

NALA News & Tutors' Update



An Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh
National Adult Literacy Agency

www.nala.ie

01-855 4332

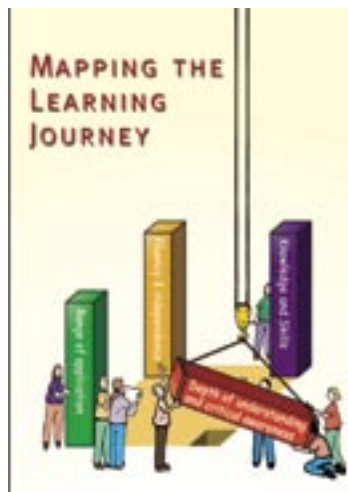
literacy@nala.ie

November 2004

Mapping the Learning Journey ready for roll out

Mapping the Learning Journey (MLJ), a framework for summarising and

recording the progress of literacy learners, is due to be launched before Christmas. This is the culmination of many years of work and consultation with literacy learners and practitioners from Ireland and abroad. MLJ will be offered to basic education



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Family literacy gets a boost from new activities

The importance of family literacy was highlighted recently in the media. This was as a result of NALA responding to coverage of a report from the Department of Education and Science which indicates that 30% of primary school children in disadvantaged areas have difficulties with reading and writing. This gave NALA the opportunity in a follow-up article in the Irish Times to emphasise the potential of family literacy as an approach to helping both adults and children with literacy difficulties.

The strength of a family literacy approach is that it gives attention and support to literacy development at home and in everyday life. Both adult literacy and community development projects find that family

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Professor Aine Hyland who was a keynote speaker at the family literacy conference

literacy work gives vital support to parents and children. It also encourages adult family members to work on their own literacy and numeracy. NALA is currently involved in a number of projects to develop family literacy work as an aspect of adult literacy provision.

National Family Literacy Conference

To recognise and encourage developments in family literacy work in Ireland, NALA and the Family Learning Project in Co. Clare organised a national conference on family literacy. The event was also used to mark the 10th anniversary of the United Nations International Year of the Family.

The keynote speaker was Lyn Tett, who is an expert on family literacy in the home and communities. She is on the staff of the Department of Community Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Edinburgh and works in the field of adult and community education. Ms. Tett spoke on ‘Literacies, risk and really useful knowledge’.

The other speaker of note, who is well known in adult literacy circles, was Professor Aine Hyland, Professor of Education and Vice-President at University College Cork. Prof Hyland is, in addition to her academic career, the Chair of the Committee on Educational Disadvantage. She has a key perspective on the role of family literacy work in relation to children and adults struggling with barriers

to learning. She spoke on ‘Literacies in the 21st century’.

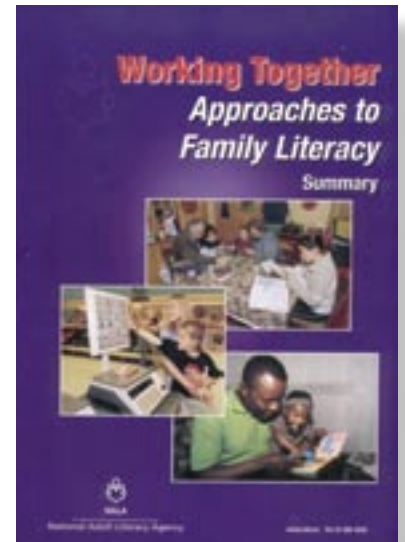
There were interesting workshops in the morning and in the afternoon. One of these was ‘Engaging Men in Family Learning’ and was run by Family Learning Development workers from the Challenge Dad project in Aberdeen. ‘Family Literacy and ESOL learners’ was the theme of another workshop, which was facilitated by a Skills for Families consultant from London. Other workshops covered such topics as:

- family literacy work with the travelling community;
- building effective partnerships;
- understanding different ways of learning; and
- ‘What’s cooking - family literacy through practical activities’.

The conference was organised by NALA and the Co Clare Family Learning Project.

NALA Family Literacy Policy and Guidelines

Another initiative by NALA to progress family literacy is the publication of the first policy and guidelines document, titled ‘Working Together: Approaches to Family



‘Working together approaches to family literacy’


Literacy'. This document:

- gives the context and background of the development of family literacy work;
- offers guidelines for setting up family literacy programmes; and
- suggests recommendations and strategy for the development of family literacy work in Ireland.

We hope that the publication of 'Working Together' will give ideas, encouragement and support to people involved in family literacy work in local areas. In addition we feel it will emphasise to policy makers and managers in education and community development work that this is an important aspect of literacy development.

'Working Together: Approaches to Family Literacy' was launched at the conference. A full report on this publication will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004.

Training for Family Literacy Work

Another element in NALA's efforts to progress family literacy is the NALA Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) course, which now has two modules on Family Literacy at certificate and at diploma level. These courses are regarded as essential training for tutors and organisers who plan to run family literacy programmes in their own areas. Information on the modules is available from NALA and from the Literacy Development Centre, WIT. The WIT Literacy Development Centre is also setting up an interesting research project related to family literacy, which should provide useful information and ideas for development. For more information on NALA WIT Courses see additional item on page 13 in this newsletter. For more information about the NALA Family Literacy Project, contact Jenny Derbyshire, NALA on (01) 855 4332 or email jenny@nala.ie 


Dancers and Derek Mooney kick off new TV literacy series

A road show to launch the new Read Write Now TV literacy series took place in September and October and was kicked off in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Dublin. This event involved Dance Fusion – dancers with a video promotion of the series. Information about the series was distributed to the general public. Derek Mooney, the series presenter, was also there.



Derek Mooney, Read Write Now 5 presenter, with Helen Ryan of NALA at the launch of the new TV literacy series.

The use of computers and modern technology is the focal point of the highly popular adult literacy series. In addition to gaining new skills, the theme of learner achievement, with the support of the series presenter, is also covered in the series.

The free Read Write Now 5 workbook accompanying the series can be obtained by phoning 1800 20 20 65, the free, confidential helpline operated by NALA. The Read Write Now series is funded by the Department of Education and Science. Read Write Now 5 is broadcast on RTÉ 2 every Monday at 7.30pm and is repeated Saturday mornings at 8.30am on RTÉ 1. It runs from 4 October until 20 December. 

New literacy learning and tuition health pack

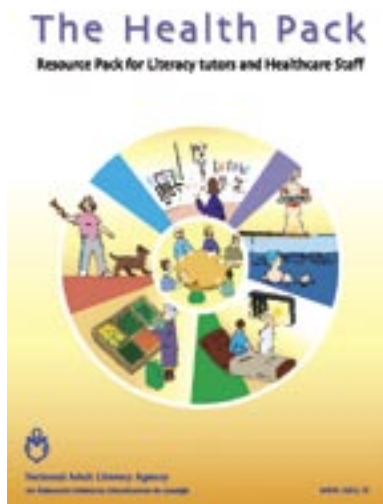
As part of our health literacy strategy, we have produced a literacy learning and tuition pack. It is for use by literacy tutors and healthcare staff and can be adapted to suit their clients. It is designed to give you ideas and suggestions on how to develop skills

that people will find useful in matters relating to their everyday health. The pack aims to develop the following skills:


- interpersonal;
- problem solving;
- decision making; and
- communication.

The pack includes a set of health-based literacy and numeracy worksheets and sample activities. In addition, this 83-page pack covers topics such as:

- Being Healthy;
- Taking Medication;
- Filling out Medical Forms; and
- Healthcare Settings.



'The Health Pack' supporting literacy and health learning

To underwrite the practical nature of the pack it was piloted in seven adult basic education (ABE) settings amongst family literacy and health promotion practitioners early in 2004. In the coming weeks we will be mailing two copies of our health pack to each VEC literacy scheme and each corporate member. The NALA Health Pack was written by Janet Kehelly and was launched at the celebration of our 16th International Literacy Day this year. The development of the Health Pack was funded by the Department of Health and Children. For more information about this, contact Jennifer Lynch, NALA on (021) 431 7012 or email jlynch@nala.ie. 

Guiding computer use for literacy and numeracy

We recently finalised a guide to assist adult literacy tutors to use computers, email and the Internet - also known as information and communications technology (ICT). This focuses particularly on the use of ICT as a tool to support the development of literacy. The guide illustrates ways to incorporate ICT in the teaching of any subject. The development of the guide was supported with advice and feedback from literacy tutors working in a wide range of areas.


People with at least a basic knowledge of ICT and an understanding of how literacy skills work will

gain most from this 34-page guide. Its chapter headings include:

- Teaching and Learning with ICT;
- Managing ICT in Adult Literacy Provision; and
- Sample Lessons.

We will send two copies to all corporate members in the coming weeks and the guide is now on the NALA websites www.nala.ie and

www.literacytools.ie. This guide was written by Ann Knox, who runs the Clare VEC Adult Education eLearning Project. For more information about this, contact Jennifer Lynch, NALA, on (021) 431 7012 or email jlynch@nala.ie.

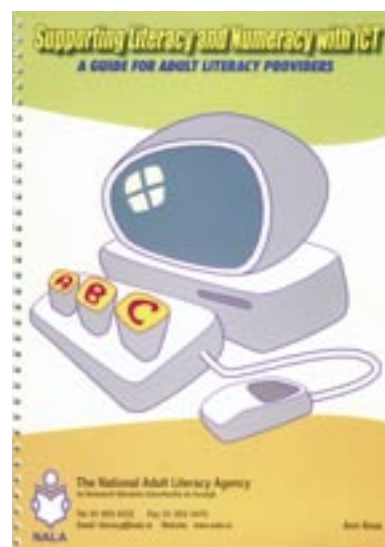
A detailed preview of this publication will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004. 

Major progress on integrating literacy

NALA's Integrating Literacy Project aims to encourage adult education and training providers to build literacy and numeracy development into all their provisions. It includes cooperating with a range of agencies, including FÁS, which funds a large element of the work, the VEC Youthreach programme, the Senior Traveller Training Centres and others. Together with NUI Maynooth and the Literacy Development Centre in WIT, the project provides literacy integration training for vocational instructors, managers and literacy/numeracy tutors. It also works to develop resources and guidelines to help practitioners build literacy and numeracy into a wide range of activities.

National Conference on Literacy and Sport

Probably the most innovative initiative in relation to literacy integration is the sports and literacy project. The first major activity in this new area is a national conference in early December on integrating literacy and numeracy into sports. This event will be of interest to centres and practitioners who are already



'Supporting literacy and numeracy with ICT'

engaged in sports projects, particularly those who wish to link those more systematically to literacy and numeracy. It will also be of interest to those who wish to introduce sports/physical activity into their centre as part of an integrated learning programme.

The sports and literacy project

NALA and the Fingal Sports Partnership are jointly coordinating a project on Sport and Literacy. There are two main aims of the project: to promote involvement in sport and physical fitness activities, and to build literacy and numeracy development into the sports activities.

We have formed a small working group, consisting of literacy tutors and sports leaders (or soon-to-become sports leaders!) from a number of training centres and adult education programmes. The centres involved in the project include: North Centre City Community Action Project, Dublin; Carlow Youth Employment; Blanchardstown Youthreach; Bonnybrook Youthreach; Transition Youthreach; The Foundations Project, Dublin; Tallaght Partnership and St. Mark's GAA Club, Tallaght.

Each of the participating centres is running programmes on integrating literacy and numeracy with sport. These are designed to meet their particular needs and stage of development in relation to both sport and literacy and numeracy provision.

NALA provides support and training for literacy



Literacy and Sport conference programme



Fiacra O'Mathúna of the Fingal Sports Partnership which is a joint organiser of the literacy and sport project



Sports and Literacy in action.

integration when required. Fingal Sports Partnership is providing an initial training course in Sports Leadership for the staff involved. The working group will meet once a month for the duration of the project to monitor it, to share experience and materials and to identify the key learning points or guidelines.

Resource pack planned

One of the objectives of this project is to develop and publish a resource pack on linking literacy and numeracy and sports/fitness. This will include a set of sports-based literacy and numeracy worksheets and sample activities. It will also include guidelines drawn from the experience of the programmes in the centres.

We would like to hear from you if you have experience of linking sports programmes with literacy and numeracy work. If you have developed literacy or numeracy materials, or methods based on sport, and would be willing to share these with other practitioners through the resource pack or the literacy tools website www.literacytools.ie, we would like to hear from you. We will acknowledge and credit you and your centre for any work you let us use.

The national conference on literacy and sport will take place on 2 December in the Great Southern Hotel, Dublin Airport. It is jointly organised by NALA and the Fingal Sports Partnership.

Jim Sells, from the UK's National Literacy Trust, will be one of the guest speakers at the conference. Jim is coordinator of the Reading the Game project – an initiative involving partnership between the National Literacy Trust, libraries and the Football Association. Other presenters and workshop facilitators will illustrate a range of approaches being developed in Ireland to build literacy and numeracy into sport.

National forums for literacy tutors working in training centres

In early October, NALA and the National Coordinating Unit of Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) jointly organised a National Literacy Forum for STTCs. This was a significant part of the ongoing cooperation between the two agencies, and was the first of what we hope will be an annual event. The forum gave STTC staff from around the country the chance to meet each other, and to begin sharing experience, methods and materials for literacy work in the centres.




Gerard Griffin, National Coordinator for Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs) and Blathnaid Ní Chinnéide at the STTC Literacy

On 2 November NALA and FÁS hosted a national forum for literacy tutors working in FÁS Community Training Centres (CTCs). This was the fourth annual forum for CTC literacy tutors. The forum was mainly a networking opportunity for tutors, and included a workshop on 'The Numeracy Challenge'. This provided practical ideas and information on resources for numeracy tuition, and for integrating numeracy into literacy tuition and into other subject areas in the centres.

Improving your knowledge and skills in integrating literacy

There are two ways to improve your knowledge and skills in the area of integrating literacy. One is the National University of Ireland Maynooth Certificate Course in Integrating Literacy, which is mainly designed for trainers and teachers of other subjects. Previous participants from FÁS Community Training Centres, Youthreach Centres, STTCs, Teagasc and other agencies tell us that it makes a significant difference to their ability to serve the literacy and numeracy needs of trainees.

The second way is through the NALA/WIT module in Integrating Literacy. This is a new six-day module for literacy tutors, accredited as part of the National Certificate in Literacy Development. It will be offered again early next year in Dublin. For more information about the NALA/WIT programme, see the additional item on page 13 in this newsletter.

If you have any enquiries about NALA's Integrating Literacy Project contact Blathnaid Ní Chinnéide, NALA, on (01) 809 9190 or by email at bnichinneide@nala.ie. 



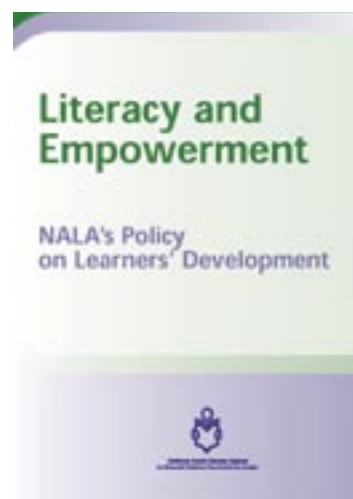
Waterford Institute of Technology's crest

Learners' development gets a boost

NALA's Learners' Development Policy was launched at our celebration of International Literacy Day. This document is guiding NALA's activities to meet the needs of learners within our existing resources and responsibilities. In developing this policy we have reviewed our existing work in the area of learner development and have considered what more we could do to promote it. This policy outlines:

- NALA's understanding of learner development;
- what work we have done to enhance learner development; and
- our future plans for learner development.

The needs of learners have always been central to the work of NALA. Learners have directly contributed to the Agency through their membership of the Executive and other committees since the Agency's foundation. We aim to make sure that, through this policy, learners stay central to all future developments in adult literacy work. A full report on this publication will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004.




'Literacy and empowerment' learner development policy document

Regional Learners' Forums 2005

The Report on the Regional Learners' Forums for 2004 has been distributed to VEC Adult Literacy Schemes and is accessible on the NALA website. The dates are now set for the Regional Learners' Forums for 2005:

- Sligo - 12th February;
- Athlone - 26th February;
- Cork - 12th March;
- Kilkenny - 30th April; and
- Dublin - 14th May.

NALA's Executive recently discussed which is the preferred term "learner" or "student", and thought it would be useful to raise this with learners at the Forums. The second area we hope to explore is NALA's communication with learners. The Regional Learners' Forums give learners a chance to meet each other, share ideas and hear about national initiatives. Watch out also for other events for learners – a writing weekend and a course on "Who makes decisions in Ireland and where?". If you have any comments, queries or ideas in relation to NALA's work with learners, please contact Margaret Murray, NALA, on (021) 431 7011 or email mmurray@nala.ie. 

NALA's celebration of International Literacy Day 2004

The celebration of International Literacy Day, on Saturday 16 October, had the theme of 'Literacy and your money' as it practically applies to literacy learners and practitioners. This was achieved by drawing on the experience in other countries and on examining what will happen in Ireland in the near future to deal with the issue. At this event participants:

- got a demonstration of literacy and money resources;
- found out about family literacy and money; and
- learned about the national plan for literacy and money.

They keynote speakers at ILD were Deborah Schwartz, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, University of Massachusetts, who talked about 'Practical examples of financial literacy in the USA.' The other main speaker was Professor Greg Brooks, School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK, who spoke about 'The work of the UK-based




International Literacy Day celebration keynote speakers Deborah Schwartz, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Boston and Prof. Greg Brooks, University of Sheffield.

National Research and Development Commission for Adult Literacy and Numeracy'.

Information sessions and workshops included the following subjects:

- Financial literacy tuition and learning materials in the UK;
- UK models of family finance and family learning;
- Financial services and your rights;
- Financial literacy support in action in a VEC Adult Literacy Scheme;
- Lets talk money – how to manage your money, this was learner-focused; and
- Introducing the NALA health pack for literacy tuition and learning.

A full report on the conference will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004. For more information, phone NALA on (01) 855 4332 or email at literacy@nala.ie. 

NALA submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science

In mid-September 2004, Inez Bailey, Director of NALA made a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science. Inez outlined the many challenges facing the VEC adult literacy



Media coverage following NALA’s presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science

service, including the need to develop:

- an attractive career structure to attract and retain staff;
- local infrastructure - to combat the shortage of existing premises for adult learners;
- weekend and summer classes for learners; and
- expanded services to support those studying alone - at present most classes take place in cities and towns.

(All of these developments are dependent upon an increased budget to VECs.)

A final point also raised concerned the level of adult numeracy in Ireland and called for a national numeracy strategy.

Following this submission there was coverage in the Irish Independent and Irish Times, which underwrote many of the issues she raised.

The Committee is made up of representatives from all political parties in both the Dáil (TDs) and the Seanad (Senators). The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science considers the public affairs that come under the Department of Education and Science, including government policy, matters for

which the Minister for Education and Science is responsible, policy issues concerning bodies partly or wholly funded by the State and proposals for EU legislation. The Committees have a statutory responsibility to advise the Minister for Education and Science.

If you are interested in informing the work of Government on a local issue, you could contact this Joint Oireachtas Committee. To get in touch with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science you can contact your local TD or the clerk of the Committee, Marie Fennell, at marie.fennell@oireachtas.ie or tel (01) 618 3051 or fax (01) 618 4123. You can also write to the Committee at Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. 📧


NALA Plain English Service expands into training

NALA has recently launched plain English training as part of our Plain English Service. We have received many requests from individuals and groups to provide courses and we are delighted to now offer a choice of one-day and half-day training sessions. We have already provided training to groups such as the EBS, Wexford County Development Board and the Equality Tribunal.



NALA Plain English Service promotional leaflet

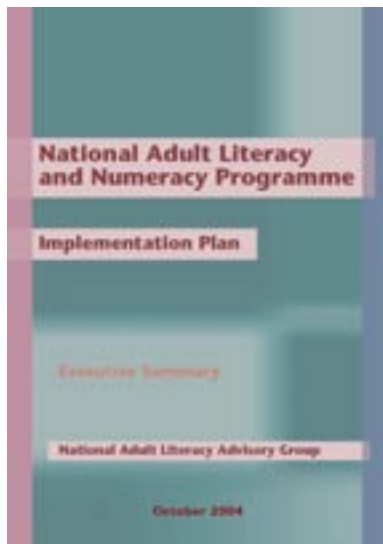
The courses help participants grasp the benefits and background of plain English and, most importantly, the main plain English techniques. For those working outside the literacy sector, the training also includes a short literacy awareness segment. The courses aim to be as relevant to participants’ needs as possible, so they make use of suitable ‘before and after’ examples to help people understand the impact of plain English on writing and layout. They also give people the chance to apply the plain English techniques to material they produce in their day-to-day work.

We offer group training to a minimum of eight and a maximum of 20 people at a time. For more information, please contact Clodagh McCarthy, Plain English Project Worker, on (01) 809 9194 or email cmmcarthy@nala.ie. 


National Adult Literacy Implementation Plan to be published

The first ever plan for the development of adult literacy at a national level is set for publication in November after nearly three years' work. The plan aims:

- to meet the need in existing provision and then grow capacity;
- to continue the integration of adult literacy services into other VEC adult education provision;
- to build pathways for progression both within the VEC and in other adult education and training services; and
- to address employment and career opportunities for staff in the sector.



'National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Programme Implementation Plan'

This has come out of the work of the National Adult Literacy Advisory Group. This group in turn was informed by the priorities identified in the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) within the White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life, (2000). The Group met between 2002 and 2004 and was a multi-stakeholder expert group with representatives from the Chief Executive and Education Officers' Association/Irish Vocational Education Association, Adult Education Organisers' Association, Adult Literacy Organisers Association, National Adult Literacy Agency, FÁS, An Comhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) and literacy practitioners. The Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Department of Social and Family Affairs also attended meetings. A full report on this publication will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004. 

Continued from page 1

settings, including VEC Adult Literacy Schemes and will be supported through training and advice.

Helping learners and tutors identify and record progress

MLJ is designed to help learners and tutors identify and record progress in a way that supports teaching and learning. In the course of the next year the 'MLJ User Guide' will be made available, along with a programme of training for literacy tutors. The MLJ User Guide focuses on supporting teaching and learning and is not an accreditation system.


MLJ Implementation plan

The MLJ Implementation plan, which is due for publication in November, proposes a support process over two years. This will include initial training and funding for temporary additional duties for literacy practitioners to support the introduction of MLJ within participating VECs. The Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), the representative body of the 33 VECs, is currently considering this plan.

It is expected that participation by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) will be on a voluntary basis. In addition, supports will initially focus on paid tutors in the first year and volunteer tutors in the second year. MLJ is also informing the work of FETAC in the development of new accredited awards at levels 1 and 2 of the National Framework of Qualifications. A full report on this publication will appear in the next NALA Journal in December 2004.

Literacy learners and practitioners consulted and involved

The development of MLJ involved consultation and involvement of literacy tutors, organisers and learners at all stages. The framework was piloted in VEC Adult Literacy Schemes, Youthreach Centres, Community Training Centres and Senior Traveller Training Centres. The MLJ Mainstreaming Steering Committee was established in May 2004 with representatives from the IVEA, NALA and the Department of Education and Science (DES).

For more information about this, contact John Stewart, NALA, on (01) 809 9196 or email jstewart@nala.ie. 

NALA offers a wide range of training opportunities

The NALA Training Calendar 2004 – 2005, which offers a wide range of training opportunities, is currently available in printed and electronic form. It has already been sent out to adult basic education (ABE) providers. More than 60 training events are included in the calendar and more will be announced later. It contains a range of short training courses – usually one-day – dealing with a wide variety of literacy and numeracy issues. This will help you to organise and plan your training.



The NALA Training Calendar

The September 2004 to June 2005 NALA in-service training calendar is now available at your local adult literacy service. While all the courses on the calendar are already organised, others can be organised on demand.


The calendar features some interesting new workshops and events such as:

- using digital camera and internet for storytelling;
- how to recruit new learners;
- time management;
- ESOL: teaching mixed-level groups;
- numeracy conference; and
- our sports literacy conference


A major part of NALA training from 2005 onwards will be about Mapping the Learning Journey (MLJ). The initial support will cover:

- the provision of training and resources to cover training and additional work for literacy resource workers, project support workers and tutor trainers;
- the provision of a training and support programme for those carrying out MLJ initial support duties; and
- training of paid adult literacy tutors in participating VECs and other ABE settings who wish to implement it.

NALA is recruiting and training a panel of trainers to train adult literacy tutors in MLJ. We will co-ordinate regional and national events to support MLJ.

For more information on these or any NALA courses, please contact Fergus Dolan, Training Officer, NALA, on (01) 809 9191 or at fdolan@nala.ie. 

Work-based education moves on

NALA had a meeting with the Tánaiste, Mary Harney, TD, in June 2004. The meeting was facilitated by Ms Síle de Valera TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science. We discussed the issue of literacy in the workplace and appropriate ways to address it. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment are considering our proposal and are expected to come back to us in the near future. 

External evaluation of the Evolving Quality Framework for Adult Basic Education

NALA has engaged Liz Mc Skeane, an external evaluator, to evaluate the Evolving Quality Framework for ABE. The evaluation will provide an opportunity for users of the Framework, including many tutors, to share their views on how well the framework is working to improve service for all.

The evaluation will include:


- case studies of two ABE services using the Quality Framework;
- a specially formed evaluation team; and
- consultation meetings with the Department of Education and Science, FETAC, the IVEA and others.

The evaluation is particularly timely as more and more ABE sites are using the Quality Framework as a



'The NALA Evaluation of the Quality Framework User Guide'

tool for self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The evaluation will also be useful in profiling and positioning the framework in a broader national and international context. The evaluation has just started and will be completed by March 2005.

For further information on the Quality Framework or on the proposed evaluation contact Claire O’Riordan, NALA, on (01) 809 9193 or email: coriordan@nala.ie. 

Seminar focuses on specific learning difficulties guidelines for literacy service


A seminar took place in early October that saw the launch of the first specific learning difficulties policy and guidelines in support of the tens of thousands of people who have specific learning difficulties. The report that was launched is titled ‘Keys for Learning – NALA Specific Learning Difficulties Policy Guidelines’. The event was attended by over 150 people. The highlight was the input from the keynote speaker, a UK-based dyslexia author and expert, David McLoughlin.



‘Keys to Learning’ specific learning difficulties seminar programme

David spoke about dyslexia in the adult years. He is the principal author of ‘The Adult Dyslexic: Interventions and Outcomes’, and is Professional Director of the Adult Dyslexia and Skills Development Centre, London. The event was also addressed by Bridget Gormley, NALA Specific Learning Difficulties Policy Worker, who outlined the contents of ‘Keys for Learning’. Attendees also heard from Bobbie Grogan, an adult learner who spoke of her experiences of dyslexia. Also in attendance was Sile de Valera, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, who was presented with a copy of ‘Keys for Learning’.

A full report of the conference will appear in the NALA Journal in December. For more information

on NALA’s work in specific learning difficulties contact Bridget Gormley on (01) 809 9198 or by email at bgormley@nala.ie. 

Report on September’s financial jargon busting campaign

National Adult Literacy Awareness Week (NALAW) took place from 20-24 September and addressed the issue of financial jargon as a barrier to understanding and dealing with money effectively. This is a particularly acute issue for adults with low literacy levels. The aim of NALAW was to help staff and management from financial services companies, money advisers, Government, regulators and utility companies to provide a more client-friendly service for adults with literacy difficulties.


The week involved a range of informative events around the country, media coverage, practical advice and the distribution of useful printed support material. These included:


- a national conference examining practical financial literacy initiatives outside Ireland;
- the launch of ‘A Plain English Guide to Financial Terms’ (see page 12);
- extensive media coverage; and
- local events around the country.

National Adult Literacy Awareness Week, with its focus on financial literacy, was the first in a series of events and activities that will be rolled out over the next three years. A partnership has been formed between NALA and EBS Building Society and we are working together to help address the issue of financial literacy. A full report of the ‘Tackling



George Lee, RTE News, who addressed the “Tackling Financial Literacy” seminar.


Financial Literacy' conference on 24 September will appear in the NALA Journal in December. For more information on the NALA / EBS Financial Literacy Programme contact Tommy Byrne, NALA, on (01) 809 9195 or email tbyrne@nala.ie. 

National Adult Literacy Awareness Week (NALAW). For more information or a copy contact us at (01) 855 4332 or email literacy@nala.ie. 

Accessing finance for people excluded from mainstream financial institutions

'Creditable Alternatives', a new guide to accessing finance for people who are excluded from mainstream financial institutions, was launched recently. Published by Exchange House Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), it highlights the many obstacles still remaining for the Traveller community in accessing legal and affordable savings and credit. The report explores alternative models of credit and saving options that are in use worldwide by groups that experience similar difficulties. It highlights social lending amongst a number of strategies for the future.

Exchange House Travellers MABS believes that this book will act as a discussion document for the Traveller community and encourage the setting up of focus groups for the various models, to begin the process of adopting some or all for use within the Traveller community and the settled community. In keeping with the MABS ethos of social inclusion, Exchange House MABS believes that the research will have relevance not only to Travellers but also to other groups who have difficulty accessing legal and affordable forms of savings and credit.

This publication, which was written by Paul Quinn in association with Nuala Ní Ghabhann, was officially launched in May 2004 by Noel Ahern T.D., then Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Copies of the report can be obtained from Exchange House MABS on (01) 8648510, by email at exchangehouse@mabs.ie or from their website www.exchangehousemabs.org. 

'A Plain English Guide to Financial Terms' published

Creating a greater understanding of the obscure jargon used on a daily basis in relation to all aspects of financial products and services is a lofty ideal. Well NALA has attempted this with 'A Plain English Guide to Financial Terms'.

The guide is one of a number of NALA initiatives designed to tackle the issue of literacy difficulties as a barrier to understanding and accessing financial services. One of the ways this will be achieved is that it will guide management and staff who work in the financial services sector, money advisers, the Government, regulators and utility companies on how to simplify the language they use. Although it comprises over 30 pages with over 450 definitions, it is not a complete dictionary of financial services and money-related phrases in use in Ireland. It is intended more as an evolving publication with contributions and additions as new products and services are released.

The explanations in the guide are designed to help clarify ideas and concepts rather than to give legal definitions. Used effectively it is hoped that this guide will help to promote financial inclusion and empower people to make informed and relevant financial decisions.

'A Plain English Guide to Financial Terms' was compiled and published by NALA with the support of EBS Building Society. This publication was launched at the end of September by Síle De Valera TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science. This event took place at the EBS Building Society, which also marked the start of



'The Plain English Guide to Financial Terms'



'Creditable Alternatives'

Professional development route offered to literacy practitioners


NALA / WIT is once again offering a national qualification in literacy development. This is an opportunity to gain a recognised third level qualification while regularly meeting other adult literacy practitioners. The Higher Certificate in Literacy Development is a unique programme informed by up-to-date research on adult education theory and practice.

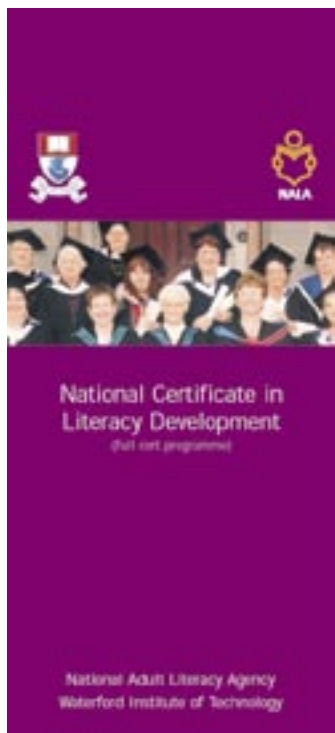
There are no formal entry requirements, but applicants must be experienced adult literacy tutors or organisers working in adult literacy practice within VEC services. The full certificate course involves 12 modules at a cost of €100 per module. This includes tuition, meals and accommodation, if required.

This course can be accessed through two routes:

- taking Single Certificate modules as and when it suits you and accumulating credits; or
- enrolling on the Full Certificate programme, takes place at a specific venue for three days per month.

For Full Certificate enquiries, contact Margaret O'Brien at (051) 302874 or maobrien@wit.ie

If you are interested in Single Certificate modules, contact Ruth Barry, WIT at (051) 302872 or rbarry@wit.ie. 



NALA / WIT courses brochure



New ESOL pack from NALA

NALA will soon be launching a second English For Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) literacy tuition and learning pack. Titled The Big Picture it has been produced to support the work of Adult Basic Education (ABE) practitioners who are providing


literacy tuition to the growing number of new immigrants to Ireland.

The pack will include a set of ESOL-based literacy and numeracy worksheets and sample activities. It will specifically focus on:

- daily life and routines;
- family life;
- festivals and celebrations;
- the education system in Ireland;
- going to the doctor;
- at the chemist; and
- a new baby.



A sample of the contents of the NALA ESOL literacy learning and tutoring pack

The Big Picture will be published in January 2005 and will be distributed widely. For more information on this publication and other NALA ESOL publications, contact Fergus Dolan, NALA, on (01) 809 9191 or email fdolan@nala.ie. 

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) conference on 2 June 2004


NALA held an international ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) conference in June this year. One hundred and fifty participants attended to listen to presentations from ESOL experts Philida Schellekens from the UK and Heide Wrigley from the USA. Also speaking was Fergus Dolan from NALA. Probably the high point of the event was Aminata Meite, an ESOL learner from the Ivory Coast, who gave an uplifting and inspirational speech for all the tutors present.



Keynote speaker Heide Wrigley addressing the ESOL conference

Fergus Dolan gave an overview of NALA's involvement in ESOL. In 2003, 20% of literacy

learners were ESOL. The adult literacy service has shown great flexibility in coping with this challenge. Philida Schellekens talked about the differences between basic skills, ESOL and EFL. She pointed out difficulties in assessing reading, writing and aural skills and the cultural disadvantages for migrants. Heide Wrigley talked about “Effective Teaching Strategies” for ESOL, which provided plenty of practical information.

Aminata Meite described her experiences with ESOL in Ireland. She left Africa in 1998, and joined the Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC) as a learner. At DALC she progressed to be a tutor. The day wound up with a stimulating questions and answers session. A full report of this conference will be in the next NALA Journal. For more information on NALA’s ESOL activity, contact Fergus Dolan on (01) 809 9191 or at fdolan@nala.ie. 



REPRISE web based information hosted on the Basic Skills Agency (UK) website www.basic-skills.co.uk

Reports on these visits will be published in the next issue of the NALA Journal and on our website www.nala.ie, later this winter.

REPRISE is a European project funded by the European Commission under its Socrates Programme (Grundtvig action). For more information about this project check out the research section of the NALA website or contact Gemma Lynch, NALA, on (01) 809 9192 or email gemma@nala.ie.

Irish participants at the ‘FORWARD’ Romanian conference

NALA has continued its work in sharing understanding of specific learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia, with European partners. This has been happening through participation in the ‘FORWARD’ project, which was established in 2003.



Irish attendees at the FORWARD Romania conference were (l-r) Blaithead Ní Chinnéide, NALA, Bridget Gormley, NALA, Emma Matthews, Pathways for Dyslexia, Celia Rafferty, ALO Finglas and Pat Bennett, ALO Naas.

Maintaining international links

As part of our ongoing development of international links NALA hosted individuals and groups of visitors from the USA, the UK and Europe in the last six months. The agency also took part in a range of international events which are outlined below.

NALA participates in European research project on basic skills for marginalised groups

For the past year NALA has been working with a group of national adult literacy experts from 11 other European countries. This project is called REPRISE (Results Exploitation of Project Results and Information on Social Exclusion). With REPRISE, we have been exploring the links between basic skills needs and social exclusion. We have also been researching national policy and models of best practice that target the basic skills needs of socially excluded groups. NALA is particularly interested in projects that address the basic skills needs of homeless adults in Ireland.

We have participated in study visits to England, France, Malta and Wales. These have given us an opportunity to learn how basic skills needs of socially excluded groups are met through policy and practice in these countries and compare them to what is happening in Ireland. REPRISE brings together experience and insight from 12 countries across Europe: Ireland, England, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain and Wales.

Its objective is the creation of a durable European network in the area of adult literacy, with special focus on reading and writing difficulties in adult learners.

The final event for the 'FORWARD' project was a conference in Bucharest, Romania, from 8-12 September. The conference was attended by teachers, psychologists and researchers from Romania who wanted to learn more about what is happening in other European countries in relation to adults experiencing dyslexia.

Leargas, Ireland's national agency for the management of national, European and international cooperation programmes, funded four Irish participants to attend the 'FORWARD' Romanian conference. There was a great deal of learning and sharing of information during the conference.

The 'FORWARD' website, www.statsvoks.no/forward, contains information from the different European countries about dyslexia and other learning processing issues for adults. There is a discussion board where you can ask a question or comment on the topics. It is open to everyone and we know you will find it a great resource.

A full article about the 'FORWARD' project and 'FORWARD' Romanian conference will appear in the NALA Journal in December. Please contact Bridget Gormley, NALA, on (01) 809 9198 or email bgormley@nala.ie if you would like further information.


Dutch visitors look for inspiration from Read Write Now

A project developing educational television in The Hague in the Netherlands, called the Foundation for Educational Television, visited NALA in October.



Helen Ryan, NALA, talks a group of Dutch visitors through the workings of the freephone call centre.

The foundation is an award-winning producer of educational TV programmes. The focus of their visit was to get a detailed understanding of the project that developed the Read Write Now TV literacy series.

There were four people from various backgrounds, including educational material development and TV production. They are currently broadcasting through regional broadcasting stations for approximately five million television viewers. These programmes are supported through Internet, ceefax, radio and printed material. They are now hoping to move on to national TV in Holland and the visit to Ireland was to "see how it is done". 

New books from the Open Door Series

Fair Weather Friend

Author: Patricia Scanlon

This is a story of life-long friends. Sophie is a giver, Melissa is a taker. Their friendship is put to the test as they go on holiday to Spain. When gorgeous Paulo appears on the scene, Melissa drops Sophie. Sophie is hurt and furious and feels the holiday is a disaster. But things change when Sophie helps an old man and a little girl. Melissa ends up jealous and in a rage and luck comes to Sophie.



World Cup Diary

Author: Niall Quinn

Niall Quinn tells of the dramatic tournament of the World Cup 2002. When they ran into trouble with Roy Keane leaving the team, they were under pressure, but they bounced back to score more goals than any other Irish team in the World Cup.

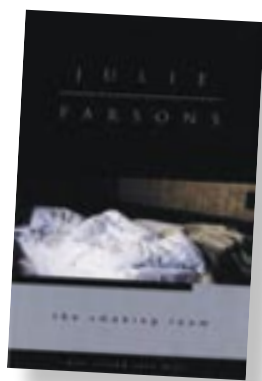


It brings us the excitement of the World Cup from the inside, with all the highs and lows of the team. And we see how important the supporters were during this explosive time in Irish football.

The Smoking Room

Author: Julie Parsons

One morning in the smoking room of the Department of Health and Welfare, happily married Jack met lovely Grace. They both smoked and they started to share a lot more, love. Jack's wife Miriam suspected that his feelings had changed and everything became a lot more dangerous.



Stray Dog

Author: Gareth O'Callaghan

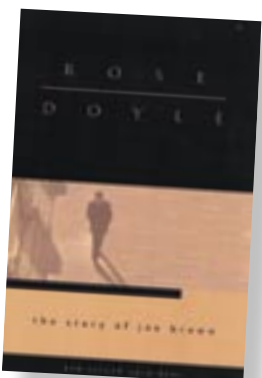
Jo and John's marriage has been stalled for years but they just continued. Then the unthinkable happens – John is diagnosed with a terminal illness and Jo is then overcome with sadness and regret. There isn't enough time to rebuild their relationship, to fall in love again. A wonderful and rare gift comes their way: a second chance.



The Story of Joe Brown

Author: Rose Doyle

Joe Brown is of average height, has average clothes and looks that are hidden behind a beard. He also had a secret from the past and wants to forget it. He might have moved on to a new life if he hadn't answered an ad for a room to rent. His chances would have been good if the



beautiful Julia Ryan hadn't taken him in as a lodger, but she did. In no time at all his past has caught up with him.

The Quiz Master

Author: Michael Scott

Spider is an easygoing pub quiz expert. Life has been tough for him and was to get much worse. When his girlfriend Gillian announces that she is pregnant, he knows that he wants to marry her. But her over-protective father and martial arts brothers have other ideas. In a bid to win a million euro and the freedom to marry Gillian, he enters a TV quiz show. He finds himself competing with Harry Evan, a quizmaster. Sorting his life out has become that bit harder.



Dates for the dairy

- Sport and integrating literacy conference 2 December, Great Southern Hotel, Dublin Airport
- The Adult Literacy Tutor's Forum 29 January 2005, Dublin
- The Adult Literacy Organiser's Forum 24-25 February 2005, Galway
- The Regional Learners' Forums for 2005:
 - Sligo - 12 February;
 - Athlone - 26 February;
 - Cork - 12 March;
 - Kilkenny - 30 April; and
 - Dublin - 14 May.



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency

76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 855 4332 Fax: (01) 855 5475

Email: literacy@nala.ie Web: www.nala.ie

The Read Right Now TV Series Freephone support line

1800 20 20 65

NALA Cork,

c/o VTSU Building, Tramore Rd., Cork

Contact: Margaret Murray

Tel: (021) 4317011

Email: mmurray@nala.ie

NALA Mullingar,

Education & Employment Centre, Austin Friar St.,

Mullingar, Co Westmeath

Contact: Peter Kiernan.

Tel: (044) 40374

Email: pkiernan@nala.ie