

**An Evaluation of the Role of ICT in Read Write Now Series 5
and the use of Learner Support Packs
by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers**

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Final Report

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Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
1.1 National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)	3
1.2 Read Write Now (RWN)	3
1.3 Evaluation Aims and Objectives	5
1.4 Evaluation Methodology	5
2. Findings in Relation to the Inclusion of ICT in Read Write Now Series 5	8
2.1 Overview of Series 5	8
2.2 Overall Response to Series 5	9
2.3 Inclusion of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in Read Write Now Series 5	10
2.4 Response to Individual ICT Topics	12
2.5 Impact on Learning	14
3. Findings in Relation to the Value of Read Write Now Learner Support Packs as a Resource for Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers and Tutors	17
3.1 Overview of Learner Support Packs	17
3.2 Overall Response by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers and Tutors to the Learner Support Packs	19
3.3 Use of Learner Support Packs by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers	19
3.4 Use of Learner Support Packs by Tutors	20
4. Issues Arising	24
4.1 Progression of the Series	24
4.2 Promotion of Less Advanced Series of Read Write Now to Independent Learners	24
4.3 Numeracy Skills	24
4.4 Broadcasting of TV Series	25
4.5 Learner Profiles	25
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	26
Bibliography	31
Appendix 1 Topics featured on Read Write Now Series 1 - 5	32
List of Tables	
Table 1.1 Overview of Themes/Topics used in Series 1-5	4
Table 1.2 Sources of Data and Methodology	6
Table 2.1 Method of Engagement with Series 5 and Focus of the Feedback from Evaluation Participants	9
Table 3.1 Contents of Learner Support Packs	17
Table 3.2 Overview of How Learner Support Packs are used by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers and Tutors	23

1. Introduction

1.1 National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a non-profit membership organisation. It was established in 1980 to co-ordinate action, provide training and develop policy in relation to adult literacy in Ireland. It is a registered company with limited and charitable status, and has a national office based in Dublin as well as two regional offices in Cork and Mullingar. It currently employs a team of over 20 people¹. It receives funding primarily from the Department of Education and Science, but funding is also received from the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Health and Children, and FÁS.

The overall mission of NALA is

"To ensure all adults with literacy difficulties have access to a range of high quality learning opportunities".²

To achieve this NALA aims to:

- Develop public awareness and understanding of adult literacy work
- Secure adequate resourcing of adult literacy work
- Develop and support high quality adult literacy provision.³

1.2 Read Write Now (RWN)

The publication of findings of an International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in 1997⁴ highlighted for the first time the considerable number of people in Ireland experiencing literacy difficulties in their everyday lives. The IALS recognised that there are five different levels of literacy skill required for the completion of everyday tasks, within three different domains - in the home, at work and in the wider community⁵. The study revealed that a quarter of the Irish adult population scored at the lowest level - Level 1, although only 1% of people with literacy difficulties were found to be participating in literacy schemes in 1998⁶. Some causes for this low participation rate have been identified as lack of awareness, accessibility, negative disposition towards school settings, negative experience of compulsory education, low level of self-esteem, shame and embarrassment, and fear of stigmatisation⁷.

The Read Write Now (RWN) Series is a distance education project which was developed to provide literacy tuition to adults in their own homes. The series developed out of the *Literacy Through the Media Project*. This Project began in 1999 with the broadcasting on local radio in Tipperary and Mayo of a pilot radio programme - *Literacy Through the Airwaves*. Independent evaluations of the radio programmes identified that it had resulted in an increase in the number

¹ National Adult Literacy Agency *Annual Report 2004-05*

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Morgan M., B. Hickey and T. Kelleghan (1997), *Report for the Minister for Education on the International Adult Literacy Survey Results for Ireland*, Stationery Office, Dublin

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ National Adult Literacy Agency (1998), *Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin

⁷ Ibid.

of individuals accessing local literacy services, raised literacy levels and raised awareness and motivation among learners.

The first TV series was broadcast in Autumn 2000. It consisted of 12 TV programmes, accompanied by a printed pack of support material. The objectives of the series were to enable learners to:

- Improve reading, writing and spelling skills up to NCVA Foundation Level (now FETAC Level 3)
- Practise reading and writing skills in everyday situations
- Learn more about the learning process and their own learning style
- Continue on a lifelong learning process.

Since 2000, five TV series (each consisting of 12 half hour episodes) have been broadcast. Two series of radio programmes have also been broadcast. Each TV series is accompanied by a Learner Support Pack (one for each series) and a freephone support line. The Learner Support Pack comes in 2 parts. Initially, it contains an A4 sized Learner Workbook and an A5 sized Learner Support Book. Subsequently, a DVD and/or video of the TV series is added to it after the 12 episodes of the current series have been broadcast. The fifth series is also supported, for the first time, by a website www.readwritenow.ie and an Equalskills CDROM. (Equalskills is a training course that introduces users to Information Communications Technology. It is co-ordinated by ECDL Ireland).

A specific set of learning objectives are set for each TV series. To achieve these objectives, literacy concepts are presented within each episode in the series and in each chapter of the Learner Workbook. The series uses what is known as an integrated approach to learning, with literacy concepts presented within the context of an everyday topic or subject matter that forms the focus of that particular TV episode/workbook chapter. Table 1.1 shows the themes/topics used in each series.

Table 1.1 Overview of Themes/Topics used in Series 1-5

Series	Overall theme of series	Examples of topics discussed in individual TV programmes and workbook chapters
1	Everyday situations and experiences	Going to a concert, a day at the races, applying for the driving test
2	Everyday situations and experiences	Reading recipes, gardening, DIY, a job interview
3	The learning process	How people learn, different types of intelligences, knowing your strengths
4	The learning process	Motivation, learning experiences, memory, study skills
5	Information Communications Technology	Technology in everyday life, using a computer, email, the internet, a mobile phone

A full list of topics addressed in Series 1 to 5 is included in Appendix 1.

1.3 Evaluation Aims and Objectives

This evaluation has two key general objectives and a number of more specific objectives as follows:

- I. **Identify the added value of including Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the RWN Series 5**
 - a. How useful have learners found the ICT element of Series 5?
 - b. How useful has the website been?
 - c. Identify good practice and learning in relation to the role of ICT in the Read Write Now project.
 - d. Make recommendations on the role of ICT in the future development of literacy programmes.

- II. **Identify the added value of the RWN Learner Support Packs as a resource for adult literacy and education service providers**
 - a. How useful have the adult literacy and educational service providers found the Learner Support Packs?
 - b. How have the Learner Support Packs been used by adult literacy and education service providers?
 - c. Identify good practice and learning in relation to the use of Learner Support Packs by adult literacy and education service providers.
 - d. Make recommendations on the role of the Learner Support Packs in the future development of the project.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

A combination of methodologies was used to undertake the evaluation. Previous evaluations of the earlier series⁸ identified 4 different user categories as follows:

1. Independent learners
2. Students attending formal adult literacy and education classes in local VEC literacy and education centres
3. Tutors of adult literacy and education classes in local VEC literacy and education centres
4. Organisers of adult literacy and education classes in local VEC literacy and education centres.

For the purpose of this report:

- ❖ ***An independent learner is defined as someone who has engaged with Read Write Now independently at home rather than as part of a literacy or basic education scheme***

⁸ Grummell, B. (2001), *Read Write Now TV Project Evaluation Report*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin
McSkeane, L. (2002), *Read Write Now TV Series 2 Evaluation Report*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin
McSkeane, L. (2003), *Read Write Now TV Series 3 Evaluation Report*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin
Westmeath Employment Network, (2004), *Read Write Now TV Series 3 Evaluation Report*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin

❖ *A student is defined as an individual who engaged with Read Write Now 5 as part of a formal literacy/education class in a VEC.*

This distinction is made for the purposes of clarity, reflecting simply whether an individual learner engaged with the Read Write Now Series 1) independently in the home, or 2) through a formally organised literacy/education class.

The methodology chosen for this evaluation ensured that all 4 of these groups were consulted during the evaluation. A survey questionnaire of the co-ordinators/organisers of 118 VEC Adult Literacy and Education Services in Ireland was undertaken. Focus groups were conducted with students attending formal classes in VEC adult literacy and education centres, as well as with the tutors working in these centres. Telephone interviews were conducted with independent learners. The TV series and the Learner Support Packs of Read Write Now were also reviewed as was the Read Write Now website.

Table 1.2 provides an overview of the evaluation methodology, outlining the various sources of data used in the evaluation, the methods of data collection, the number of individual respondents or participants and the type of data generated.

Table 1.2 Sources of Data and Methodology

Source	Method of Data Collection	No. of Respondents/ Participants	Type of Data
Documentation	Review of TV programmes, workbooks, website, CDROM, videos and DVDs of Series 1-5	N/A	Qualitative
Literacy and adult education service providers/organisers	Survey Questionnaire	36 (response rate 30.5%)	Quantitative and qualitative
Literacy and adult education tutors	Focus Groups (9)	28	Qualitative
Students attending formal literacy and adult education classes	Focus Groups (8)	52	Qualitative
Independent learners	Telephone Interviews	25	Qualitative

In relation to the survey of adult literacy and education scheme providers, 36 out of the 118 questionnaires issued were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 30.5%.

Within the questionnaire, literacy/adult education scheme organisers were asked about:

- 1) their views on Read Write Now Series 5
- 2) their perception of the response of tutors and students working/attending VEC schemes to the various ICT topics covered in Series 5

3) how useful tutors and students found the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs, and the innovative ways in which the Learner Support Packs are used by literacy and education scheme providers, tutors and students attending VEC schemes.

8 focus groups were conducted with students attending literacy and education courses provided by VEC's around the country. A total of 52 students attending a variety of classes, including literacy, FETAC Communications, and English, participated in the focus groups which were held in 6 different VEC adult literacy and education centres around the country. The centres were selected to ensure a balanced regional representation. Two centres were selected in the west, one in the south, one in the east, one in the midlands and one in Dublin. These focus groups explored:

- the reaction of students to the inclusion of ICT topics in Series 5
- the usefulness of the ICT component of Series 5 of Read Write Now as a means to improving literacy skills.

Adult literacy scheme providers and tutors were also invited to participate in focus group discussions at the same VEC locations as the students. A total of 28 tutors participated in focus group discussions. It was originally intended that the focus group discussions with the tutors and scheme providers would be held separately to those held with students. However, in four of the six VEC centres, it was decided by either the scheme providers, tutors or students that the students might feel more comfortable participating in a discussion with their tutors present. Consequently, with the exception of two VEC centres, student and tutor focus groups were combined. Discussions with adult literacy providers/tutors explored:

- the reaction of tutors and learners to the inclusion of ICT topics in Series 5
- the usefulness of the ICT component of Series 5 of Read Write Now as a means to improving literacy skills
- the use of the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs for adult literacy schemes
- the benefits arising from the use of Read Write Now Learner Support Packs by adult literacy providers.

A total of 25 telephone interviews were conducted with independent learners to discuss their views on the ICT component of Series 5 of Read Write Now. These interviewees were selected from a database of independent learners provided by NALA.

1.4.1 Methodological Issues

The methodology employed for the selection of the independent learners was based on the database of people who rang the NALA Read Write Now freephone support line to request a Support Pack for Series 5, and who had indicated that they would be willing to provide feedback on the series. This telephone call was generally prompted by a viewing of the TV series and as such indicated an initial willingness among this group of independent learners to engage with ICT, and an initial positive response to its inclusion in Series 5. As such, the sampling of independent learners can be seen to be somewhat skewed towards a positive reception of the series by the independent learners surveyed. Ideally the database should have included independent learners who had engaged with previous series of Read Write Now, but had decided not to engage with the current series⁹.

⁹ Only 38% (9) of the independent learners surveyed had engaged with any of the previous series. However, under the terms of the Data Protection Act, independent learners who had engaged with previous series, but not the current series, would have had to provide consent, at the time of their initial telephone call to NALA, to be contacted to provide feedback on future Read Write Now Series. As this consent was not sought at that time, previous independent learners could not be included in the database.

2. Findings in Relation to the Inclusion of ICT in Read Write Now Series 5

2.1 Overview of Series 5

Following a recommendation of the evaluation of Read Write Now Series 4, Series 5 introduced the area of Information Communications Technology (ICT) and aimed to enable independent learners and literacy scheme students to gain an understanding of, and develop skills, in the use of ICT. The projected learning outcomes of Series 5 are:

- 1) improved reading, writing and spelling skills
- 2) increased knowledge of technology and how to use it in everyday life
- 3) an open attitude to learning, and in particular lifelong learning.

Literacy concepts in Series 5 were presented within the following ICT topics:

- Technology in everyday life
- Using a computer - computer hardware and software
- Using a mobile phone
- Using the internet
- Using email
- Using digital cameras
- Using an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM).

From the various consultations it was clear that Series 5 was accessed and used by independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and literacy/education scheme organisers in different ways. The feedback received from the different categories of evaluation participants reflects the particular way in which each engaged with the Series. For example, the feedback from independent learners who watched the TV series and used the Learner Support Packs in their own homes is based on their experiences of both. In contrast, only 6 out of 52 literacy scheme students (11%) who participated in the evaluation had actually watched the Read Write Now Series 5 TV programme. Consequently, the feedback from these students to Series 5 was limited to their experience of the Learner Support Pack and, unless stated otherwise, did not extend to the TV programme.

None of the 28 tutors/scheme organisers who participated in the evaluation process had used the TV series as part of their instructional strategies, although many had watched the programme on an informal basis. Therefore, while feedback from tutors and scheme organisers includes their response to both the TV programme and learner support materials, it is the latter that received most attention during focus group discussions.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the primary method of engagement with Series 5 and the focus of the feedback received from the four categories of evaluation participants.

Table 2.1 Method of Engagement with Series 5 and Focus of the Feedback from Evaluation Participants

Category	Primary Method of Engagement with Read Write Now Series 5	Primary Focus of Feedback
Independent learner	TV programme and Learner Support Pack	TV programme and Learner Support Pack
Literacy scheme student	Learner Support Pack	Learner Support Pack
Tutor	Learner Support Pack	Learner Support Pack
Organiser	Learner Support Pack	Learner Support Pack

2.2 Overall Response to Series 5

Overall, the response from independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and literacy scheme organisers to Series 5 was positive. Independent learners reported that they found the TV programme to be very informative, well presented and easy to follow. The use of everyday language, and ordinary people in everyday circumstances received particular praise, as did the fact that independent learners could see technology being used in real life,

"They talked to you as a real person, not down to you. They explained things without making you feel stupid" (independent learner).

"It was well explained to people who are not very well educated. They used easy, everyday language" (independent learner).

"It is good to be able to see what it is they are talking about" (independent learner).

The fact that the TV programme featured a learner each week also generated a positive response among independent learners,

"...knowing that there are more people out there like me. I liked that they chose ordinary people from every walk of life" (independent learner).

"the TV programme used real people, not actors" (independent learner).

However, one independent learner felt that the pace of the TV programme was too fast - a sentiment that was echoed by 3 of the 6 literacy scheme students who watched the programme. One literacy scheme student said that she found the programme easier to follow if she had completed the corresponding sections in the workbook beforehand.

The response to the workbook included in the Learner Support Pack was also positive. Again, praise was given for its use of easy, understandable, everyday language, its presentation and layout and clear explanations.

"The pictures are very good for showing you what you are talking about" (literacy scheme student).

"...easy to follow, ordinary language, no high-filuted words, its step-by-step. I would recommend it to anyone" (literacy scheme student).

"...everything in it was good...not too complicated...easy to get going witheasy to understand" (independent learner).

However, unlike the workbook for Series 4, the Series 5 workbook did not contain features or articles on real people. According to one tutor, students like reading about other people in a similar position as themselves, and the absence of such a feature in the current workbook was criticised by one independent learner and several literacy scheme students and tutors.

2.3 Inclusion of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in Read Write Now Series 5

The response of independent learners, literacy students, tutors and literacy scheme organisers to the inclusion of ICT in Read Write Now Series 5 was mixed.

On a positive note, independent learners and literacy scheme students reported that, in addition to improving literacy skills, learning about computers, in particular the parts of the computer, and how technology is used in everyday life was *"interesting"* and *"enjoyable"*. As one student said, the series (speaking specifically about the workbook) was

"...good for spelling and for getting to know basic things about computers" (literacy scheme student).

Tutors/organisers described Series 5, with its focus on ICT, as *"useful"*, *"practical"*, *"relevant"*, *"very real to life"*, *"a wonderful resource"* and *"a great guide"*. One adult literacy scheme organiser stated,

"Learners [i.e. students] are interested in being knowledgeable about technology. Even if they aren't actually using everything, they want to understand something about what it can do and how it works. It is part of today's world and our learners are like everyone else" (literacy scheme organiser).

Not all responses were positive. One literacy scheme student who participated in a focus group reported that he found the ICT element of Series 5 to be

"...scary...more daunting...off-putting for new students...not suitable for beginners" (literacy scheme student).

Tutors and literacy/education organisers also reported that some students found the ICT element of Series 5 to be daunting. Tutors/organisers provided anecdotal evidence of students not engaging with Series 5 because, as they claimed, the series (but specifically the workbook), with its emphasis on ICT, was not suitable for basic literacy students¹⁰, and that some students were not using the workbook because of the ICT themes, as illustrated by the following comments by tutors/organisers,

"some of my students didn't use the book because it was all about technology...should not be all about ICT...some students have missed out on a good book because they were afraid of the technology" (tutor).

¹⁰ It is important to note here that, for Series 5, NALA did not target basic literacy students.

"...have lost some students because of the ICT" (literacy scheme organiser).

"the book is great for those interested in computers but a lot of students are afraid of computers" (tutor).

This view was not supported, however, by the majority of literacy scheme students or independent learners who participated in the evaluation. The reason for this divergence in opinion may be a reflection of the sample of independent learners and literacy scheme students included in the evaluation - all of whom had engaged to some extent with Series 5.

It is also the case that an independent learner/literacy scheme student/tutor's willingness to engage with the ICT component of Series 5 could generally be tracked back to their original motivation for engaging with Series 5. Reasons for engaging with the series differed among the evaluation participants. For example, some independent learners/literacy scheme students engaged with the series as a means of learning about technology and computers. Many were using the series as a support or aid to a computer course they were doing. These students reported that the workbook enabled them to get familiar with the various parts of a computer before sitting at a computer during a subsequent computer class.

"I was doing a computer course through FETAC. They recommended it - wouldn't have known otherwise" (independent learner).

"To get a [FETAC] computer cert you have to be able to name all parts of the computer...the book was useful for this" (literacy scheme student).

"...ICT is popular among students who came in to do ICT...it is better than other computer courses because it is not as advanced" (tutor).

For others, it was the general literacy tuition that the series provided that encouraged them to follow the series rather than the ICT information it provided. As such, several independent learners reported that they only focused on the reading and writing sections of the series and workbook, and "skipped over" the ICT sections,

"Reading and writing is more important to me than computers" (independent learner).

"I just concentrated on the sound and spelling pages with my son" (independent learner).

"I skipped through bits about using a computer. I wouldn't have a clue on how to use a computer" (independent learner).

Tutors reported that the extent to which they engaged with the ICT elements of the workbook depended on the ability and wishes of the students. Some tutors reported that they did not engage with the ICT sections of the workbook with their students because 1) the students were not interested in learning about ICT or 2) the tutor felt that the level was too advanced for their students. This is also reflected in the feedback from some literacy scheme students. When asked for their views on individual aspects of the ICT component of Series 5, some reported that they "didn't do it" (i.e., in class with their tutor). For other tutors and literacy scheme students, the reverse was the case, and both tutors and students found the ICT element of the workbook to be very helpful and enjoyable.

The mixed response from evaluation participants to the inclusion of ICT in Series 5 is also evident from the fact that when participants were asked to identify their favourite part of Series 5, approximately 50% of participants selected an ICT topic - such as learning how to use a computer, while the other 50% of participants selected literacy exercises contained in the workbook, such as words puzzles, crosswords and spelling exercises.

2.4 Response to Individual ICT Topics

Section 2.3 detailed the general response of independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and tuition organisers to the inclusion of ICT in Series 5. It found that the extent to which participants engaged with ICT varied according to their learning wishes, needs and abilities. This section attempts to identify why and to what extent participants engaged or did not engage with the following specific ICT topics included in Series 5:

- Using a computer - computer hardware and software
- Using a mobile phone
- Using the internet
- Using email
- Using digital cameras
- Using an ATM.

2.4.1 Using a Computer

Learning about computers (i.e. learning about the different parts of the computer's hardware and software and the history and role of technology in everyday life) was found to be the most popular ICT topic of Series 5. 84% of independent learners interviewed reported that this topic was either a useful or very useful part of the series. Independent learners, literacy scheme students and tutors alike stated that it provided an easy introduction to the basics of computers. The information on the names of the various parts of the computer, and what they did, was found to be particularly helpful.

"...showed basics of computers for people who never used them before...it took away the fear" (independent learner).

"...gave you an idea on how to use it [a computer]" (independent learner).

"...great to get familiar with computer on paper before you sit down at the computer...it's not so scary then" (literacy scheme student).

"...puts names on computer parts...can see the part on the page in the workbook and see the name beside it" (tutor).

Several independent learners reported that they did not engage much with this topic because either they did not have a computer and/or were not interested in learning about computers, or they believed that their lack of prior knowledge on using computers prevented them from engaging with this topic. Several tutors reported that they did not use this section of the workbook with some students for the same reason. However, there was a general acceptance among independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and organisers that the topic was explained very well and useful to those who were interested and had the required level of prior knowledge.

2.4.2 Using a mobile phone

Learning how to use a mobile phone was the second most popular ICT section of Series 5. Learning how to text was a particularly popular activity among independent learners, literacy scheme students and tutors alike,

"...showed me how to do text messages quickly" (independent learner).

Of those who found this section not to be particularly useful, many reported that they already knew how to use a mobile phone. However, it was acknowledged that it was well explained and of interest to those who didn't know how to use a mobile phone or how to text.

2.4.3 Using an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM/Banklink)

The module on learning how to use an ATM also proved to be popular among independent learners and literacy scheme students, particularly as,

"...it showed all the services available on the ATM, not just cash" (independent learner).

Again, those who found this topic not to be useful reported that they already knew how to use an ATM, but again they acknowledged that it was explained well and of interest to those who didn't know.

2.4.4 Using a digital camera

Only 46% of independent learners reported that the information on using a digital camera was useful. Lack of interest in this section was found to be due primarily to the fact that most participants did not own a digital camera or believed that learning how to use a digital camera would be too difficult. Once again however, the majority of evaluation participants reported that they believed the section was very well explained and would be useful to those who were interested. Very few students attending literacy schemes had engaged with this section, with only 2 students (4%) describing the information provided as *"interesting"*.

2.4.5 Using the internet and email

63% and 62% of independent learners interviewed stated that they found the information on using email and the internet was either useful or very useful. Likewise, students who had covered these topics in classes also described them as *"interesting"*. Some of the positive comments made in relation to these topics included:

"...it was brilliant, hands on learning. It showed you how to do it rather than telling you" (independent learner).

"...I found it difficult but it was well explained [email]" (independent learner).

Similar to the other topics discussed above, those who did not find these topics particularly useful reported that it was because either they didn't have a computer or access to the internet. As one independent learner said,

"I was not really interested. I don't have a computer at home. I have no real interest in this" (independent learner).

2.4.6 www.readwritenow.ie website

Very few of the independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and organisers had accessed the website accompanying Series 5 - www.readwritenow.ie. Only 2 of the 25 (8%) independent learners had accessed the website, while just 1 student (2%) attending a formal literacy class had used the website (after her son found it for her). No tutors/literacy organisers had accessed the website. The primary reason for lack of use of the website was the fact that participants were unaware of its existence. This can be attributed in part to the fact that, although the website was advertised during each of the TV programmes, it was not advertised in the Learner Workbook because the website had not been finalised by the time the Workbook went to print. Consequently, participants who had not watched the TV series (i.e. literacy scheme students, tutors and organisers) were unaware of the existence of the website. However, several participants also suggested that they do not (or would not be able to) use the website because of 1) a lack of access to a computer, 2) a lack of access to the internet and 3) a lack of knowledge as to how to use computer/internet. However, these participants also stated that they would be interested in using the website if they had the required resources and knowledge to do so.

2.5 Impact on Learning

The impact of including ICT in the latest series of Read Write Now can be explored from three perspectives: 1) impact on general literacy skills, 2) impact of ICT use on general literacy skills, and 3) impact on ICT literacy.

2.5.1 Impact on general literacy skills

Almost all of the independent learners and literacy scheme students surveyed reported that their general reading and writing skills had improved as a result of engaging with Read Write Now Series 5. In particular, independent learners and literacy scheme students reported that the spelling tips, word construction and word search exercises contained in the workbook were particularly useful for helping to improve their ability to spell, which in turn gave them more confidence to use their writing skills in everyday life.

Examples of skills that had improved, according to evaluation participants, include:

- Spellings
- Writing letters, in particular pro-forma letters, e.g., letters of complaint
- Punctuation
- Addressing envelopes
- Reading maps and signs
- Completing forms
- Writing cheques
- Completing crosswords and word puzzles.

Independent learners and literacy scheme students who participated in the evaluation gave examples of how their literacy skills have improved,

"I can now do puzzles in puzzle books....doing them all the time now at home" (literacy scheme student).

"...spellings have come on hugely...got an award recently for them...thought that would never happen as I left school at 12 and couldn't spell. I can now spell and use a dictionary" (literacy scheme student).

"...can write letters better...how to start and finish them...when to use comma...[I] can explain myself better when writing now" (independent learner).

"...reading is a lot better. I learned how to take my time and be neat" (independent learner).

2.5.2 Impact of ICT use on general literacy skills

The use of ICT by literacy scheme students/independent learners was found to have contributed to improving general literacy skills. Some evaluation participants reported that as a result of learning to text, and therefore texting more frequently, their spelling has improved. Similarly, for some independent learners/literacy scheme students, using email and typing on a word processor has meant that they have more opportunity to practise and come to grasps with spellings,

"Computers are very good for helping with your spelling because it tells you when it is wrong" (literacy scheme student).

"Using email all the time now so spellings have improved" (independent learner).

2.5.3 Impact on ICT literacy

The impact of Read Write Now Series 5 on ICT literacy varied according to the previous level of ICT literacy of the independent learner or literacy scheme student. For many, the Read Write Now Series 5 had enabled them to engage in ICT for the first time, to become comfortable using technology, and familiar with ICT terminology. Several literacy scheme students revealed how they were initially very nervous about using a computer, but have since become more comfortable,

"It was scary...didn't get used to it till the 4th class...thought I'd break the computer" (literacy scheme student).

"Eventually you know that it's ok to use it and you relax with it" (literacy scheme student).

Some independent learners/literacy scheme students now have the capacity to text using a mobile phone, to use an ATM, to start up a computer, to use the internet, and to write emails.

"It taught me some new things you can do with a bankcard" (independent learner).

"Before I was afraid to touch a button on the computer in case it would crash, but now I have no problem surfing the net and writing emails" (independent learner).

"...didn't know how to switch on a computer before - now I can and I can name parts of the computer" (literacy scheme student).

"...more aware that phones can be used for many purposes" (literacy scheme student).

"I learned that once you know how to get into it [internet], it opens up a whole new world - everything is at your fingertips" (independent learner).

2.5.4 Some other impacts of Read Write Now

Aside from helping to improve people's ICT and general literacy skills, many independent learners and students identified some additional benefits from having engaged with the series. These additional benefits included:

- Increased levels of self-confidence
- Increased level of confidence in one's literacy abilities
- An awareness of not being the only person experiencing literacy difficulties
- A removal/reduction in levels of fear associated with learning.

One of the more significant impacts for participants - independent learners and students attending literacy classes- was an **increased ability to be able to assist family members, particularly children and grandchildren, with literacy tasks**, as highlighted in the following comments:

"It has helped me help my kids with their homework" (independent learner).

"...best thing is being able to help grandchildren...I don't feel so stupid now in front of my grandchildren" (independent learner).

"I started using the book....because I have a child in Montessori and I wanted to be able to help him" (independent learner).

Two participants also reported that the series had equipped them with the knowledge and skills to provide some additional literacy support and tuition to their children who were themselves experiencing literacy difficulties,

"It mirrored what my son was learning in school, it mirrored the way he learned" (independent learner).

"It has helped me to help my child with speech therapy...I learned the sounds and homonyms...I found it more helpful than the stuff the speech therapist gave me...one of the best things I ever got to help me with my son. It helped me to be the teacher for my son" (independent learner).

3. Findings in Relation to the Value of Read Write Now Learner Support Packs as a Resource for Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers

Each Read Write Now series is accompanied by a Learner Support Pack. This section examines how the Packs are being used in Adult Literacy and Education Centres and classrooms. It also explores the value of the Learner Support Packs for Adult Literacy and Education Organisers/Providers and tutors. Firstly, the content of the Learner Support Packs are examined.

3.1 Overview of Learner Support Packs

The Learner Support Pack is comprised of:

1. Learner Workbook
2. Learner Support Book
3. Equalskills CDROM on basic introduction to computers (new to Series 5)
4. Website (new to Series 5)
5. Video of the TV series (available after series is broadcast)
6. DVD of the TV series (available after series is broadcast).

While the website is not physically part of the Learner Support Pack, it is a further support and it is thus reviewed in the context of the Support Pack review. Table 3.1 details the contents of the Learner Support Pack for each series.

Table 3.1 Contents of Learner Support Packs

Contents of Learner Support Pack	Series 1	Series 2	Series 3	Series 4	Series 5
Learner Workbook	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learner Support Book	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video of TV series (available after TV series is broadcast)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DVD of TV series (available after TV series is broadcast)			✓	✓	✓
Equalskills CDROM					✓
Website: www.readwritenow.ie					✓

3.1.1 Learner Workbook

Each Read Write Now Series has its own Learner Workbook. The Workbook is split into 12 chapters (one chapter per each of the 12 TV programmes of that series). The chapters relate to the topics covered in each of the 12 TV programmes. The workbook is however developed so that it "could be used on its own, but preferably in conjunction with the television programmes"¹¹. Although the workbook contains material that supports and corresponds to the TV programmes, the TV series and workbook are not identical, with more literacy concepts in the workbook than covered in the corresponding TV programme.

Within each section of the Workbook, examples and exercises for the reader to practise specific reading, writing, spelling and grammar skills are provided. Exercises include:

- reading a passage and writing answers to corresponding questions

¹¹ Grummell, B. (2001), *Read Write Now TV Project: Evaluation Report*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin

- asking the reader for an opinion on the topic covered in the passage
- filling in forms
- grammatical exercises
- word puzzles, including crosswords and word searches.

The objective of each exercise is to enable the reader to practise a particular literacy concept, with the subject matter used reflecting the topic of the particular chapter and corresponding TV programme. For example, the chapter that has 'using the internet' as its topic contains word search exercises that ask the reader to locate words related to the internet.

3.1.2 Learner Support Book

The Read Write Now Learner Support Book is common to each series. Its primary aim is to act as a reference book for independent learners/literacy scheme students. It provides information under the following headings:

- Alphabetical order
- Using a dictionary
- 100 most common words
- Calendar
- Sentence structure - verbs, nouns, capital letters, full stops
- Numbers in words
- Formats - completing forms, letter layout
- Spelling tips.

The Learner Support Book also provides 26 alphabetised blank pages at the back of the book in which the independent learner/literacy scheme student can record new/useful words.

3.1.3 Series DVD/Video

The DVD/video contains a copy of the 12 TV programmes of each series.

3.1.4 Equalskills CDROM

Series 5, with its focus on ICT, is also accompanied by an Equal Skills CDROM. The CDROM provides the independent learner/literacy scheme student with information on:

- using a computer mouse
- what the internet is and how it works
- what email is and how it works.

The information is presented in both text format on the computer screen and in audio format. This enables the user to read the information as it appears on the computer screen, while at the same time, hearing it read aloud by an audio voice. The CDROM is also interactive, providing the user with opportunities to practise using a mouse and accessing different parts of the computer through the provision of exercises for the independent learner/literacy scheme student to complete.

3.1.5 Read Write Now Website - www.readwritenow.ie

www.readwritenow.ie is an interactive website that enables users to practise both their ICT and their literacy skills by completing literacy exercises on-line, using the mouse to select correct answers to questions on the screen. Examples of exercises include reading a passage and corresponding questions on the computer screen, and using the mouse to 'click' on the correct answer provided, completing words and sentences by using the mouse to 'click and drag' parts of words/sentences together.

Similar to the Equalskills CDROM, the information and instructions on the website are presented in both text and audio format. In other words, the user can both read the information as it appears on the computer screen, and again hear it read aloud.

The homepage of the website provides general background information about Read Write Now as well as contact information for NALA. A Learner Support Pack can also be ordered via the website.

3.2 Overall Response by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers and Tutors to the Learner Support Packs

Tutors and adult literacy organisers who participated in the evaluation praised the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs as "*an excellent stand alone resource*", that provided a wide range of materials which could be used by tutors as part of their classroom instructional strategy. However, on further investigation, it was found that the use of the Learner Support Packs by tutors was largely confined to the use of the learner workbook. This is discussed further in Section 3.4

3.3 Use of Learner Support Packs by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers

Learner Support Packs were found to be accessed by adult literacy and education scheme service providers or organisers in three significant ways:

- 1) to provide support materials and resources for tutors and students engaged in a variety of educational courses in the centre
- 2) as a promotional tool to attract new students to the centre
- 3) as a resource for training new tutors.

3.3.1 Provision of materials and resources for tutors and students

Each September, NALA issue a set number of Learner Support Packs for the new RWN series, to each of the VEC Adult Literacy Services, based on the number of learners in each service. The Centre can then re-order additional packs for the new series and also previous packs if needed. Each tutor in the Centre is then given a copy of the latest workbook. A complete Learner Support Pack is also placed in the resource library/room of the centre. The most recent Learner Support Pack can be accessed by all tutors/students/visitors to the centre, along with the Packs from previous series. Generally, each student attending a literacy or basic education class in the centre is also given a copy of the latest workbook, and informed of the availability of the DVDs/videos/CDROMs of the TV series in the resource library/room. However, no organiser who participated in the evaluation was aware of the existence of the supporting website, and so the website did not become part of any centre's suite of support materials and resources.

3.3.2 Promoting literacy tuition

According to literacy and education scheme providers, the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs were also used as a tool to attract new students to the centre. The straightforward, everyday language used in the TV series and workbooks, and the attractive, clear lay out of the workbooks was seen to provide excellent promotional material for literacy tuition and adult education.

One centre, for example, conscious that many homes in its catchment area did not contain any books, held a Family Learning Programme during which Read Write Now Learner Support Packs

were distributed to participants as gifts, in the hope that it would stimulate interest in further learning. Three participants in that programme subsequently joined a Communications Group in the Centre - an event which the Centre believes can be attributed in part, at least, to the distribution of the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs.

Two adult literacy organisers identified the Learner Support Pack for Series 5, with its focus on ICT, as particularly instrumental in attracting new students into literacy and education courses. These organisers reported that promoting the ICT focus of the series, as opposed to the literacy tuition, attracted people, and in particular young people, to attend classes that previously would not have attended. In fact, one adult literacy organiser referred to the ICT focus of Series 5 as the "*carrot*" which they used to bring in new students in need of literacy tuition but who would not have been comfortable attending a traditional literacy class.

Adult literacy organisers, participating in the evaluation, also reported that they put up posters in their centre advertising the TV series. One centre also distributed leaflets advertising the series to local resource centres.

3.3.3 Resource for training new tutors

In 2 of the 6 adult literacy and education centres who participated in focus group discussions, tutors/organisers reported how the DVDs/videos of the Read Write Now TV series were used as a resource when training new tutors. Organisers found the DVDs/videos of the series very useful for demonstrating the learning process of literacy students and the type of interaction that occurs between a tutor and his/her student during that process.

3.4 Use of Learner Support Packs by Tutors

Focus group discussions with tutors revealed that the use of Learner Support Packs by tutors was almost exclusively confined to the Learner Support Workbook, with only a small minority of tutors making use of the DVDs, videos, and/or CDROMs. No tutor surveyed reported using the website.

3.4.1 The Learner Workbook

While tutors did not use the workbook as a core textbook for their class, the workbook was used to provide valuable and much-used materials for classroom use. In general, tutors reported that they "*dip in and out of*" the workbook to get materials to illustrate a concept that they are teaching or to provide students with exercises to practise a particular concept or skill.

The evaluation found there were two distinct ways in which the workbooks were used by tutors in the classroom. While all tutors reported that their students have a copy of the workbook, not all used the actual workbook in the classroom. Some tutors preferred to leave the students to complete the workbooks as they wish, in their own time at home. In this situation, tutors photocopied relevant sections of the workbook and distributed these to their students to complete in class. (One tutor explained how she took apart all the pages of her workbook, and filed each page according to the exercise or learning point contained with it, along with similar exercises/learning points from other sources). According to tutors, using photocopied sheets of the workbook enabled students to practise the task. Students could then repeat the exercise at home in their own book. This was a popular approach among students who did not want to write on their workbooks unless they were confident of what they were doing. The other approach involved tutors asking their students to complete exercises by writing directly into their workbook in class. Either way, tutors reported that students took great pride and

ownership of their own workbooks. Both groups of tutors also reported that they used the exercises in the workbook as homework for students to complete at home.

According to one adult literacy organiser, the Learner Support Packs, but specifically the workbook, were extremely helpful for tutors who have not any class strategies or lesson plans prepared as the workbook provided the tutor with a ready-made lesson plan. However, tutors who participated in focus group discussions also reported that they also used the workbook as a template from which they developed similar but new exercises. According to the tutors, the workbooks provided ideas to develop strategies and exercises which could be tailored to meet the abilities of their students, or which reflected a different subject matter, e.g., word searches, spelling exercises using words related to a sporting topic instead of an ICT topic.

The workbook for Series 5, in particular, provided tutors with materials which enabled the integration of ICT and literacy tuition. As a result of this workbook, tutors began to integrate the use of ICT into the lesson plan. For example, tutors began to ask students to read a comprehension piece in the workbook, and then type a short passage about it or type answers to questions based on the piece directly into a computer. This would often be followed by an exercise whereby the student would be asked to re-format the font type and size, copy and paste etc. Similarly, tutors reported that, when learning spellings, students began to type the words into the computer, rather than onto paper, and again this would often be followed by formatting exercises on the computer. By doing so, students were practising literacy and computer skills.

Another interesting finding was the fact that the Read Write Now Workbooks were being used, not just by literacy tutors but also by tutors in other areas, including:

1. FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) Communications Course
2. FETAC Basic Computers Course
3. Return to Education Course
4. Return to Work Course
5. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
6. Youthreach classes
7. Traveller Training Classes
8. Tuition for people with a learning disability.

According to adult literacy and education organisers who participated in the evaluation process, tutors for courses 1-4 (above), in particular, made considerable use of the Series 5 workbook. Tutors for these courses used the Series 5 workbook to provide background information about the role of computers, the internet, email etc. According to one tutor, the Series 5 workbook is "*excellent as a quick reference guide*" for students and one which they encourage their students to use to refresh their basic computer knowledge. Particular use was made of the pictures/photographs of the computer hardware and desktop. Tutors reported that they used these pictures to name and explain the various parts of a computer to students without them having to sit at a computer. This was particularly helpful for tutors who did not have computers readily available to use in the classroom. A tutor teaching Return to Work classes reported that she made particular use of the internet and email sections within the workbook as an introduction to these subjects.

3.4.2 *The Learner Support Book*

The evaluation found that, unlike the Workbook, the Learner Support Book did not feature in tutors' class lessons. However, tutors who participated in the evaluation reported that they did encourage their students to use the Learner Support Book as an easy-access reference book or guide when working independently in the classroom or at home, i.e., as an additional source of assistance if the tutor is not available.

3.4.3 www.readwritenow.ie

None of the literacy and education organisers and tutors who participated in the evaluation had accessed the Read Write Now website. The primary reason for lack of use of the website was that they were unaware of its existence. However, several organisers/tutors were of the view that even had they known about the website they would be unable/unwilling to use it in class because of 1) not enough computers, 2) a lack of access to the internet, 3) lack of interest from students in ICT (i.e. the tutors were not engaging in the ICT sections of Series 5). However, for those tutors that were engaging with their students in the ICT sections of Series 5, many stated that they would be interested in using the website assuming they had the necessary resources.

3.4.4 *DVD/Video*

Literacy and adult education organisers do not receive the DVD/video of the current series from NALA until after the TV series is complete. This is due to the fact that as individual programmes are not completed until two weeks before being broadcast, it is not possible to issue videos/DVDs of the complete series until after the whole series has been broadcast. As a result, many literacy scheme students have completed the workbook by the time the DVD/video of the TV series arrives in the centre. This means that students cannot engage with the workbook and the TV series at the same time in the classroom. Alternatively, tutors could record the TV programmes themselves for viewing in the classroom. However, tutors were of the opinion that limited concentration levels among students, together with the time constraints, did not allow for the TV programme to be watched in a single sitting in a classroom. They did believe that relevant sections of the programme could however be watched. Interestingly though, only 1 tutor reported having watched the programme within the context of a class lesson.

3.4.4 *Equalskills CDROM*

Despite providing information and computer exercises on the internet and email, only 2 tutors reported that they used the Equalskills CDROM as a resource. Again, lack of awareness of the existence of the CDROM was the primary reason given for why it was not used by those tutors who chose to engage with the ICT sections of Series 5 with their students. Tutors who did not engage their students in the ICT sections of Series 5 also did not use the CDROM.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of how the Learner Support Packs are used by both Adult Literacy and Education Providers and Tutors.

Table 3.2 Overview of How Learner Support Packs are used by Adult Literacy and Education Service Providers and Tutors

	Action	Workbook	Support Book	DVD	Video	CDROM	Website
Adult literacy and education organisers	Supplying resources and materials to tutors and students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Promotional aid for literacy tuition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tutors	Students complete literacy exercises in class	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Students assigned literacy exercises as homework	✓					
	Template for developing literacy class lessons	✓					
	Introducing students to using ICT and the role of ICT	✓		✓	✓	✓	

4. Issues Arising

The evaluation process also identified a number of other key issues.

4.1 Progression of the Series

"If the series keeps progressing as it does, it will be too advanced for those who need it most - the basic learners." (tutor)

One of the criticisms of the current series raised by tutors and adult literacy and education organisers alike is that the progression of the series from year to year has meant that the later series have become too advanced for some basic learners. Many of the tutors were of the opinion that students are not engaging with Series 5 because they believe it is too advanced for their skills/needs. Clearly, for those whose literacy levels have advanced in accordance with the series progression, they will benefit if the series continues to advance. The fear is that those with lower literacy skills, who have not engaged with earlier, less advanced series, will not engage with future series if they continue to become more complex. This is something NALA need to consider in terms of the future development of the series, and indeed the future use of the existing series.

4.2 Promotion of Less Advanced Series of Read Write Now to Independent Learners

The impetus for Read Write Now originated from a need to improve the literacy levels of people who are either unable or unwilling to access literacy tuition in local education centres. However, if Read Write Now is becoming too advanced for basic learners, as discussed above, this may have more significant consequences for independent learners than for adult literacy students.

Students attending formal classes can, and are supported to, access materials from other sources, and indeed from earlier less advanced series of Read Write Now, that are more suitable to their learning needs. Independent learners, *who contact NALA*, have a similar facility. Any independent learner that rings the NALA freephone line is asked which RWN series they would like, have they followed the series before and if they would like to be referred to a scheme (if not already in one). If the learner is unsure which series would suit them best, they are asked a series of questions in order to identify the most appropriate Learner Support Pack for their needs. If needed, independent learners are advised on whether they should access one-to-one tuition and where they can access tuition.

However, during any one year, it is the most recent series of Read Write Now that is actively promoted by NALA. The most recent series is broadcast on television, during which independent learners are encouraged to order the accompanying Learner Support Pack. If a potential independent learner perceives the current series to be too advanced for their needs, they may not be encouraged to contact the NALA freephone line, and hence may not be aware that there are more suitable Learner Support Packs available to suit their learning needs.

4.3 Numeracy Skills

While NALA have produced a radio series dedicated to developing numeracy skills - *Time 4 Learning* - the current television series of Read Write Now does not contain any sections on developing numeracy skills. This has been identified as a flaw of the series by tutors

participating in the evaluation. Many tutors would like to see basic numeracy concepts included in the series along with general literacy concepts.

4.4 Broadcasting of TV Series

Only a small minority of students attending formal literacy and education classes reported watching the TV programme. The time of broadcast was one of the primary reasons why they did not watch the programme. Many students were in fact attending classes during the first airing of a programme - Monday, RTE 2, 7.30pm. For those who did watch the programme (i.e., the minority of literacy scheme students and independent learners), several noted that the airing of the programme clashed with popular programmes such as Coronation Street. Many were unaware of when the repeat programme was aired.

4.5 Learner Profiles

The profiling of individual learners on the TV programme was both an enjoyable and popular feature for independent learners/literacy scheme students who watched the programme. However, the workbook for Series 5 did not contain features on the individual learners profiled on the TV programme. This was missed by those who had enjoyed reading about the learning experiences of real people in a previous workbook (Series 4), and a view was expressed that this feature should be re-introduced in the workbooks accompanying future series.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall consensus among independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and adult literacy and education organisers is that Read Write Now is a very valuable and useful resource. Similar to previous series, independent learners and literacy scheme students reported an increase in their self-confidence, and in their confidence in their own learning abilities as a result of engaging with Read Write Now Series 5. In particular, participants found that the series helped to remove their fear of learning.

While the overall response by independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and literacy and education organisers alike to Read Write Now Series 5 was positive, the response to including ICT in the Series was mixed.

5.1 What has been the added value of including Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the Read Write Now Series 5

Read Write Now Series 5 introduced independent learners and literacy scheme students to Information Communications Technology (ICT). For most, it was their first time engaging with ICT, and in particular with computers, email and the internet. Read Write Now Series 5 was found to impact upon independent learners' and literacy scheme students' ICT literacy at different levels - depending on an individual's prior level of ICT knowledge. For some, it meant that they are now familiar with the terminology associated with technology, it removed their fear of technology and specifically computers, and they can now sit down and access a computer screen. Others reported that they can now surf the internet and send and receive emails.

5.1.1 How useful have independent learners/literacy scheme students found the ICT element of Series 5?

- ❖ The response to the ICT element of Series 5 was mixed. Some participants found the inclusion of ICT to be interesting, enjoyable, informative and relevant, while others described the ICT sections of the series as being of little relevance to them, and in some cases, "*daunting*".
- ❖ An individual's (independent learner, literacy scheme student, tutor, organiser) interest in and perceived abilities in ICT was found to be a key factor in whether they reported a positive or negative reaction to the inclusion of ICT in Series 5. For those who were interested, and had access to ICT (such as a computer, mobile phone or ATM), and/or believed that they had the required ability to engage with ICT, they responded positively. For those who were not interested in ICT, did not have access to technology and/or perceived that they lacked the necessary level of prior knowledge, their response, not surprisingly perhaps, was less positive.
- ❖ Not all evaluation participants (independent learners, literacy scheme students and tutors) engaged with the ICT sections of Series 5. Two distinct motivations for engaging with Read Write Now Series 5 were found to exist among participants. Some engaged with the Series in order to access the ICT tuition it provided. Others accessed the Series to avail of general literacy tuition. Consequently, some participants focused only on the ICT sections of the series, others on the general literacy tuition, while a third group accessed both the ICT tuition and the more general literacy tuition.

- ❖ Those who engaged with the ICT sections of the Series reported a positive response to individual ICT topics address in the series. Learning the names of the various parts of a computer, what they do and how to use them was the most popular ICT section of the series. The section on digital cameras was the least popular section.
- ❖ Reasons for not liking or engaging with individual ICT topics, included lack of interest, lack of belief in their ability to engage with a specific topic, and critically, a lack of access to the technology. The latter factor was a significant factor for those who did not engage with the internet, email and digital camera sections.

5.1.2 How useful has the website been?

- ❖ There is a lack of awareness of the existence of the website www.readwritenow.ie. Consequently, its value as a resource for independent learners, literacy scheme students, tutors and organisers is therefore diminished.
- ❖ While tutors and adult literacy and education organisers acknowledged that the website would be a valuable support, many also expressed the view that a lack of access to computer and internet facilities would prevent some tutors from using the website as a learning tool in their classroom.
- ❖ Independent learners who reported that they engaged with the ICT sections of Series 5 also acknowledged that the website would be a valuable support. However, many also reported that a lack of access to computer and internet facilities would prevent them from using the website.

5.1.3 Identify good practice and learning in relation to the role of ICT in the Read Write Now project

- ❖ Some independent learners and literacy scheme students reported that they have combined the acquisition of literacy and ICT skills as a result of engaging with Series 5. For example, participants described how they used the computer to type short passages, notes, essays - thereby practising spellings, sentence structure and punctuation, and then formatting the piece by changing font size and type etc.
- ❖ The ICT sections of the series workbook have been used and adapted by tutors providing a variety of wider educational courses including, FETAC Communications, FETAC Computer Literacy, Return to Education, Return to Work courses.

5.1.4 Recommendations for the role of ICT in the future development of literacy programmes.

1. Future series of Read Write Now should include ICT as one of the learning objectives. It could be included as 1) an individual topic within the series, 2) a tool for accessing the series via the website and CDROMs, and 3) an exercise included within each topic.
2. Consideration should be given to formally adapting and promoting the current series and Learner Support Pack as an 'Introduction to Computers' Guide that could be accessed by others interested in learning about the ICT for the first time.

5.2 What has been the added value of the Read Write Now Learner Support Packs as a Resource for 1) Adult Literacy and Education Organisers and 2) Tutors

5.2.1 How useful have the adult literacy and education organisers found the Learner Support Packs?

- ❖ Overall, there was a very positive response among adult literacy and education organisers and tutors in relation to the value of Read Write Now Learner Support Packs. The Packs are described as extremely valuable resources that provide literacy and education centres, with an array of materials, ready-made lesson plans, and ideas for future lesson plans.

5.2.2 How have the Learner Support Packs been used by adult literacy and education organisers?

- ❖ The Learner Support Packs are used in different ways by adult literacy and education organisers and tutors.
- ❖ Adult literacy and education providers use the Learner Support Packs as follows:
 - The Packs are used as resource materials - to be accessed by both students and tutors.
 - The Packs are used as a promotional tool to encourage people to engage with literacy and adult education classes.
 - The DVDs/videos of the TV series are used during tutor training sessions to demonstrate the learning process of literacy students and the interaction between a tutor and student.
 - All components of the Learner Support Pack are used by adult literacy and education organisers, with the exception of the website - www.readwritenow.ie. The majority of organisers were unaware of the website's existence.
- ❖ Tutors use the Learner Support Packs as follows:
 - The Learner Workbook is used far more extensively by tutors than any other item of the Support Pack.
 - While the workbook is generally not used as a classroom textbook, tutors tend to "dip in and out of" the workbook to access materials and information that support the current classroom lesson.
 - Tutors use the workbook to provide students with classroom and homework exercises.
 - Tutors use the workbook as a template on which to base lesson plans.
 - Tutors recommend literacy scheme students to refer to the Learner Support Book for assistance if the tutor is not available to provide it.
 - The DVD, video and CDROM components of the Packs are used by only a minority of tutors as part of their lesson plan. Generally, DVDs/videos of the current series are not received in adult literacy and education centres until after the series is broadcast on TV, and often after the workbook is completed by the students. This can prevent tutors from incorporating the TV programme into their lesson plan.
 - No tutors accessed the website as part of a lesson plan. No tutor, who participated in the evaluation, was aware of the existence of the website.

5.2.3 Identify good practice and learning in relation to the use of Learner Support Packs by adult literacy tuition schemes

- ❖ The individual themes/topics of the Read Write Now Series are used as the focus to attract new students, in need of literacy tuition but who would not be willing to attend a literacy class. For example, some adult literacy schemes are promoting Series 5 as an ICT course, rather than a specific literacy course. This has had the impact of attracting more young students to the centre, who then receive literacy tuition in conjunction with the ICT tuition.
- ❖ The Learner Support Workbooks are used as a teaching aid by tutors of non-literacy classes. For example, by tutors of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Similarly, the workbooks of Series 5 are being used as a teaching aid by FETAC Communications and Computer Literacy tutors, and by Return to Education and Return to Work tutors.
- ❖ Tutors use the Learner Support Workbooks as a template from which to develop resources and materials for use in class. The Workbook provides a framework for tutors to develop class lessons and exercises based on topics of the tutor's choosing, i.e., a topic that reflects the interests of the class.

5.2.4 Recommendations for the use of Read Write Now Learner Support Packs by Adult Literacy and Education Organisers

3. The adaptability of the Learner Support Packs as a resource for tutors of a wide range of adult education classes should be promoted.
4. As DVDs and videos of the current series cannot be issued to centres in advance of the broadcasting of the TV series, tutors should be encouraged to record the TV programmes as they are broadcast so that, if they wish, they can make greater use of them as part of their lesson plan.
5. There needs to be greater promotion of the existence of Read Write Now website by advertising it in future Learner Workbooks, and by issuing 'flyers' and posters to all Adult Literacy and Education Scheme Providers.

5.3 General Usage and Accessibility Issues

- ❖ The TV series is accessed primarily by independent learners in conjunction with the workbook, while students attending formal literacy classes generally do not watch the TV series, focusing almost exclusively on the workbook.
- ❖ The standard of the most recent series of Read Write Now is too advanced for basic learners.
- ❖ It is unknown how many independent learners with basic literacy skills did not engage with the most recent series of Read Write Now because of its complexity.

- ❖ The series is being used by independent learners and students to enable them to be able to help family members with literacy tasks. This ranges from parents/grandparents learning to read and write so that they can help the children/grandchildren with their own homework, read stories to and by their children/grandchildren, to learning how they too can provide literacy tuition to a family member who may be experiencing literacy difficulties.

5.3.1 Usage and Accessibility Recommendations

6. NALA needs to consider how future series of Read Write Now will address the wide range of learning needs of independent learners and students, but particularly those with lower literacy skills. A balance needs to be found so that learners/students can progress with the series, while still accommodating the needs of basic learners/students.
7. NALA needs to advertise the availability of earlier, less advanced Read Write Now initiatives during the broadcasting of future TV programmes. Along with advertising the current Learner Support Pack, TV viewers should be made aware of the availability of alternative Learner Support Packs that are suitable for a range of learning needs.
8. Profiles of learners engaging in a learning process should be re-introduced in the Learner Workbook accompanying future series.
9. Numeracy concepts should be included in future series of Read Write Now.

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Appendix 1 Topics featured on Read Write Now Series 1 - 5

Series 1	Series 2	Series 3	Series 4
1. Going to a concert	1. First Aid	1. The learning world	1. How we learn
2. Buying a video recorder	2. Cooking	2. How we learn	2. Strengths
3. A day at the races	3. Football	3. Learning experiences	3. Motivation
4. The birthday party	4. Gardening	4. Use your learning	4. Multiple inte
5. A promotion	5. Wedding	5. Different types of intelligences	5. Multiple inte 2
6. A new job	6. Accommodation	6. Memory	6. Learning exp
7. Applying for the driving test	7. Information Technology	7. The drive to learn	7. Ways of lear
8. Going to the hospital	8. DIY	8. Knowing your strengths	8. Memory
9. Saturday at the pictures	9. Healthy Lifestyle	9. Learning and planning	9. Memory stra
10. Family life	10. Interview for a Job	10. Ways of learning	10. Study skills
11. Booking a holiday	11. Pets	11. Managing your learning	11. Reviewing yo learning
12. Trip to Newgrange	12. Trip Away		12. Progression