identifying learners' course-related literacy needs. Jointly plan how to address these. Possible models for an integrated response include
 - supporting subject staff in developing integrated lesson plans and materials;
 - team-teaching: subject staff and literacy staff jointly facilitating classes or training sessions;
 - ensuring that the specialist literacy sessions include a focus on identified course-related needs.
- Cooperate with subject staff and literacy staff to develop integrated literacy materials.
- Develop proposals for and participate in *whole-centre activities* to promote literacy development. These might include
 - producing a centre magazine or newsletter;
 - organising reading days, with guest poets and writers;
 - showcasing learners' work (plays; readings; exhibitions)
 - organising regular team games, quizzes, competitions with staff and learner involvement and with a literacy and numeracy element;
 - organising debates.
- Develop proposals and materials for *cross-subject routines* designed to provide literacy practice and promote literacy development. These might include
 - consistent procedures for learner evaluation of sessions/classes/course (written, oral, graphic);
 - all staff facilitating learners in keeping a learning journal;
 - all staff encouraging learners to keep a personal dictionary related to the various skills or subjects.

- Literacy-proof centre materials for use in learner induction. Ensure that key documents such as Codes of Conduct, Rules and Regulations, Health and Safety documents are in plain language and that literacy support materials related to those topics are available.
- Ensure that individual learners and class groups are met during induction, to
 - identify any concerns about the literacy demands of their course;
 - inform them of the supports available in relation to these.
- Build links with the local Adult Literacy Service, with other Further Education and Training providers and with any employers involved in the course to ensure that the progression needs of people with literacy difficulties are addressed.
- Carry out initial and ongoing assessment of learners' literacy needs and progress. Ensure that an individual learning plan is negotiated with each learner which includes a focus on personal and course-related literacy.
- Ensure that records are maintained of learners' literacy work within the subject area and within the specialist literacy session. Facilitate learners and staff in reviewing learners' progress in relation to literacy, on a regular basis and with reference to the individual learning plan.
- Ensure learners with special needs have access to appropriate specialist assessment and tuition and to exam supports.

10. Progression

- An integrated approach to literacy in Further Education and Training helps to ensure that learners with literacy needs can progress and transfer appropriately within the centre itself.
- If work experience is part of the course, the centre should ensure that learners with literacy needs have access to work experience which will suit their expertise in and aptitude for the particular job. Work should be done with employers to identify any literacy requirements of the particular work placement, and to agree ways of building in literacy support.
- Links should be made with the local adult literacy service to ensure learners with literacy needs have access to ongoing tuition when the course is over.
- For learners who wish to progress onto another Further Education and Training programme, links should be made with the provider to agree ways of building in course-related literacy support.
- It is possible in some cases that when the course is over, or the person's time in the centre has come to an end, they may not be ready to completely break the ties with the centre's literacy support system. A planned and phased approach to progression is recommended. A transition period towards the end of the course may be useful, during which time the learner may
 - engage in part-time work, training or education outside the centre;
 - continue to avail of literacy support in the centre, related to that progression route;
 - be introduced to the adult literacy service in the community as a post-course option.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Training in Literacy

Appendix 2 References



Appendix 1

Training in literacy

Literacy Awareness Training

The aim of this one-day training programme is to raise awareness of literacy issues and to enable participants to explore appropriate responses.

Topics covered include:

- What is literacy?
- Nature and extent of literacy difficulties;
- Causes and effects;
- Appropriate responses.

Contact NALA's Training Department for further details.

NUI Maynooth Certificate: Integrating Literacy.

This course aims to:

- provide an insight into the special problems experienced by people with literacy difficulties.
- equip participants with the appropriate teaching skills and approaches to enable them to integrate the development of literacy within their own programme.
- ensure that participants will appreciate the need to encourage a literacy focus in their workplace.

Duration:

The course is conducted over 100 hours. It is usually delivered in a series of two-day training sessions within a six-month period.

Learning Modes:

In keeping with the ethos of adult education, participants are encouraged to share experience and support the group's learning through active participation and peer support. The sessions will include practical exercises, small group discussion as well as tutor and participant presentations.

Assessment:

- Eight short assignments linked to course sessions.
- One essay (1800 words) based on a Learning Journal.
- Practical project (2500 words)

On successful completion of the course, participants will be awarded a National University of Ireland Certificate: Integrating Literacy.

NALA/WIT Single Module Certificate in Literacy Methodologies

This is one of the 12 modules which make up the National Certificate in Humanities in Adult and Community Education offered through Waterford Institute of Technology. It carries 10 credits towards the full National Certificate (120 credits).

Learning Outcomes:

Having successfully completed this module participants will:

- be able to discuss the context of adult literacy provision in Ireland
- have defined the range of skills encompassed by literacy
- have explored own attitudes to learning, understand how adults learn and the impact of different learning styles
- know how to assess literacy levels of learners and negotiate appropriate learning programmes arising from specific needs and aspirations
- be able to use a variety of approaches to teaching reading and writing
- be able to encourage improved self-image, confidence, independence and critical thinking in the learner
- be able to review, select, adapt and create appropriate learning materials
- understand and be able to use appropriate assessment, record-keeping and evaluation procedures
- have explored the impact of new technology in literacy work.

Learning Modes:

Lectures, group discussion, skills-based workshops, assignments, experiential and work-based activities, focused discussion with learners.

Assessment:

Three Lesson Plans	(60%)
Essay	(40%)

Duration: 35 hours

VEC Adult Literacy Service

VEC's around the country, through their Adult Literacy Service, organize initial and in-service training in adult literacy tuition, which is primarily designed for people wishing to work as volunteer tutors in the service. In some VEC's the initial tutor training course is accredited by WIT (see above).

Appendix 2

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