

# Literacy Matters



Keeping you up to date with literacy news in Ireland and informing you of the work NALA is doing

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**New report profiles adult literacy learners in Ireland from 2000-2009**

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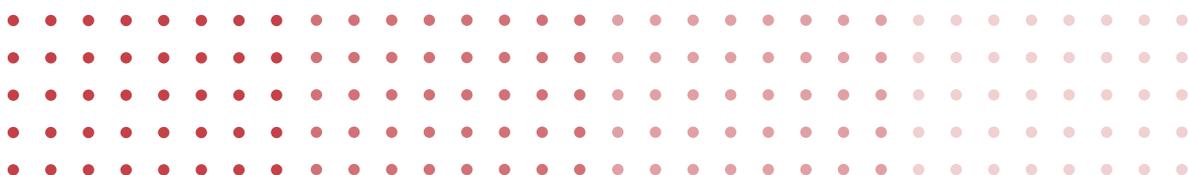
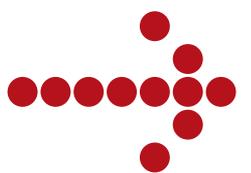
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**Students 'work their socks off' and champion the literacy message for third year in Athy**

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# Welcome

Since the summer edition of Literacy Matters, we have seen very significant developments in the further education and training space and NALA has been seeking to advance the adult literacy agenda during this period of reform. It is important that learning opportunities for adults with literacy and numeracy needs are maximised. Whilst the resources available to the whole further education and training sector are likely to be reduced NALA is calling for a greater share of the cake for people with no or low qualifications. In the past those with the least, got the least. Armed with that information, we have been advocating to Government that the reform of the sector provides us with a unique opportunity to redress the balance and support those most in need.

NALA has been raising the importance of adult literacy learning opportunities with a variety of stakeholders as the reform of education and training sector moves forward. Critically we have met with Minister Ciaran Cannon to highlight the importance of adult literacy in the development of the SOLAS implementation plan and he assured us we would be further consulted on a draft of that plan by the end of the year.

Meetings have also taken place with senior management in FÁS who will be remaining to form the new SOLAS entity.

Minister Quinn invited NALA to meet with him to discuss the forthcoming Budget and we highlighted the very low base adult literacy funding has come from and the significant work by VEC Adult Literacy services in meeting increased demand over the years. We also pointed out that there are great opportunities for improved outcomes for children,

young people and adults if we can increase the collaborative working between schools and adult literacy centres. Minister Quinn responded that this input was a helpful contribution.

In addition NALA met with Minister Joan Burton to raise concerns over the future of the Return to Education programme and sought assurances that provision for people with literacy difficulties who are in receipt of an unemployment payment would be increased going forward.

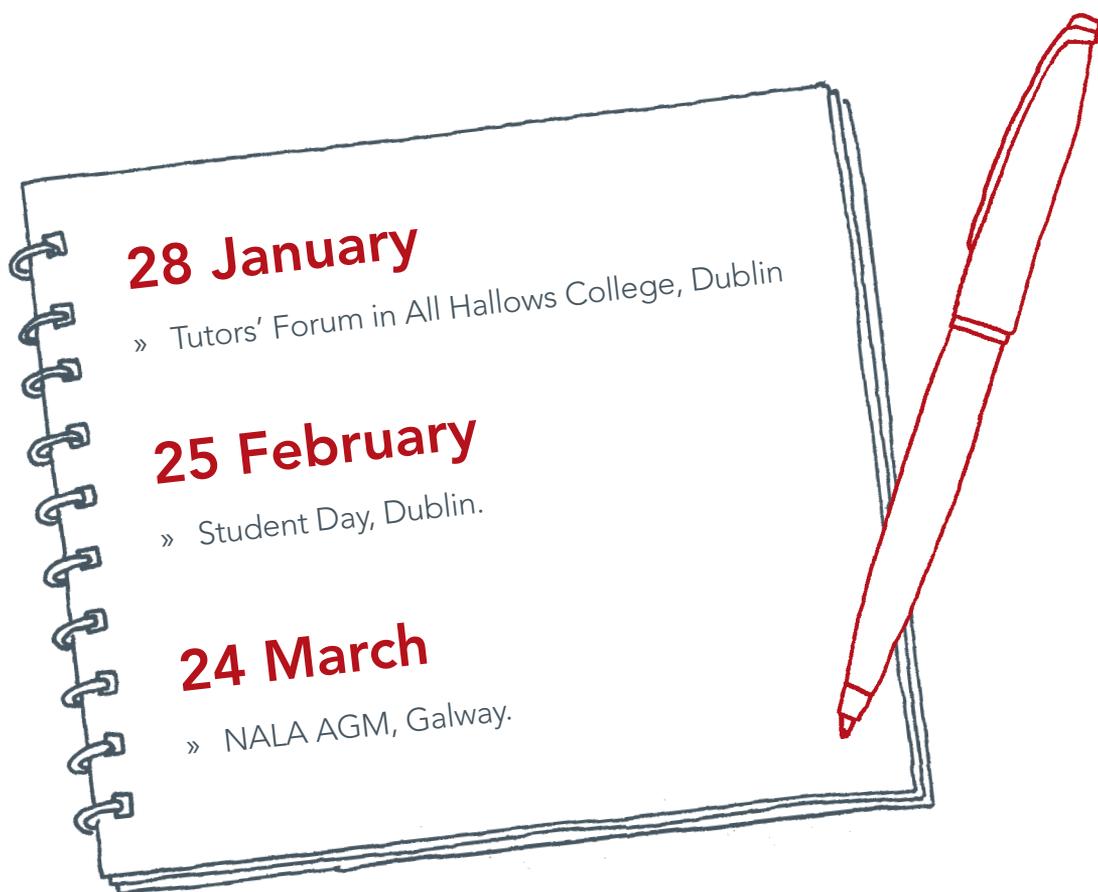
NALA has been working closely with Aodhan O'Riordan TD to highlight adult literacy issues amongst the Labour Parliamentary Party. Aodhan has been a very active member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills consistently asking questions of the Department of Education and Skills officials and representatives of education and training providers about how they intend to address adult literacy needs of the population going forward. NALA has also been following legislative developments around the creation of local Education and Training Boards as they go through the Oireachtas and will seek to secure greater representation for adult literacy interests in the final Bill.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Literacy Matters and wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year.



Inez Bailey  
Director, NALA.

## Dates for your diary



# New report sheds light on cohort of the population that is rarely acknowledged in official statistics



This November, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) launched a report that profiles adult literacy learners in VEC Adult Literacy Services from 2000-2009. The report and research, the first of its kind to be conducted on this sector in Ireland, shows how over a decade, participation rates in adult literacy classes increased by over 200%, rising from 17,000 in 2000 to 55,000 adults a year in 2010.

The most significant findings show that:

- » In each year over 50% of all learners were aged between 25 and 44 years
- » In each year the majority of literacy learners were female
- » Literacy learners were more likely to be unemployed or not in the labour market
- » Between 2008 and 2009 the number of unemployed adult literacy learners increased by 30%



**“It is a triumph against difficult circumstances to encourage so many adults back into basic education after they have had bad experiences of school. The work of the VEC Adult Literacy Organiser and their team of tutors takes place day and night throughout Ireland working to turn a negative into a positive whereby people can improve their life chances through education. Here we see those working and the unemployed, increasingly returning to education to prepare themselves for a changing Ireland,” said Inez Bailey, Director, National Adult Literacy Agency.”**

The significant rise of the number of adults participating in adult literacy over the time period was also accompanied by a rise in funding for the sector from a little over €11m in 2000 to €30m in 2009.

This report, which was funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), describes for the first time the changing profile of Irish adult literacy learners over a ten year period. This cohort of the population is very rarely seen or acknowledged in official statistics or academic reports.

Adult literacy services in Ireland are provided by the Vocational Education Committees in 120 locations throughout the country. The dramatic rise in the participation rate is a testament to the state provided service and the organisers, tutors and 3,500 volunteer tutors who work in the sector. The VEC Adult Literacy Service in conjunction with NALA has continued to work to increase the participation rate and in 2010 almost 55,000 adults were participating in adult literacy courses including family literacy, return to education, skills for work and intensive literacy programmes. The increase in participation rates came at a time when the economy was both booming and the unemployment rate was at an all time low and also includes figures since the recent crisis in 2009.

With unemployment now standing at over 14% and the need for further education and training a political priority for Government, NALA believes that this report has the potential to inform policy and practice developments and planning in the adult literacy sector. NALA argues that raising literacy and numeracy skills of Irish adults must be an urgent priority for our Government, economy and society. A world-class economic and social infrastructure is beyond our reach unless there is a refreshed adult literacy and numeracy strategy that brings new thinking to old problems.

**“Now that we have managed to create the conditions for people to see adult learning as an essential part of their life and to overcome barriers to participate, it is imperative we retain the services which enable them to keep up in our society.”**

Family literacy special:

# Supporting parents, support children

Last July, a wide ranging new strategy aimed at ensuring that every child leaves school having mastered literacy and numeracy was launched by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn. It is important that among the recommendations, there are a range of actions to enable parents and communities to support children's literacy.

In this family literacy special, we look at the new national strategy and what it means for adult literacy. We also provide some guidelines on developing a family literacy programme, with top tips for both literacy tutors and parents. We hope you find it useful.



## Who wrote the national strategy and what does it say?

The publication of the strategy is the culmination of an extensive consultation process. Submissions were received from almost 480 individuals and organisation and Department officials held consultative meetings with over 60 interest groups, not only from the education sector but also from community and other sectors.

Ambitious targets have been set under the strategy to be achieved by 2020. Nationally, the aims include:

- » At primary, increasing the number of children performing at Level 3 or above (the highest levels) in the national assessments of reading and mathematics by 5 percentage points
- » Reducing the percentage performing at or below the lowest level (Level 1) by 5 percentage points
- » At post-primary level, increasing the number of 15-year old students performing at Level 4 or above (the highest levels) in the OECD's PISA test of literacy and mathematics by at least 5 percentage points
- » Half the numbers performing at Level 1 (the lowest level) in PISA test of literacy and mathematics
- » Improve early childhood education and public attitudes to reading and mathematics.



## But what does it say about family literacy?

Importantly, the national strategy outlines actions to enable parents and communities to support children's literacy and numeracy development. It recognises that the support of parents who are engaged in their child's learning has a significant positive impact on a child's educational achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. Young people achieve better when their parents take an active interest in their education, supporting and encouraging them and creating high but achievable expectations. Equally it states that it needs to help families and communities to foster children's learning in literacy and that there needs to be a more targeted support for family and community initiatives that are proven to work.

Key actions that the National Adult Literacy Agency hope to work with the Department on, include:

- » Supporting a national public information campaign highlighting the role that all parents and communities can play in improving children's literacy and numeracy,
- » Providing all parents with information and on-line resources about activities that they can use to support their child's oral language development, literacy and numeracy from birth
- » Targeting tailored information on supporting children's literacy and numeracy to parents with literacy difficulties through adult and family literacy provision by VECs

The role of parents in the development of their children's literacy cannot be overemphasised. Yet with 500,000 adults having literacy difficulties, not every parent finds it easy to help their child. We know that addressing the literacy needs of parents will also positively impact on their children's performance and we look forward to working in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills, VECs and adult literacy providers on this important initiative.



# Thinking of developing a family literacy programme?

The key to developing a successful Family Literacy programme is to develop good community links. This means making contacts with relevant services within your own community that cater for families. Find a gap in the existing service and fill it!

### You can do this by:

- » Surveys
- » Visit to playgroup
- » Community meetings
- » Exhibition in a shopping centre
- » Presentation to a parent association
- » Printed articles
- » Open day for local evening classes
- » Display in a library

If you already offer a family learning or literacy programme, it is useful to discover what priorities individual parents have.

### Do they want to:

1. Tell stories or read to their child?
2. Help children with homework?
3. Improve their own literacy skills or numeracy skills?
4. Know about the school curriculum?
5. Be more confident in dealing with school?
6. Develop own learning skills?

Family Learning programmes should make learning fun. The primary idea is that parents are their child's first teacher and that lots of learning happens at home. Courses take place in a nonthreatening atmosphere and often use materials that are readily available at home. Parents are shown how to use everyday activity to help develop their child's verbal, number and literacy skills.

# What's the story? The role of storytelling in family learning

Telling stories is familiar to people in many parts of the world. Traditionally, telling stories was an entertaining way of passing information down the generations. But sharing stories with young people is more than just looking at or reading books. It creates a relationship between the teller and the listener; between the listener and the story; and between the story and life experiences. Stories have an emotional quality which can help children make sense of their feelings. Storybooks help children learn language and reading skills and much of this learning can occur naturally at home.

## Guidelines for tutors

Some parents want to learn how they can enjoy telling stories to their children. This learning can lead to developing their own literacy skills. There are a variety of ways to introduce story telling in the family. Parents can use the family's own history. They can create their own stories, make homemade books or tell stories with books. Storytelling has a real intergenerational element and courses can include grandparents, carers or childminders, older siblings, transition year or craft students as well as parents.

## Suggested course outline

Here is a suggestion for a course you could plan around storytelling stories.

### Possible topics:

- » What do children learn from stories?
- » Tell your own stories, for example real life or fantasy stories;
- » The who? What? Where? When? And how? Of stories;
- » Mix and match a story

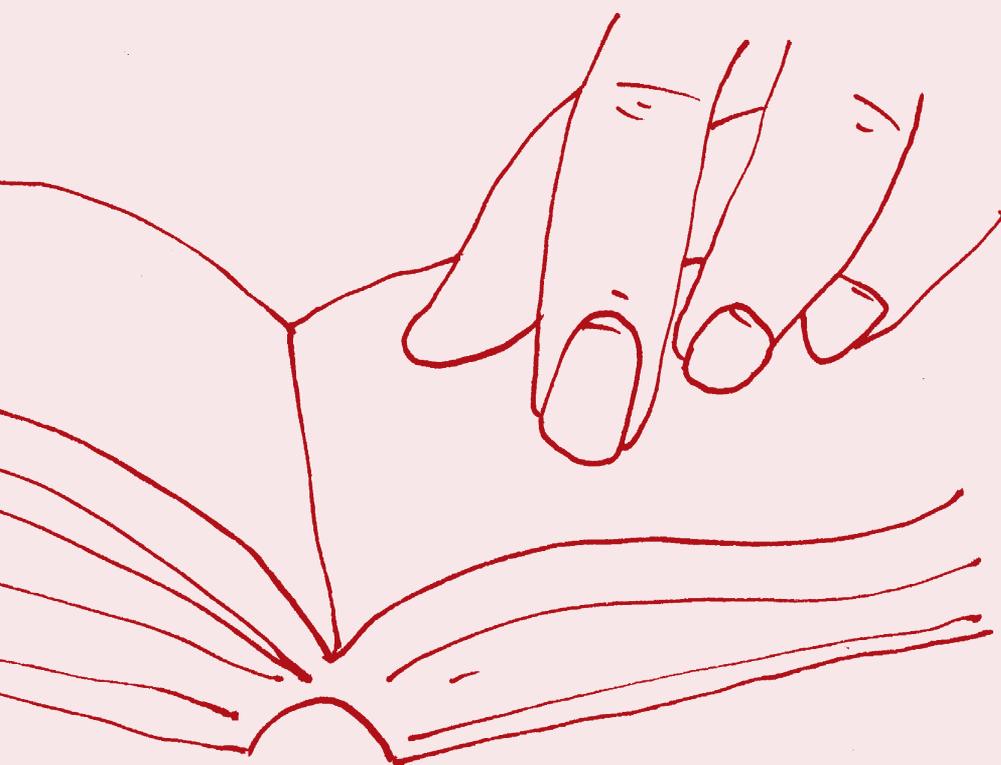
## What do children learn from stories?

The tutor can introduce the topic by asking parents to talk about:

- » Stories their children like;
- » Stories they remember themselves from childhood;
- » Stories they like to tell children
- » Whether their children like to join in with stories

The tutor begins a group discussion by asking "What makes a good story?" Possible responses:

- » Has a funny incident;
- » About something the child is interested in;
- » About the child;
- » Has a happy ending.



## Tell your own stories:

Group members are asked to tell a story or anecdote. The tutor models an example of a story:

- » They heard in childhood;
- » About themselves as a child;
- » About a funny thing that happened recently;
- » Another activity is for one person to start a story and it is continued around the room until everyone has contributed to the telling. Participants can opt to 'pass'.
- » These stories can be written down and illustrated, with the tutor acting as a scribe, if necessary. This is similar to the language experience method.
- » Parents can be encouraged to draw pictures to go with any of the stories they tell their children.

## The who, what, when, where and how of stories:

- » Small groups work together to create their own stories using the headings; who, what, when, where and how. The plot of the story can be worked out by using the following chart. It could later be written, illustrated and bound.
- » Stories can be created using materials, such as small or soft toys, old family photo's magazine cut outs or cartoon drawings.
- » Work in pairs or small groups;
  - Select some items from material pool;
  - Create a simple story with a beginning, middle and end;
  - Single words or short sentences can be written to go with collected pictures;
  - Type stories and create a collection of stories by the group for their children

## Mix and match stories:

Tutor provides the following for small groups to create a story:

- » Pictures of fairy tale or TV characters, for example Snow White, Postman Pat, Buzz Lightyear or similar;
- » Verbs written in appropriate tenses on card;
- » Drawings of different places, such as woods, castle, mountain, cave, treehouse, garden or house;
- » They can be arranged and turned into different stories;
- » All the stories can be written and illustrated and turned into a book.

## Storyboard stories:

- » Each group member writes or draws (stick figures will do) a story element;
- » It can be done in sequence;
- » Alternatively, fold over after each section without seeing the previous contribution, for a surprise story.

Family literacy work can help to overcome the barriers to learning felt by some adults and children who find it difficult to relate to school learning and encourages parents and children to work together to improve both their literacy skills.



<p><b>WHO</b> is in your story? Are there one or more characters? Are they real or imaginary?</p>	
<p><b>WHAT</b> happens in your story? Is there a problem or difficulty?</p>	
<p><b>WHEN</b> did it happen? Is it in the past, present or future?</p>	
<p><b>WHERE</b> did it happen? Is it a real or imaginary place?</p>	
<p><b>HOW</b> does it end? Will it be happy or sad?</p>	



Family literacy special:

# Parent and babies - tips for 'babbling'

Children's ability to think and understand experiences develops by listening and speaking. As a child's language becomes more complex so does their ability to understand more complex thoughts and ideas. Early speech is called 'babbling', when a child is 'playing' at making sounds. Parents of different nationalities pick out the sounds which are most like their own language and respond enthusiastically to them. The family is the child's first source of language and learning and there are lots of everyday activities that occur in the home, which can help children's language skills.

- » Have your baby nearby when you are talking to other adults so that they can listen
- » Repeat the sounds your baby makes and turn them into a game
- » Turn sounds into words. For example, say "bang bang" if they are banging
- » Name sounds you hear. For example, if you both hear a car engine say "That's a car"
- » When they use a word, add another one. If they say "cat" say "nice cat"

**Learning through play** – one of the ways children learn is through play. A child who is playing is refining learning skills that continue to develop during childhood and beyond. Adults can help by providing opportunities for different types of play. Play can help to show what children know and understand.

## Useful resources you can download on [www.nala.ie/family](http://www.nala.ie/family)

**NALA policy brief on family literacy** - in Ireland up to 30% of primary school children from disadvantaged areas have literacy difficulties. NALA believe that family literacy should be a key element in a national literacy framework, and in a refreshed adult literacy strategy, as outlined in this document.

**At home with family learning** provides lots of ideas for parents to help babies, toddlers and primary school children's literacy and numeracy development. The booklet demonstrates how to practice reading, writing and maths skills with a child, in a fun and colourful way. It includes games and puzzles that have a wide appeal for all age groups. The booklet also contains information for adults wishing to join a literacy programme. It includes a handy section for parents with practical information on what to do if their child needs further support in developing their literacy and numeracy.

**Working together – approaches to family literacy** provides an introduction to the concept of family literacy and guidelines for groups interested in family literacy work.

**Supporting family literacy** is a useful guide for people involved in family learning programmes. The guide explains the many different theories of learning, how the family environment can affect a child's motivation, learning through play and even the importance of early speech or 'babbling'.

## Other Useful Resources

### AISTEAR

Aistear is the new **early childhood curriculum framework** for children from birth to six years in Ireland. Because early childhood marks the beginning of children's lifelong learning journeys, this framework is called Aistear, the Irish word for journey. It provides information to help practitioners, including infant teachers and Early Start teachers, to plan for and provide enjoyable and appropriately challenging learning experiences that will allow all children grow and develop as competent and confident learners.

The Aistear Toolkit contains resources to help you get to know *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and to use it in your work with children. [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

### Guide to Family Learning programmes in Ireland

Following many requests about family learning information, Clare Family Learning Project recognised the need to create an overall picture of what work is being done nationally in this innovative and important area. This publication lists the various family learning programmes that are currently being offered nationally by the adult education sector in collaboration with local schools, community groups and service providers. [www.clarefamilylearning.org](http://www.clarefamilylearning.org)

# Come join us at our National Forum for Adult Literacy Tutors 2012

## Keeping adult literacy students actively involved in the learning process

**Saturday 28 January 2012 -  
11.00 am to 4.00 pm  
All Hallows College, Grace Park Road,  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9**

**Aim of event:** This event aims to look at how tutors can work with students to:

- » explore their needs and interests;
- » set their own goals; and
- » decide how they wish to learn.

## Morning presentations:

### **Transformative learning theory and the importance of story in adult literacy**

Margaret O'Brien, Lecturer in Adult Literacy Studies, Literacy Development Centre, Waterford Institute of Technology

'Once upon a time' ... This presentation will examine the role of story in supporting the development of writing and reading. Links will be made with the ideas of Paulo Freire and transformative learning theory, examining the idea that we can transform our lives through writing.

### **Building on students' connections with family, work and community**

Kathy Maclachlan, Adult Literacy Consultant, Scotland

The presentation will explore the meaning of a social practices model of adult literacies in theory and in practice. It will consider the relevance of social practices and the learning theories that underpin it, to literacies learners' families, communities and working lives.

## Afternoon workshops:

### **A. Enabling learners to take responsibility for their own learning**

– Maura McNamara, Adult literacy trainer. Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning is a very important part of the work of a tutor. Facilitating the learners to make decisions about what they wish to learn, which activities they will engage in and how they will show that they have satisfactorily completed the task is empowering. The workshop will cover the use of learning contracts, setting goals, learning journals, learning styles, listening and building confidence.

**B. It's not all about hard sums: Building everyday numeracy into adult literacy provision** - Louise Conroy, Maths, Computers and Communications Tutor, Youthreach Dungarvan.

This workshop will provide tutors with ideas which they can further develop, a list of resources, and practical examples for integrating numeracy into their given subject. The topics covered will include everyday numeracy, developing your 'mathematical eyes', integrating numeracy and fun with numbers.

**C. Students' needs and goal setting with mixed level groups**- Janna T Kearney, Programme Developer, Co. Cavan VEC.

This workshop will examine the difficulties of teaching a mixed level group. For example finding the appropriate resources and materials, organising the class, making sure all learners are challenged and interested, determining individual needs and so on. The workshop will also look at suggestions for effective mixed level teaching.

### **D. Integrating literacy into other subject areas**

– Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide, Integrating Literacy Coordinator, NALA.

This workshop is intended mainly for subject teachers, vocational instructors and tutors working in further education and community education and training programmes, such as Youthreach, VTOS, PLC's. The workshop will consider teaching and learning methods that overcome literacy barriers to learning in the main subject as well as methods to help learners develop the relevant language, literacy and numeracy.

### **E. How to use the internet to resource your teaching and learning**

– Fiona Murphy, Adult Literacy Tutor, South Westmeath VEC.

This workshop aims to assist the tutor in using the internet to source up to date and relevant learning materials suitable for adult learners. It will give ideas on how these materials can be incorporated into lesson plans and adapted to suit learners in Ireland. Finally, it will also look at the use of the internet to assist teaching, allowing students to learn interactively and through a multisensory approach.

### **F. Lesson Planning** - Germaine Cahill, Adult literacy trainer.

This workshop will look at what you should keep in mind when planning a lesson. We will discuss how to prepare your lesson and how to assess progress. We will also examine the resources available to tutors and how they can be used to full advantage.

### **G. How to review students' progress** - Helen McHugh, Adult literacy trainer and tutor, Co. Donegal VEC.

In this workshop, we will discuss and explain the meaning and purpose of review and what we mean by learners' progress in adult basic education. We will also identify different methods of review and show how to use these methods to track and record learner's progress. This will demonstrate the importance of reviewing progress in actively involving the learner in the learning process and sustaining students' motivation.

**You can download a booking form at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie) or contact Sandra Peel in NALA. Tel: 01 412 7900. Email: [speel@nala.ie](mailto:speel@nala.ie). There is no charge for tutors to attend this event.**

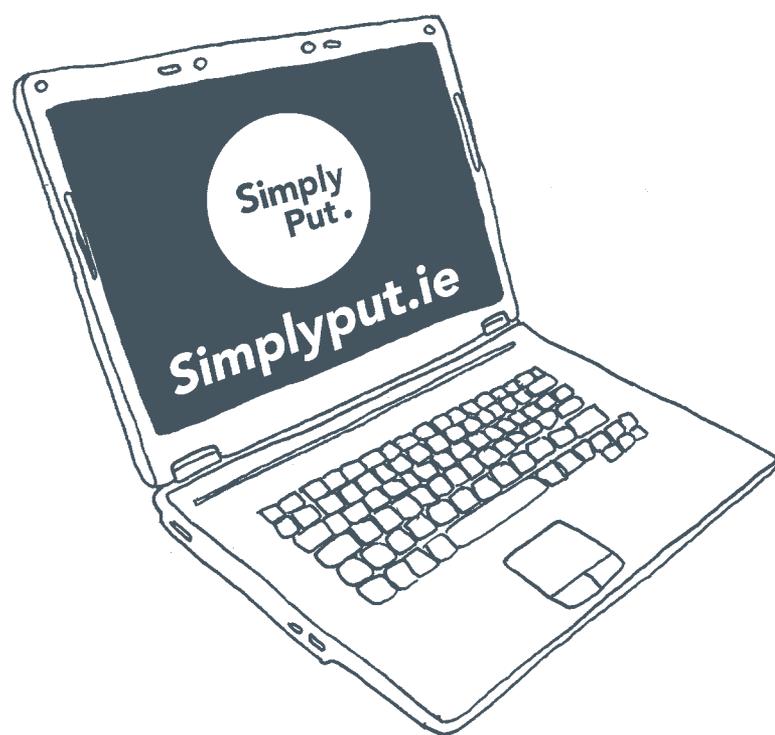
# Excellence Ireland Quality Association join forces with NALA to promote plain English

Details of a new agreement between Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) and NALA to promote plain English was announced during National Adult Literacy Awareness Week. The EIQA is the leading professional association for the advancement of quality practices in Ireland. As part of the agreement with NALA they will promote the use of plain English with their 2,500 members and ensure that their auditors and assessors are trained in plain English writing skills.

**“At the heart of all Q Mark programmes is the principal of continuous improvement. The Q Mark report and recommendations have influenced many changes in Irish businesses. We are confident that our association with NALA will further promote the use of plain English,”**

Irene Collins, Managing Director, EIQA.

See [www.simplyput.ie](http://www.simplyput.ie) for more information and tips on how to write in plain English.



## Phrases like 'pro rata' or 'in lieu of' confuse young people

### Almost 2 in 5 find it difficult to understand information from public services

Research released by NALA revealed that difficulties exist amongst sectors of the Irish population when it comes to understanding information from public services and government bodies. Although the majority of participants had a level of understanding of terms like 'pro rata' and 'in lieu of', younger participants in particular appeared to have a lesser understanding of these words.

The research, commissioned by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), found that almost 39% (2 in 5) found it difficult or very difficult to understand information from public services and government bodies. This increased to 47% for participants aged 18-24.

Just over 61% (three fifths) of participants knew that the term pro rata meant 'a proportion of'. A lack of understanding of the term 'pro rata' was most common amongst younger participants aged 18-24 (39%). Similarly, almost a third (33%) of 18 - 24 year olds struggled with the meaning of the word 'stakeholder'.

The research was released as part of National Adult Literacy Awareness Week 2011 to promote the use of plain English at a training day for people working in the public sector.

“Plain English can help the public sector become more efficient because clearer information is more likely to save time, money and possible frustration that might otherwise be involved in making repeated requests for information, clarifying misunderstandings or contesting legal agreements that may be misinterpreted. It's only fair - giving people the information they need in language they understand enables them to make informed choices, access their entitlements and meet their legal duties,” said Claire O’Riordain, Plain English coordinator, National Adult Literacy Agency.



# Four out of 10 people in Ireland have low health literacy

## Irish findings of first ever EU Health Literacy Survey announced at launch of Health Literacy Awards

Four out of 10 people (39%) in Ireland have inadequate or problematic health literacy according to the first ever European Health Literacy Survey. The survey was carried out by University College Dublin for Ireland and funded by the EU Commission and the Department of Health in association with NALA. Vulnerable groups such as those experiencing long term illness, financial hardship and those from lower-socio-economic groups were seen to have the lowest levels of health literacy. Low levels of health literacy results in poorer health, poor quality of self-care and self management of disease, ineffective use of the health service and a decreased ability to advocate for oneself in the healthcare arena.

Health literacy involves a person having the skills to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. It also involves a person having the knowledge to understand their treatment options and make informed decisions about their own health.

The survey marks the first time that health literacy levels have ever been measured in Ireland. Ireland is not alone in its health literacy problem - nearly every second person (46%) across the participating eight European countries was shown to have low or problematic health literacy.

The announcement of the survey results was made at the launch of the fifth annual Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards, which are designed to recognise and reward excellence in health literacy in the healthcare sector. For more information on the awards and the health literacy survey, visit [www.healthliteracy.ie](http://www.healthliteracy.ie).

"These results are welcome in that we can now quantify the problem with regard to health literacy, the impact

it is having on the health of our population and the need for further education in this area. The results show that over 17% of people have difficulty understanding leaflets that accompany medicines and almost 20% of people would find it difficult to understand what to do in a medical emergency - thus demonstrating that the levels of low health literacy are having a real impact on a day to day basis. Medical care and interacting with the health service is become increasingly complex and this data will further draw the attention of policy makers to the issue of health literacy. I would encourage anyone who would like to improve their health literacy to make contact with their local VEC adult literacy service or NALA at 1800 20 20 65." commented Inez Bailey, Director, National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

According to the EU Health Literacy Survey report, at an individual level, the report is advising that low health literacy be addressed by educating the Irish public and increasing their personal health literacy and also by making the tasks and situations involved in the health system less demanding.

The Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards were developed to recognise and reward the excellent work already being done in the healthcare sector to address the issue of health literacy. The Awards are open to anyone who works in the healthcare sector who is improving health literacy by communicating more clearly and making information and services more accessible to patients. Since the Awards were launched in 2007, nearly 450 entries have been received from GPs, practice managers, consultants, nurses, receptionists, advocacy groups, and pharmacists across Ireland. The closing date for entries is Friday, 27th January 2012. Entries can be made online at [www.healthliteracy.ie](http://www.healthliteracy.ie).



**Inez Bailey, NALA, Dr Neil Boyle, MSD and Dr Gerardine Doyle, UCD at the launch of the survey results**

# Everyone has a story to tell. What's yours?

There wasn't a dry eye in the house when the participants of the TV series *A Story with me in it*, read their personal, life stories to an audience of friends, family and literacy students in the National Library of Ireland last September on International Literacy Day.

So emotional were their accounts that an RTE radio reporter who recorded the stories for that evening's Drivetime programme, said it was one of the most powerful events he had ever attended.

Well known authors Sheila O'Flanagan, Peter Sheridan and Marita Conlon McKenna were on hand to support the participants and talk about their own experiences making the TV series and getting to know the participants and helping them write their incredible, honest and always brave stories.

Having left school at 12 with poor literacy skills Eileen Sheehan never thought she would one day stand in front of 70 people and read a story she herself penned. Yet this is what the mother of three from Moyross in Limerick achieved at the event. "To go from thinking I was just a nobody to standing up in front of all those lovely people was just amazing," she told an Irish Times reporter after the event.

All their stories, along with 70 other stories from literacy students are now hosted on the website [www.astorywithmeinit.ie](http://www.astorywithmeinit.ie). This website allows members of the public to showcase their writing and is specifically aimed at emergent writers. While not a competition, members of the public can submit and rate stories, and those with the highest recommendations get promoted on the home page. Stories and poems can be entered under a number of categories, including achievement, family, friends, humour, kindness, love and poetry.

If you would like to read or submit a story simply go to [www.astorywithmeinit.ie](http://www.astorywithmeinit.ie) – we would love to hear from you.

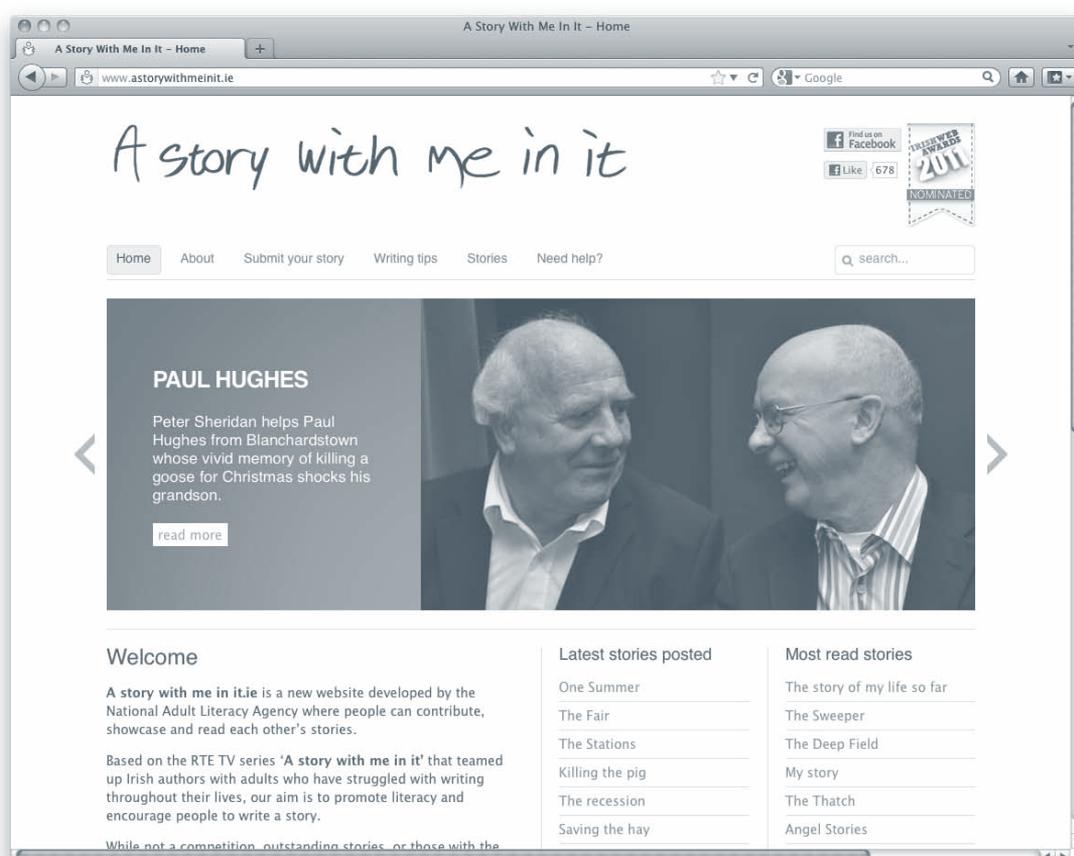
## NEW TV SERIES

Early this year, **A Story with me in it** teamed up six well known Irish authors with six adults who had struggled with writing throughout their lives. Each programme focused on one person's story and the challenges they faced to write that story down. It was a challenging and rewarding experience for learners and writers alike, and all involved were delighted with the end result. It also struck a chord with viewers around the country, with 270,000 people tuning in to watch it the first night.

Due to the phenomenal success of the programme, Animo TV, in association with NALA, is making a second series of **A Story with me in It'**, for RTÉ and are now looking for 6 learners to participate in the series. The programme will be shown on RTÉ One in April 2012

For those of you who didn't see the TV series, **A Story with Me in it** is a personal transformation series that focuses on the journey of each person. It is a fresh, honest, often moving and insightful look at how people cope with having to learn the basic skills many of us take for granted. Next year we will have a number of leading Irish writers who will take time to work with literacy students, and help them write the story they want to tell. The writer will in turn write a short story on their experience of this journey.

**If you are interested and would like more information on the programme please contact Ciara on 01 6468250 or e-mail [ciarak@animo.ie](mailto:ciarak@animo.ie)**



# Mum's new recipe

by Jo Kelly

I've heard it said that most people either love or hate liver. In my family, only my parents loved it: but it had to be cooked in the oven with bacon and onion, and Mum would make delicious gravy from the juices of the meat. Marian, one of my sisters, loved to dip bread in the gravy and then eat the bread.

One day, Marian had a falling out with Mum who had kept asking her to clean her bedroom, but all Marian kept saying was, "in a minute." As you would expect, it was Mother who won the argument. So that night Marian refused to have any of the gravy as she usually would, so Mum poured it over the dog's food instead. After dinner, Mum was straight out the front door with no good-byes, or "see you later", all she wanted to do was to get to the bingo on time. Dad went to bed early, as he had to be up at 5am for work the next morning. About half an hour later, he flew past us in a mad dash to the toilet, and was running back and forth to the loo for most of the night. So me and my sisters had a feeling that he was suffering from diarrhoea. At the same time our dog, Ben, was also suffering in the same way. At this point, we guessed that it might have had something to do with that night's dinner, which made us glad that we didn't like liver!

Next thing we knew was Mum came running through the front door, heading for the toilet, but Dad was in there again. She started yelling and banging on the toilet door, demanding that he get out of there, so that she could use it, as she was desperate. By now, Dad knew that something must be very wrong for Mother to leave the bingo early; as nothing ever got in the way of her bingo nights. He asked her about

the dinner and what exactly she had done. She was disgusted at him for questioning her about her cooking abilities. But she did say that the onion was a "funny colour" when she chopped it up, and "thought that it had tasted a bit woody." Then out of the blue, Dad asked us all, where was Ann's bulb – the one she was given at school. No one had a clue where it was. Mum then realised that as she had wanted to get to the bingo on time, she had been in a hurry that night to get dinner prepared, and instead of chopping up an onion, she had chopped up Ann's daffodil bulb and cooked it with the liver and bacon. By now Marian was feeling very smug, as she had refused to have the gravy that night and was smirking to herself.

Later on in the evening, Dad was standing by the balcony door with just a white vest and his trousers which he was holding up with one hand. Beside him on the table were some plastic flowers in a vase, so he picked them up with his free hand and held the flowers over his head and started singing "I'm a little wallflower." At this stage we were all in hysterics laughing, except Mum. All she could do was to moan about her un-played bingo cards that she had left behind, saying, "I could have won the jackpot!"

The area where we lived in London was mostly all flats and the people

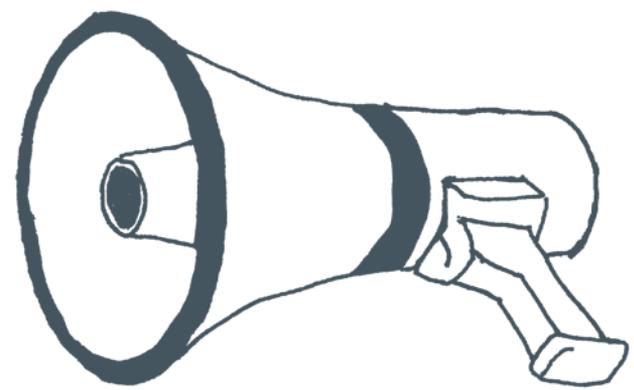


living there had nowhere to grow plants etc. So, once a year, the local primary school would give out daffodil bulbs to the children aged between ten and eleven years old, to take home and grow them in a pot. After a few months, the children would bring the daffodils back to school, which were then judged by the headmistress. The best three were given a pencil box, but all of the children got certificates for their efforts. Sad to say, that year Ann had no daffodil to enter, as my parents had eaten her entry! However, as she was only ten at that time, she could try again the next year.

When she was given her bulb the following year we all barred Mother from cooking liver and bacon until Ann's daffodil was brought back into school. This time she came home with a pencil box and a certificate, which we framed and put up on the bedroom wall. We all hoped that this would make up for last year's fiasco.

It is not recommended that you try this recipe!

# NALA Student Days



Student days provide us with a valuable way of getting direct feedback from students about their issues and rights. We make sure that these are reflected in our work and considered by politicians, policy makers and public bodies.

NALA's Student Sub-Committee ran two adult literacy student days in 2011. 242 students attended (170 students went to the Dublin Day and 72 students went to the Cork Day). This was the largest number of students attending in recent years.

The days collected feedback from all 242 students on:

- » difficulties in their everyday life because of their literacy difficulties and,
- » their experience of learning in their local literacy centres.

## Difficulties experienced by students

The top three difficulties students experienced in everyday life were:

- » reading and writing particularly when it came to dealing with forms.
- » the stigma of having a literacy difficulty and associated difficulties with confidence and,
- » helping their children or grandchildren with homework.

## Experiences of students of their local services

Students were also asked about their experience of learning in their local literacy services. The majority of them found it a very rewarding and positive experience, noting in particular the adult friendly ethos and committed tutors. Their top issues noted however were:

- » lack of sufficient funding for services,
- » not enough one to one tuition available,
- » the pace of tuition sometimes too fast,
- » moving from 1:1 to tuition to group working and,
- » the need for more support for students with dyslexia, students with special needs or disabilities or both, ESOL students.

## Findings from four workshops on technology, work, numeracy and hearing students' voices

- » While students are interested in learning about technology most of them are not yet using it. Those who are however, reported that it has been a helpful tool for learning. Many students were unaware of NALA's distance learning website [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie)
- » Students in work enjoy it. Students who are seeking work need upskilling, guidance and opportunities, particularly if they are older students.
- » Students generally seemed to have a low appreciation of the value of learning numeracy learning. The numeracy workshop helped develop this understanding and showed how numeracy was different to maths.
- » Students think their views and opinions should be heard in their literacy services and beyond. Some students suggested that local student committees, NALA, the Evolving Quality Framework for Adult Basic Education (a quality plan at centres involving students, tutors and management) and a students' union were possible means of getting their voices heard as a group. Typically though many students don't know how to make their views heard.

## High level recommendations

- » Students need to be better informed about their learning, their centre and their rights. First steps to make this happen should be :
  - developing a network of local student groups that would link in with the NALA Student Sub-Committee for information-sharing and mentoring support;
  - getting more students to become members of NALA,
  - developing a simple leaflet on NALA (including its sub-committee), the VEC Adult Literacy Service and students supports available.
- » Students need to be facilitated to meet at different levels (locally, regionally and nationally) to identify common views and issues and work together with others to get their issues addressed and resolved. Students studying through distance learning should also have opportunities to meet and discuss their issues.
- » NALA should continue to use the feedback from its student days and other student work to inform its work, share it with other stakeholders and get their responses.
- » All partners concerned involved with the upskilling of people with literacy difficulties should be mindful of NALA's Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work (2005).
- » More students and tutors should be encouraged to use technology (particularly [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie)) as a teaching and learning tool.
- » More students and providers should focus on promoting numeracy skills learning.

Literacy and guidance services should work on developing programmes for learners 45 years and older.

**Out next student day is in Dublin on 25 February 2012.**



# Students 'work their socks off' and champion the literacy message for third year in Athy

A big thank you to all the students who worked their hearts out at the National Ploughing Championships in Athy, Co Kildare from the 20-22 September, this year. It was a very busy Ploughing Championship, with over 190,000 people attending the event over the 3 days and the students never stopped talking!



**Frank Locke, Michael Power, Sean Gallagher, Olive Phelan and Bridie Daly at the Ploughing Championships**

Four students- Frank Locke, Michael Power, Olive Phelan and Bridie Daly (pictured) worked hard for three days at our stand in the Education section of the event. The student team felt that this Ploughing Championship was very different from other years because a lot of people came looking for the NALA stand this year, having enjoyed talking to us last year. More importantly, the students all remarked that for the first time, people were directly approaching them to talk about their own literacy difficulties. This is a great development, as it seems that our work in helping people break through the barriers they feel when first admitting that they have literacy problems, is successful. The student team all agreed that it is the fact that they are on the stand, sharing their stories and successes, that makes it easier for people to come up and ask for advice and information.

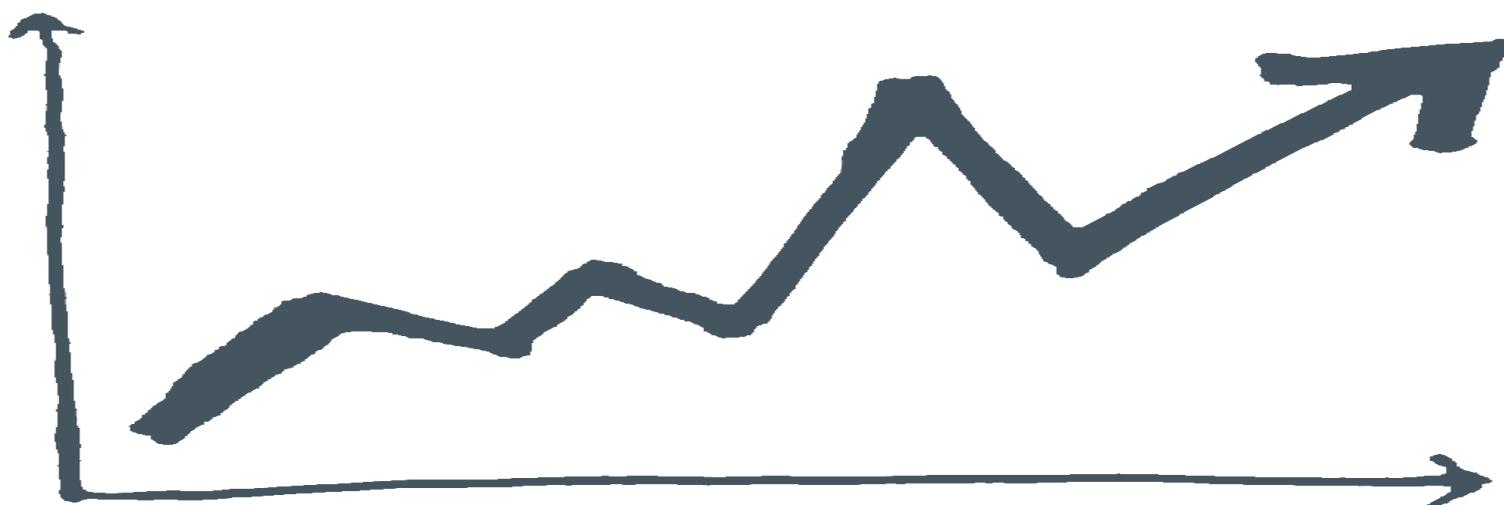
Two other students, Vincent Gaffney and Laura Foley came down for the day to work and support their committee friends. They both enjoyed the experience of meeting new people and talking about their work in the student subcommittee at NALA. All in all, it was a very successful three days and all the students finished happy with their work but very tired! One of the students, Frank Locke, summed up his experiences over the three days by saying "We all worked our socks off for NALA, but also for each other, we played like Liverpool football club and as a team, you never walk alone".

NALA would like to thank all the Student subcommittee members for their hard work throughout the year. If you would like more information about NALA's student subcommittee, please phone Denise McBride on (01) 4127916.

# Europe 2020 Education Target –The missing link:

## Setting and reaching adult literacy targets

By Helen Ryan, Policy Officer, NALA



### EU targets

In 2009 EU Member States and the European Commission published a **strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (“ET 2020”)**. To measure progress in Europe 2020 goals, five benchmarks were agreed for the whole EU.<sup>1</sup> In 2010 two of the five benchmarks were given higher political status as headline targets – these were:

- » Reducing school dropout rates below 10%; and
- » At least 40% of 30-34 year olds completing third-level education.

These areas focus on the formal sectors of first, second and third level education and further education and training is the forgotten sector once again. NALA believes the EU should commit to an adult literacy target under the education targets. This would strengthen and prioritise adult literacy responses on a European level and within EU Member States.

The current progress of the **participation in lifelong learning** benchmark shows that in 2009 the average participation is 9.3%, with Denmark (31.6%), Sweden (22.2%) and Finland (22.1%) being the best EU performers. Ireland is currently at 6.7%, decreasing since 2005 where it was 7.4%.<sup>2</sup>

NALA believes every EU Member State should publish a national literacy strategy, including adults, and an implementation plan every 5 years. These should clearly outline actions, outcomes, targets, who has responsibility for delivery and evaluation. There should also be better targeting of resources using national data (and upcoming PIAAC<sup>3</sup> results) to prioritise the resources of those most in need and distant from society and the labour market. At European level, the Action Plan on Adult Learning needs to be promoted, agreed at EU Ministerial level and monitored in order to impact on adult literacy and numeracy levels. Guideline 1.1.8 states that “A statutory right to education equivalent to primary and secondary level exists for low-skilled and low-qualified adults.”<sup>4</sup> Having this implemented by EU Member States would result in a legislative commitment to address basic skills for adults.

### Ireland’s targets

Ireland published their first national policy on adult education including adult literacy in 2000.<sup>5</sup> Whilst acknowledging the success of the policy, it is now outdated and needs updating. Furthermore policy implementation was undermined and weakened by the lack of a published national implementation plan for adult literacy.

1 [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm)

2 [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/benchmarks10/pg7\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/benchmarks10/pg7_en.pdf)

3 Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies

4 [http://www.kslll.net/Documents/ALWG\\_Basic%20skills%20guidelines\\_final%20report.pdf](http://www.kslll.net/Documents/ALWG_Basic%20skills%20guidelines_final%20report.pdf)

5 Department of Education and Science (2000), *Learning for Life: White paper on adult education*

Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion set a measure to reduce the proportion of the population aged 16-64 with restricted literacy to between 10% and 15% by 2016,<sup>6</sup> from the level of 25% found in 1997. Social Justice Ireland highlights in their Socio-Economic Review that this target "implies that the aim of government policy is to have "only" 301,960 adults of labour force age with serious literacy difficulties in Ireland by 2016."<sup>7</sup> The Review also states that "the government's literacy target is illogical, unambitious and suggests a complete lack of interest in seriously addressing this problem."

There are currently 379,100 people in the labour force with less than a level 4 qualification.<sup>8</sup> In 2007 the National Skills Strategy (NSS) suggested that by the year 2020 there should be 45% with qualifications at levels 4 and 5 and 7% with qualifications at NQF levels 1 to 3.<sup>9</sup> This equates to an upskilling of nearly 300,000 workers with basic education needs. The latest report on the implementation of the National Skills Strategy shows that the slowest progress made so far has been with upskilling those at FETAC Levels of 1 - 3 up to Levels 4 and 5. This group was identified as the most significant challenge to upskill for the period to 2020. A key factor in delivering on the targets is ensuring the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.<sup>10</sup>



## Current participation in lifelong learning in Ireland

We know that people with literacy and numeracy difficulties are less likely to participate in education and training. A recent report highlighted that "third level graduates (6%, 58,000 persons), were three times more likely to participate in lifelong learning than those with lower secondary or less educational qualifications (2%, 9,000 persons)."<sup>11</sup> This situation compounds the Matthew effect whereby people who need the most assistance are the least likely to be assisted while those who need the least assistance are the most likely to be assisted.<sup>12</sup> In order to effectively address the other EU targets, in particular employment and poverty and social inclusion, Ireland needs to have an ambitious government target for adult literacy.

## Role of family literacy

Family literacy programmes improve the literacy practices of parents and other family members, has a very significant knock on effect on school performance of children and can help to break inter-generational disadvantage. The European Commission Family Literacy Report states that "in most cases, third-party overviews of Member States' education systems make little mention of parents, focusing instead only on institutional structures such as schools and early childhood education and care systems."<sup>13</sup> To move forward the report identifies that "the focus on families requires "joined-up", cross-departmental policy making."

## Conclusion

We need to create and implement an ambitious vision for adult literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 76 million of the EU-27 working population (25 – 64 year olds) are low skilled and have the lowest rate of employment. We must work together better – European institutions, national governments, state agencies, employers, adult education providers, non-governmental organisations, adults and learners – to provide flexible high quality literacy learning opportunities and by removing unnecessary literacy-related barriers. We want adults with literacy needs to no longer experience barriers to social inclusion and equality around health, education, employment, income and active citizenship. We believe that raising literacy levels will be a principal means to addressing poverty, achieving equality and social cohesion.

6 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016, page 44

7 Social Justice Ireland (2011), *Socio-Economic Review 2011: A New and Fairer Ireland* [http://www.socialjustice.ie/sites/default/files/file/SER%202011/2011-05-16%20-%20chapter%203\\_7%20-%20Educational%20Disadvantage.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.ie/sites/default/files/file/SER%202011/2011-05-16%20-%20chapter%203_7%20-%20Educational%20Disadvantage.pdf)

8 CSO website: [http://www.cso.ie/qnhs/calendar\\_quarters\\_qnhs.htm](http://www.cso.ie/qnhs/calendar_quarters_qnhs.htm) Table S9a, Quarter 2 2011

9 Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2007), *Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy*, page 12

10 Department of Education and Science (2010), *National Skills Strategy Implementation Statement* <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=10861&pcategory=10861&ecategory=10876&sectionpage=12251&language=EN&link=link001&page=1&doc=48574>

11 Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2011), *Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply 2011: Trends in Education and Training Outputs*

12 Kerckhoff, A. and Glennie, E. (1999), *The Matthew Effect in American Education. Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization*

13 Report is available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2011/literacy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2011/literacy_en.pdf)

# Working Skills conference

By Helen Ryan, Policy Officer, NALA

The European Basic Skills Network (EBSN) is an independent policy network with 64 members in 35 countries, including 16 Ministries of Education. It co-operates with the European Commission. The objectives of the network are to:

- » contribute to EU policy;
- » knowledge sharing and creation;
- » awareness; and
- » foster EU research and development.

## 2011 conference

This year's annual conference took place in June in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. The conference theme was 'Working Skills' and we heard from different organisations both from an EU and member state context.

The **European Commission** presented their Guidelines for Basic Skills. There are 32 Guidelines ranging from stakeholders to addressing barriers to participation and from qualifications to quality assurance. The Guidelines are not mandatory and there is no formal monitoring or evaluation of them. <http://europeanbasicskillsnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/martina-ni-cheallaigh-28062011.pdf>

The EU has set an adult lifelong learning participation benchmark, which states:

The EU average level of participation in lifelong learning of the working age population should at least reach 12.5% in 2010 and 15% in 2020.

The April 2011 report shows that in 2009 the average is 9.3%, with Denmark (31.6%), Sweden (22.2%) and Finland (22.1%) being the best EU performers. Ireland is currently at 6.7%, decreasing since 2005 where it was 7.4%.

**Cedefop** – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – talked about their work on key competences. 76 million of the EU-27 working population (25 – 64 year olds) are low skilled and this group has the lowest rate of employment. Cedefop are involved in a new study looking at how work-based learning programmes that target low-skilled unemployed adults and focus on the development of key competences can contribute to getting this target group into the labour market. This study will begin this autumn and will include a comparative overview of 12 – 15 EU member states, with 10 case studies of best practice examples. The results will be published in 2013.

## Country inputs

We heard from 10 countries about different programmes and research. Two of the most relevant presentations for Ireland were:

### UNISON Skills for Life Survey

Joyce Black from NIACE, UK gave a presentation about a survey of the literacy, numeracy and computer skills of UNISON members. Some initial data shared was:

- » 1.3 million members in UNISON; 27,000 respondents (2%);
- » 94% response online – skewed to office workers;
- » 40% had qualifications to degree level, while fewer than one in ten left with no qualifications or with qualifications below level 2;
- » 2% responded 'not very confident' for reading and 7% for using numbers;
- » 22% responded 'quite difficult' (18%) and 'very difficult' (4%) for using spreadsheets like excel;
- » 16% said that they didn't apply for promotion because of confidence; and
- » 54% identified they had 'a bit lower than needed' (27%) and 'much lower than needed' (27%) levels of confidence and literacy to go for a promotion.

### Adult Literacies 2020: Literacies for and within work

Cath Hamilton from Learning and Teaching Scotland talked about developments in Scotland. Some highlights of her presentation were:

- » There is a Literacy Action plan to progress adult literacy in Scotland: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/27084039/5](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/27084039/5)
- » *Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009* showed that 73.3% skills appropriate for contemporary society; 26.7% had literacy challenges with 3.6% of those with very limited capabilities.
- » *Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020* outlines more detailed plans to improve the literacies capabilities of Scotland's adults over the next 10 years.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/339854/0112382.pdf>

- » Their vision looks at the importance of literacies for employability and work, financial capability, families, health and well-being.

## For more information

To see the presentations from the conference, go to EBSN website at [www.basicskills.eu](http://www.basicskills.eu)

Click on **Events** tab, click on 'archive' and click on EBSN annual conference 2011.

Then you will see the presentations as hyperlinks in the agenda itself – just click on these to see presentations.

# Students make their voices heard at European Literacy Conference.

In October, Michael Power and Kevin O'Duffy travelled to Barcelona to represent Irish learners at a Eur-Alpha Conference - a European network of 12 countries that share best practice between literacy and numeracy learners, tutors, researchers and policymakers. While the weather was warm, Michael and Kevin had little time to enjoy any sights, as they worked ten hour days discussing, debating and contributing to workshops about adult literacy in Europe.

The overall aim of Eur-Alpha is to support and develop best quality practice in literacy and numeracy in Europe. This conference was specifically organised to gather student views on what students need in Europe and to draw up a student manifesto that will be presented to the European Parliament in Brussels.

Speaking after the event, Kevin O'Duffy said it was a very educational and worthwhile trip. "It was hard work. Some of the workshops ran from nine in the morning to nine at night but it was a great trip and you got to meet very interesting people. Each country had to do a presentation on what students did in their country so we talked about all the publicity work we do on TV and how we work at the National Ploughing Championships every year." said Kevin.

"The aim of the workshops and committee of learners is really to share best practice, learn from each other and give all European learners a voice – to put literacy on the map in European. A big way of doing this is through the Manifesto – the louder you shout the more you are heard!," he said.

Helen Murphy, Head of Literacy Development Centre, School of Education, WIT also attended the conference and found the long days tiring but very worthwhile. "It was a great exercise in interculturalism and the dynamic between the different nationalities was fascinating. Some of the learning came from the similarities in student views but also the differences in how literacy is talked about. There was a huge debate about the term illiterate, which the Scottish and Irish delegates strongly objected to. However the word 'illiterate' in French does not have the same resonance or negative connotations as it does in English. In the end I think everyone agreed to disagree," said Helen.

The event culminated with the students attending Spain's annual national literacy conference. But again there was no rest for the Irish as Michael was asked to open the conference on behalf of Eur-Alpha. His speech was translated for the audience as he spoke and was very well received.

Well done to Kevin, Michael and Helen for flying the Irish Flag!

The manifesto and details for Eur-Alpha will be available on [www.eur-alpha.eu](http://www.eur-alpha.eu) in the coming months.



**Kevin O'Duffy, who spoke at the Eur-Alpha Conference in Barcelona**

# The Digital Switchover in plain English

## What is Digital TV?

Digital TV is the new way of broadcasting and receiving television. A digital signal codes the pictures and sounds into 'computerised' data. This allows the information to be transmitted more easily and more efficiently. Digital TV can offer more services – more TV channels, radio channels, electronic programme guides and interactive services.

Already digital television is commonly available in Ireland through Pay TV service providers over cable and broadband networks. With the launch of Saorview, digital TV is now available over an aerial and without subscription to about 98% of the Irish population.

## What is Digital Switchover?

Across Europe, and around the world, there is a major change in the way television is being broadcast. In line with this, in Ireland, the old TV network is being replaced with a new digital TV network offering the RTÉ Saorview TV service.

Digital Switchover (DSO) is the process of changing from analogue to digital broadcasting. What this means is that you will be able to watch more channels and have more choice.

For TV viewers who use the old TV network, digital switchover, is the process of upgrading to digital TV in order to continue to access the Irish TV channels after the closure of the old TV network. TV viewers have until 24 October 2012 to make this change.

## How does this affect me?

The old TV network is switching off on 24 October 2012.

Pay TV services such as Magnet, Sky, UPC and local TV operators which operate over cable, broadband or satellite networks are unaffected by the closure of the old TV network. If you are a Pay TV customer you will continue to receive the Irish channels through your Pay TV service after 24 October 2012.

If you watch television using an aerial this means that you use the old TV network and you will lose your TV reception when it switches off.

You will need to upgrade your television(s) before 24 October 2012 to avoid losing reception of the Irish TV channels.

To continue to get the Irish channels you can upgrade your television to either SAORVIEW or PAY TV (SKY, UPC, or others) or BROADBAND technologies.

**From left to right: John Shine, National Consumer Agency; Claire O'Riordan, NALA; Pat Rabbitte, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Hugh O'Reilly, The Wheel; Edward Crean, The National Disability Authority**

## Benefits to TV Viewers

**Better coverage of the national Irish network:** The old TV network offers RTÉ One and RTÉ Two to 98% of the population, TG 4 to 95% and TV 3 to about 90% of the population. Saorview reaches 98% of the population. This means that 98% of the population can get all four Irish national TV stations without subscription for the first time.

**Better Reception quality:** Digital TV provides clear pictures and sound. It does not suffer from ghosting or snowy pictures.

**Greater choice of TV channels and services.** Digital TV offers a much wider range of services, more TV channels, radio channels, programme information services and high definition TV.



# Xmas offer for members!

Better World Books in association with the National Adult Literacy Agency is offering you 10% off two or more used books. All you have to do is use the coupon code: LITERACYWEEK at [www.BetterWorldBooks.co.uk](http://www.BetterWorldBooks.co.uk) to get the special offer. For every book purchased using this code, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) will receive 5% of the sale, which it will use to support literacy projects in Ireland. Offer ends December 31st!

  
**BetterWorldBooks.co.uk**



## Simply Put.

## There are times when plain English works best

**Writing and design tips to make your documents easy to read**

1. Think of the person you are writing to and why.
2. Be personal - don't be afraid to use 'we' for your organisation and 'you' for the reader.
3. Keep it simple and define any essential jargon and abbreviations.
4. Use a clear font such as Arial or Verdana and use 12 point as standard.
5. Keep sentences to an average of 15 to 20 words.

More tips at [www.simplyput.ie](http://www.simplyput.ie)



National Adult Literacy Agency  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

# Calling all tutors! Membership of NALA – Special Offer

Pay before December 31<sup>st</sup> and it's only  
€10 for 2012 (€5 if you are not working)

- » you will get **50% off attendance** at our tutor development and networking events
- » you will have access to a NALA **tutor support-line** where you can get advice and support,
- » you can access **free teaching resources** including worksheets and step by step guides to popular issues (FETAC accreditation etc) and get reduced price on other resources.
- » you will be kept up to date on the most recent literacy news, international and national developments and updates will be e-mailed directly to you.
- » you will have access in January to an online forum where you can interact with other tutors and learn / share ideas

## Supporting NALA, supporting tutors, supporting literacy

We need your support. Tutors are at the front line when dealing with literacy students, therefore as members, you are best placed **to inform us and shape NALA's work** and direction. In return, we will ask you what you want to see included in our events, our research and on our website.

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onto [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)