

An Evaluation
of
***"The Really Useful Guide to
Words and Numbers (RUG)"***

**Final Report
August 2007**

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1. Introduction, Context and Understanding of the Project

1.1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the National Adult Literacy Agency's (NALA) distance education project - *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers*. The evaluation process commenced in December 2006 and was completed in April 2007. An interim report was compiled in February 2007. This report incorporates the findings of the interim evaluation report.

1.2 National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a non-profit, voluntary membership organisation. It was established in 1980 to co-ordinate action, provide training and develop policy in relation to adult literacy and basic adult education in Ireland. It is a registered company with limited and charitable status.

NALA currently has approximately 1,200 members. Its membership includes VEC Adult Literacy Schemes, libraries, Aontas, the Combat Poverty Agency, NTDI (National Training and Development Institute), CORI (the Conference of Religious of Ireland), trade unions, FÁS (the national training agency), community training workshops, traveller workshops, Youthreach Initiatives, and individual students, tutors, trainers and organisers.

NALA's head office is in Dublin. It also has two regional offices in Cork and Mullingar. It currently employs approximately 20 people¹. The work of NALA is overseen by an Executive Committee of 14 members, elected by NALA's wider membership at their Annual General Meeting. Executive Committee members are elected for a two-year period and are made up of learners, tutors and VEC Adult Literacy Organisers. NALA's main source of funding is the Department of Education and Science. This funding is used to employ staff in its head and regional offices. NALA also receives funding to implement specific projects from a variety of other government departments, state agencies and the EU.

The overall goal of NALA is to ensure that all people,

"...with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs".²

¹ www.nala.ie

² NALA, 2007. *Strategic Plan: 2007-2010*, p. 10

NALA aims to achieve its goal by:

- 1 Securing the support of policy makers and politicians for providing increased resources to adult literacy and numeracy services;
- 2 Making it easier for more adults to develop their literacy and numeracy through education and training programmes;
- 3 Making approaches to teaching and learning more effective;
- 4 Persuading organisations to be fully accessible to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties;
- 5 Strengthening NALA's effectiveness as an organisation³.

NALA's key activities include:

- Policy development,
- Advocacy,
- Research, and
- Advisory services.

To date, NALA have undertaken numerous projects and activities as a means to developing new ways to support people with literacy difficulties. One of its leading projects has been the *Literacy Through the Media* Project⁴.

1.3 *Literacy Through the Media*

NALA define literacy as,

*"listening and speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using everyday technology to communicate and handle information. It includes more than the technical skills of communication: it also has personal, social and economic dimensions. Literacy increases the opportunity for individuals and communities to reflect on their situation, explore new possibilities and initiate change".*⁵

An International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1997⁶ highlighted the considerable number of people in Ireland experiencing literacy difficulties in their everyday lives. This study revealed that a quarter of the Irish adult population were at the lowest literacy level - Level 1, i.e., a quarter of the adult population could only perform tasks that "*involved locating a simple piece of information in a fairly short written passage, with no distracting information*

³ Ibid

⁴ Other projects and activities implemented by NALA include: In-service training; Workplace Basic Education; Family literacy; ESOL; Evolving Quality Framework; Literacy Awareness Training; Plain English; ICT and literacy; Integrating literacy; Health and literacy; Specific learning difficulties; Research; 'Mapping the Learning Journey', the assessment framework to help tutors and learners identify learners' progress and areas they may need to develop. Further information on each of these projects can be found on www.nala.ie.

⁵ <http://www.nala.ie/faq/>

⁶ 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

and when the structure of the passage assisted the task⁷. In 1998, NALA found that only 1% of people with literacy difficulties were participating in literacy schemes⁸. Some of the causes for this low participation rate were identified as a general lack of information about literacy courses, lack of interest/motivation, negative attitudes towards school settings, negative experiences of compulsory education, low levels of self-esteem, shame and embarrassment, and fear of stigmatisation⁹.

NALA developed its *Literacy Through the Media* project to address this situation. The project is a distance education project which aims to provide literacy tuition to people in their own homes. The Project commenced 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 found that the programmes had generated an increase in the number of individuals accessing local literacy services, had raised literacy levels and had raised awareness and motivation among learners.

Following the success of the *Literacy Through the Airwaves* pilot project, the *Read Write Now* TV Series was developed. The first TV series was broadcast in 2000. It consisted of 12 TV programmes, accompanied by a printed pack of support material. Since 2000, five TV series (each consisting of 12 half hour episodes) have been broadcast. Each TV series was accompanied by a Learner Support Pack (one for each series) comprising of an A4 sized Learner Workbook and an A5 sized Learner Support Book. Each series was also accompanied by a freephone support line and a DVD and/or video of the TV series. Series 5 was also supported by a website www.readwritenow.ie and an Equalskills CD-ROM. (Equalskills is a training course that introduces users to Information Communications Technology. It is coordinated by ECDL Ireland). Two series of radio programmes were broadcast - *Read Write Now Radio Literacy Series* and *Time 4 Learning* - a radio numeracy series broadcast in March and October 2001 respectively.

1.4 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers (RUG)*

The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers is NALA's most recent media-based distance education project. It ran from September 2006 to April 2007. The project aimed to help adults to improve their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as highlighting the stories of individuals who had gone back to learning and the difference made to their lives¹⁰. The series consisted of three strands:

1. The Television Series

- The television series was split into two parts:
 - **Part 1** comprised 12 half hour weekly programmes which were broadcast on RTE 1 between September and December 2006 at

⁷ <http://www.nala.ie/faq/>

⁸ National Adult Literacy Agency (1998), *Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes*, National Adult Literacy Agency, Dublin

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ NALA, *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Learner Workbook 1, p.6

1.15pm on Sundays and repeated on Tuesday nights after midnight;

- **Part 2** also comprised 12 half hour weekly programmes which were broadcast on RTE 1 between January and April 2007 at 1.15pm on Sundays and repeated on Tuesday nights after midnight.

2. A Personal Learning Package

- Two Learner Workbooks supported the content of the TV programmes. One Learner Workbook supported the first 12 episodes (i.e. Part 1) of the TV series, while the second Workbook supported Part 2 of the TV series.
- An Interactive website - www.rug.ie - the website contained games and interactive exercises adapted from the workbook. It provided a facility for users to download the Learner Workbook (in total or individual chapters), or to watch previous episodes of the TV series. The website also included contact details for NALA and a facility to request the workbook and/or to ask questions/send a comment to NALA.

3. Other Learning Supports

- The Freephone support line and online support provided by literacy tutors employed by NALA. This service operated from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday from September 2006 - April 2007. Following the initial broadcast, the support line has been redirected to the main NALA number.
- Referral by NALA staff members to a local VEC Adult Literacy Service.

The primary target audience identified by NALA for this project were adults who were not involved in any learning programme but who wished to improve their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a home situation. NALA refer to these individuals as 'independent learners'. Other audiences include learners who are attending more formal literacy training courses and who use the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* as a supplementary source of learning.

The focus of the series was to provide advice and help in relation to a variety of everyday practical tasks and activities that require reading, writing and numeracy skills. The reason why the project was developed in this was to take account of independent learners' 'spiky profile', i.e., the fact that some independent learners may be good with one aspect of literacy (e.g. reading) but may have difficulties in another area (e.g. numbers).

1.5 The Evaluation Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the evaluation is:

- ❖ *To examine the relevance and effectiveness of the project content and delivery as a learning tool for independent learners.*

1.6 Evaluation Methodology

Three key activities were undertaken to achieve the above evaluation objective:

1.6.1 Telephone Interviews with Independent Learners

The primary source of data collection was telephone interviews with independent learners. For the purpose of the evaluation, an independent learner was defined as someone who had engaged with *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* series independently at home rather than as part of a formal literacy or basic education scheme.

A total of 50 telephone interviews were conducted with independent learners around the country to discuss their progress as a result of engaging with the series. The interviews also explored the areas where learners were making most progress and where they experienced success and most difficulty, as well as exploring interviewees' opinions on the effectiveness of the project's delivery and the relevance of its content.

The telephone interviews took place in two stages:

1. Stage 1: 25 independent learners were interviewed between December 2006 and January 2007. The findings from these first 25 interviews formed the basis of the Interim Evaluation Report, compiled in February 2007. The interviewees were randomly selected by NALA freephone staff from a database of independent learners who had made contact with NALA (either through the freephone support line, or through the website) to request a copy of the learner workbook.

This first set of interviews focused on independent learners' opinions and perceptions of:

- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* TV Series - **Part 1**
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Learner Workbook - **Part 1**
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* freephone support line.

2. Stage 2: 25 telephone interviews were conducted with independent learners between March and April 2007. Interviewees were again selected from the database of independent learners who had contacted NALA for a copy of the learner workbook. The sampling process for the Stage 2 interviews was however undertaken by the evaluator rather than by NALA freephone staff. (The reason for this amendment to the sampling process is outlined in Section 1.7).

This second set of interviews focused on independent learners' opinions and perceptions of:

- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* TV Series - **Part 2**
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Learner Workbook - **Part 2**
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website
- *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* freephone support line.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the first group of 25 telephone interviewees are referred to as *Stage 1 interviewees*, while the second set of 25 telephone interviewees are referred to as *Stage 2 interviewees*.

See Table 1.1 for an overview of both groups.

Table 1.1 Overview of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Telephone Interviewees

Stage	No. of Interviewees	Category	Period of Data Collection	Focus of Interview Discussion
1	25	Independent learners	December 2006 - January 2007	1. TV Series Part 1 2. Learner Workbook Part 1 3. Website 4. Freephone Support Line
2	25	Independent learners	March 2007 - April 2007	1. TV Series Part 2 2. Learner Workbook Part 2 3. Website 4. Freephone Support Line

1.6.2 Telephone Discussions with Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs)

It had initially been intended to hold focus group discussions with basic adult education/literacy tutors. These focus groups did not go ahead however. The reasons why they did not proceed are detailed in Section 1.7. NALA freephone staff did however contact Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs) around the country by telephone to ask them 3 specific questions identified by the evaluators as follows:

1. Did you receive the learner workbooks?
2. Are you using the learner workbooks?
3. How have you found the learner workbooks?

The responses from 33 ALOs have been incorporated into Section 3.7 of the evaluation findings.

1.6.3 Review of Relevant Documentation

All relevant documentation was reviewed. This included:

- ❖ The programme content for the TV series (Part 1 and 2);
- ❖ TV programme ratings for Part 1 and 2;
- ❖ The content of the Learner Workbooks (Part 1 and 2);
- ❖ The content of the interactive website, and web access statistics¹¹;
- ❖ Quantitative data provided by NALA in relation to the number of calls made to the free phone support line, as well as the number of requests for the learner workbooks received via the website.

¹¹ Website access statistics were collated, on behalf of NALA, by Biznet Solutions.

1.7 Methodological Issues

The evaluation process raised a number of important methodological issues:

1.7.1 Contacting Independent Learners

For the first set of telephone interviews with independent learners, NALA freephone staff randomly selected independent learners from their database, contacted them by telephone, asked them one or two general questions about how they were finding the series and asked if they would be agreeable to participating in the evaluation process. It was explained that this involved the evaluator contacting them at an agreed date and time and asking more specific questions in relation to the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers series*. Interviewees' names and contact details, and the agreed date and time for the telephone interview, were then supplied to the evaluator. A number of issues emerged from the use of this type of process:

1. A small number of the initial interviewees (approximately 3-4), when contacted by the evaluator at the agreed time, felt that the evaluator was asking the same questions as the NALA staff member had asked a few days previously. In reality the questions were different, but the information that interviewees provided was quite similar. It was subsequently decided, following a discussion between the evaluator and NALA, that NALA staff would only ask independent learners if they would participate in an interview and arrange a time for the interview.
2. There was an expectation that by involving NALA staff in the sampling process and in making the initial contact with independent learners and arranging the date and time of the telephone interview, that the amount of time required by evaluator in this stage of the data collection process would be reduced (i.e. the evaluator could focus on conducting the interview and would not spend time arranging telephone interviews). However, it soon emerged that this was not the case. When contacted by the evaluator at the date and time agreed with NALA staff, many of the interviewees were no longer able or willing to participate in an interview. On other occasions, the evaluator could not get in contact with the interviewee. A decision was subsequently made that for the second set of interviews, the full database would be supplied to the evaluator who undertook the sampling process from start to finish. This information, which contained independent learners' name, address and contact details was only furnished for the purpose of contacting interviewees for the evaluation.

1.7.2 The Website Users

Only 1 of the first 25 (i.e. Stage 1) randomly selected independent learners had accessed the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website. In Stage 2, only 1 of the first 16 randomly selected telephone interviewees had accessed the website. A decision was subsequently made to actively select the remaining 9 interviewees for Stage 2, from the group that had used the website and had also supplied a contact telephone number. 20¹² telephone calls were then made to independent learners within this more tightly defined

¹² This figure of 20 refers only to telephone calls which were actually answered. It does not include telephone calls which were not answered, went to voicemail or where the phone was switched off.

group, in order to identify 9 independent learners who had accessed the website and who agreed to participate in a telephone interview.

1.7.3 'Independent Learners'

The 50 telephone interviewees classified as 'independent learners' were identified under that heading because they had individually requested the learner workbook to be sent to their home address. Two-thirds of the 50 telephone interviewees (33 interviewees in total) were not accessing any other form of literacy tuition. Just over a third (17 interviewees) were attending some form of formal adult education or literacy tuition: thirteen of whom (just over a quarter of the total number of interviewees) engaged with the series independently of their formal literacy class, while the remaining 4 interviewees (8% of the total group) used it as part of their formal literacy class.

1.7.4 Consulting 'Students' attending Basic Adult Education/Literacy Courses

NALA had originally planned to organise 4 focus groups with learners attending literacy/basic adult education classes as part of the evaluation process. Two of the focus groups were to be held in December/January 2006 and the second two in March/April 2007. As part of the organisation of these focus groups NALA wrote to every student who was a member of NALA (172 students in total) inviting them to contact NALA if they were interested in travelling to Dublin to take part in a focus group discussion about *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Series*. Travel costs and other expenses were to have been reimbursed by NALA. Only 4 students volunteered to participate. A decision was made by NALA not to pursue this particular data collection option any further and to focus the evaluation solely on the opinions and experiences of independent learners as the primary target audience for the series.

Some of the anecdotal reasons suggested by NALA staff for the low response rate from NALA members included:

- Students were not keen to travel to Dublin.
- Students felt it would take too much time.
- Those contacted weren't using the *Really Useful Guide* as a significant part of their learning.

1.7.5 Consulting Adult Literacy Tutors

It had also originally been intended to hold 4 focus groups with adult literacy tutors using a similar methodology to that outlined in section 1.7.4. As part of this process NALA sent over 100 letters to adult literacy tutors around the country, asking them to participate in the focus groups. Only 2 tutors however volunteered to take part in the focus groups. Again, a decision was made by NALA not to pursue this particular data collection option any further and to focus the evaluation solely on the opinions and experiences of independent learners as the primary target audience for the series.

Some of the anecdotal reasons suggested by NALA staff for the low response rate from Adult Literacy Tutors included:

- Tutors felt it would take too much time in an already busy schedule.
- Tutors were not keen to travel to Dublin.

1.8 Profile of Telephone Interviewees

Table 1.2 below provides a profile of the 50 telephone interviewees. There was a 50/50 male/female divide among the 50 interviewees. The urban/rural divide among the interviewees was also relatively even with 22 (44%) residing in largely urban¹³ areas and 28 (56%) residing in largely rural¹⁴ areas. However, at 37, the number of interviewees who lived in the South and Eastern (S&E) region of the country was three times greater than the number who lived in the Border, Midlands, Western (BMW) region (12 interviewees resided in the BMW region)¹⁵. The evaluators actively sought to sample more interviewees from the BMW region but found it difficult get interviewees to participate in the evaluation who fitted the required criteria i.e., had contact telephone numbers, answered the phone, were willing to take part, were independent learners, were web users etc.

Table 1.2 Profile of Telephone Interviewees

Stage	Gender		Urban/Rural		Region		
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	BMW Region	S&E Region	Unknown/ Not Disclosed
1	11	14	12	13	6	18	1
2	14	11	10	15	6	19	-
Total	25	25	22	28	12	37	1

The 50 interviewees engaged with the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* in different ways. 78% had watched either Part 1 and/or Part 2 of the TV Series; 82% had used either Workbook 1 and/or 2. 78% reported that they had used the freephone support line, but only 22% reported that they had accessed the website. Table 1.3 below provides an overview of the number and percentage of the interviewees who had used different parts of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* series.

Table 1.3 Number & % of Interviewees who had used each Section of the RUG Series

Component	Stage 1 (n=25)	Stage 2 (n=25)	Total (Stage 1 & Stage 2)
TV Series Part 1	16 (64%)	-	39 (78%)
TV Series Part 2	-	23 (92%)	
Learner Workbook 1	21 (84%)	-	41 (82%)
Learner Workbook 2	-	20 (80%)	
Website	1 (4%)	10 (40%)	11 (22%)
Freephone Support Line	24 (96%)	15 (60%)	39 (78%)
Total	25	25	50

¹³ For the purposes of this evaluation, urban areas are loosely defined as centres of population > 1500.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this evaluation, rural areas are defined as areas that are not urban.

¹⁵ The BMW Region includes: Cavan, Donegal, Galway, Laois, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, and Westmeath. The S&E Region includes: Carlow, Clare, Cork, Dublin, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Meath, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, and Wicklow.

A comparison of interviewees shows that the percentage of each Group who had used the workbooks was largely the same. However, a higher percentage of the Stage 2 interviewees watched Part 2 of the TV series. The primary reason given by Stage 1 interviewees for not watching the TV programme was that the times the programme was broadcast did not suit them. This was not an issue for Series 2 interviewees even though Series 2 was broadcast at relatively the same times. It was not possible to ascertain whether there were other factors at play that might explain why a greater percentage of the Stage 2 interviewees watched the TV series. In order to do this, it would be necessary to interview the same group of independent learners in relation to both Series 1 and 2.

Almost all of the Stage 1 interviewees had contacted NALA at least once via the freephone support line, while only 15 of the Stage 2 interviewees had. This difference can be explained by the fact that 10 of the Stage 2 interviewees contacted NALA using the website instead of the freephone support line.

1.9 Structure of the Report

This first section of the evaluation report gives an outline of the background, and aims and objectives of the evaluation. It also provides details of the methodological processes used to meet the evaluation objective. Section 2 of the report focuses on the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* TV series, while the Learner Workbooks are evaluated in Section 3. In Sections 4 and 5, the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website and freephone support line are reviewed. Section 6 looks at the impact of the series on the evaluation interviewees, while Section 7 discusses some issues arising from the evaluation, as well as the conclusions and recommendations.

2 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers TV Series*

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the style and content of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers TV series*, the TV audience viewing figures, as well as the viewing patterns and opinions of Parts 1 and 2 of the TV series by Stage 1 and Stage 2 interviewees respectively.

2.2 Style and Content of the Television Series: Parts 1 & 2

For twelve weeks between September and December 2006 (Part 1), and for another twelve weeks between January and April 2007 (Part 2), 24 episodes of the TV series were broadcast on RTE 1, firstly at 1.15pm on Sunday and then repeated a little after midnight on the following Tuesday night.

The programme was studio-based, presented by a female presenter - Flor McCarthy. Each episode commenced with Flor speaking directly to the camera about a certain issue - such as common literacy difficulties, concerns that people may have in relation to their literacy skills, or everyday tasks and activities that require literacy skills. The subsequent programme content proceeded to look at the particular issue(s) in more detail, providing advice and information on how and where to access help to address the particular learning difficulty or need. Each episode focused on a different topic but followed a broadly similar format, with 4-6 distinct parts to it, namely:

1. Studio discussion with 2 invited guests
2. 'Skill Builders'
3. 'Really Useful Guide to...'
4. 'All About Learning'/Student Profiles
5. 'In the News'
6. Further support.

2.2.1 Studio Discussion

The studio discussion between the presenter and two guests formed the core of each episode. Studio discussions generally focused on two main themes: 1) adult learners' experiences of returning to education in order to access help for a literacy difficulty, and 2) the nature and range of help available for people with literacy difficulties in adult learning centres around the country.

In 20 out of the 24 episodes, at least one of the studio guests was a learner who had accessed basic adult education in recent years, and who spoke about his/her previous literacy difficulties, how they made the decision to access help, their experiences of adult education and adult learning centres, and the difference it had made to their lives.

In 14 of the 24 episodes, the second studio guest was involved in either providing or organising adult education, or supporting people returning to learning. These guests spoke about the availability, range and flexibility of adult education courses and supports available to people. The remaining guests came from a diverse range of backgrounds, but all spoke about the importance of literacy skills in their professional and personal lives, and included:

- An RTE sports presenter
- A Professor of Psychology
- An Irish language lecturer
- A member of the Polish community
- A lecturer from the Royal College of Surgeons
- A representative of the National Consumer Agency
- Singer/songwriter.

The core messages emanating from these studio discussions were as follows:

- Many people experience difficulties with a range of everyday literacy tasks;
- No one should be afraid or embarrassed to seek help;
- Help is readily available in adult learning centres around the country where people can access either group-based or one-to-one tuition in an informal, friendly, and flexible setting.

2.2.2 'Skill Builders'

The Skill Builders were prescriptive, step-by-step guides to a key reading, writing or spelling skill, such as sounding out words, spelling words with -'ing' endings, reading the 24-hour clock, filling in forms etc. Table 2.1 below lists the Skill Builders used in each of the 24 episodes of the TV series:

Table 2.1 An Outline of the Skill Builders used in the TV Series

	Episode	Description of the Skill Builder
Part 1	1	Sounding out letters and words
	2	What is meant by 'alphabetical order' and how it works
	3	Spell words with 'ing' endings
	4	Reading and filling in forms
	5	Sending text messages
	6	Spelling plural words
	7	Leaving a message on an answering machine
	8	Reading the time, in particular the 24 hour clock, and switching from 24 hour clock to 12 hour clock and vice versa
	9	Spelling larger words using root words (word building)
	10	Filling in a cheque
	11	Filling in forms
	12	Reading a newspaper
Part 2	13	Setting up an email account
	14	Reading soccer results
	15	Spelling words that sound the same but are spelt differently
	16	Using apostrophes to join words
	17	Filling out a job application form
	18	-
	19	Spelling rhyming words
	20	Writing a formal letter
	21	Calculating percentages
	22	Sending an email message
	23	Reading timetables
	24	Spelling words with silent letters

2.2.3 'Really Useful Guide to...'

The 'Really Useful Guides to..' focused on everyday activities that require a certain level of literacy skills. These items were less prescriptive in nature than the Skill Builders. They focused on providing more general information and advice. In most cases, the report featured an individual(s) engaging in the particular everyday activity or task, e.g., visiting a library; attending a parent-teacher meeting; going on a train journey; booking flights online; applying for a job; placing a bet. Table 2.2 below list the Really Useful Guides featured in each of the 24 episodes of the TV series:

Table 2.2 An Outlined of the 'Really Useful Guides to used in the RUG TV Series:

	Episode	Description of the Really Useful Guide to...
Part 1	1	Going to a GAA match
	2	Getting fit
	3	Making learning fun for children
	4	Visiting your local library
	5	Topping up your mobile phone credit
	6	Using the internet to plan a trip Understanding financial terms
	7	Saying No
	8	Going on a train journey
	9	Parent-teacher meetings
	10	DIY shops Visiting a GP or Pharmacist
	11	Reading household bills
	12	Using ATMs
Part 2	13	Booking flights on-line
	14	Buying a new TV
	15	Dealing with teenagers
	16	Card games
	17	Finding a new job
	18	Visiting a hospital/casualty Reading magazine articles
	19	Placing a bet
	20	Formal meetings
	21	Borrowing money Browsing news stories on the internet
	22	Getting things done in the community
	23	Catching a flight
	24	Digital music

2.2.4 'All About Learning'/Student Profiles

These items focused on an issue concerning learning and the learning process, and often featured a profile of an adult learner recently returned to education. These items were included in 16 of the 24 episodes. Table 2.3 below shows the variety of topics covered. Topics included: different learning styles; goals and motivation for learning; learning centres; making time for learning; the role of memory in the learning process etc. Many of the reports featured an adult learner who had returned to education. In each case, the learner spoke about his/her previous literacy difficulties; why, where and how they got help; and the positive difference it has made to their life. These particular features again clearly emphasised the message that people experience a variety of literacy difficulties in their everyday lives, but that there is help available through a range of different sources, and that by accessing help, it is possible to make a positive difference to one's life.

Table 2.3 'All About Learning'/Student Profiles included in the RUG TV Series:

	Episode	'All About Learning'/Student Profiles
Part 1	1	Different learning strengths and styles
	3	Goals and motivations The Learning Journey - profile of a learner
	4	Workplace literacy - profile of three learners accessing education through work
	5	Different ways of learning Range and nature of adult education classes Profile of an adult learner attending an adult learning centre
	7	Learning centres
	9	Profile of a learner with dyslexia/the Celbridge Career Path Centre
	10	Health Literacy
	11	Profile of a learner who returned to education through Irish
Part 2	13	Profile of a VEC learning centre and the students attending it
	15	Deafness and learning/profile of a literacy service for deaf people
	16	Learning English as a second language/profile of 2 ESOL ¹⁶ students
	18	Choosing a book for children
	19	Learning gets easier over time/profile of an adult learner
	20	Making time for learning/Profile on 'Word Aid' learning centre in Kilkenny
	23	Memory and learning/profile of a person with dyslexia
24	Making learning fun/profile of a learner engaged in a Return to Education course	

2.2.5 'In the News'

Seven of the 24 episodes also featured a report on a topic of general interest. These were not guides, but were more general *information pieces* on subject matters that often featured 'in the news', as shown in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4 'In the News' Features included on the RUG TV Series

	Episode	Topic
Part 1	2	Intercultural Ireland
	8	The reporting of crime in the media
	12	The reporting of road deaths in the media
Part 2	14	Understanding news coverage on Northern Ireland
	17	Understanding how election news is covered in the media
	21	Rising energy costs
	22	The Government

¹⁶ ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages

2.2.6 Further Support

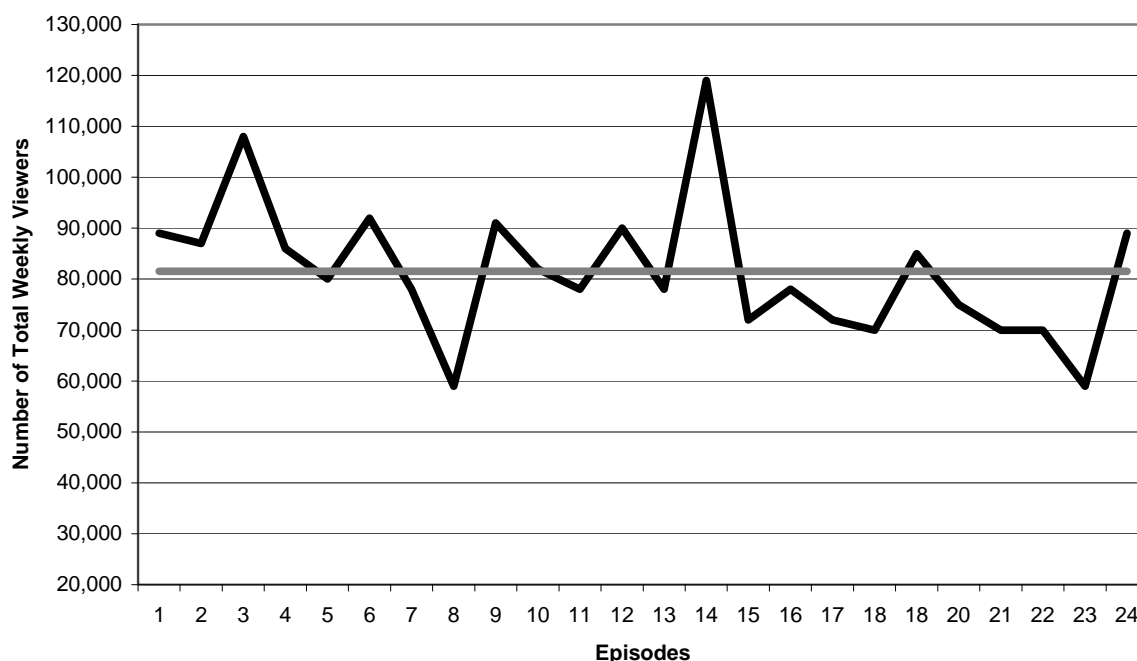
Twice in each episode, viewers were advised of the availability of the supporting Learner Workbook, firstly by the presenter during the episode (accompanied by supporting graphics showing the various contact details) and secondly as the closing credits were rolling, when the supporting graphics were shown again. When promoting the use of the Learner Workbook during the episode, the presenter often directed viewers to a specific section or page of the workbook where further exercises related to the literacy skill or topic featured on the programme could be found. She also gave the freephone number which viewers could ring to request the workbook, as well as the website address - www.rug.ie - and NALA's postal address - advising viewers that they could request the workbook through these different sources.

2.3 TV Audience Viewing Figures

2.3.1 Weekly Viewing Figures: Part 1 and Part 2

81,542 viewers on average watched each episode of the TV series each week. Figure 1 shows the total weekly audience figures for each episode in comparison to the average for the entire series.

Figure 1 Number of Total Weekly Viewers¹⁷: Part 1 and Part 2



Episode 14 recorded the highest number of viewers, 119,000 viewers watched this episode between the Sunday and the Tuesday viewing figures. Episode 3 had the second highest viewing figures with 108,000 viewers in total. Episode 8 and episode 23 recorded the lowest viewing figures with 59,000 viewers each. Some of the external factors that could have affected the viewing figures on these dates were examined in an effort to explain the dip in

¹⁷ Sunday and Tuesday viewers combined

the viewing figures. This included the weather (good weather generally reduces viewing figures), significant sporting events, and bank holiday weekends (with people often away for holiday weekends which can reduce viewing figures). However no concrete connection could be made with any of these factors and the lower viewing figures. These dates did not coincide with holiday weekends, neither were there any significant national sporting events and the weather was dull on both weekends. As such it was not possible to identify with any certainty what was behind the lower ratings on those dates. It could have indeed been a multitude of different individual factors.

2.3.2 Weekly Viewing Figures: Part 1 v. Part 2

Table 2.5 provides an overview of the average weekly viewing figures. The average number of viewers¹⁸ fell by almost 7,000 viewers for the episodes in Part 2 compared to those in Part 1: i.e. from 85,000 in Part 1 to 78,083 in Part 2. The Sunday episodes in Part 2 lost more viewers than the Tuesday episodes, falling by 6,333 viewers in comparison to a fall of 584 viewers for the Tuesday episode. The share of the total viewing audience across the two showings remained relatively constant.

Table 2.5 Average Weekly Viewing Figures Part 1 v. Part 2

	Sunday		Tuesday		Average No. of Viewers (Sunday & Tuesday Combined)
	Average No. of Viewers	Average % Audience Share	Average No. of Viewers	Average % Audience Share	
Part 1	51,833	10%	33,167	10%	85,000
Part 2	45,500	9.8%	32,583	10.5%	78,083

2.3.3 Weekly Viewing Figures: Sunday Episode v. Tuesday Episode

Table 2.6 below compares the average weekly viewing figures for the Sunday episode and the repeat episode. An average of 48,667 people watched the Sunday episode, representing a 9.8% share of the average viewing audience at that time. While the actual average number of viewers for the Tuesday repeat programme was lower, the percentage of the average viewing audience at that time was slightly higher - an average of 32,875 viewers watched the repeat programme, representing a 10.3% of the average viewing audience at that time.

¹⁸ Sunday and Tuesday viewers combined

Table 2.6 Average Viewing Figures Sunday v. Tuesday (Repeat) Episodes

Sunday (Part 1 & 2)		Tuesday (Part 1 & 2)	
Average No. of Viewers	Average % of Total Audience Share	Average No. of Viewers	Average % of Total Audience Share
48,667	9.8%	32,875	10.3%

The ratio of male and female viewers aged 15 and over, was largely the same. See Table 2.7 for details.

Table 2.7 Gender Profile of TV Viewing Audience: Part 1 and 2

	Children <15 years	Men aged 15 years and over	Women aged 15 years and over
Average Weekly Viewing Figures¹⁹	6,000	39,000	37,000

(Source: RTE, April 2007)

Those aged 55 years and over account for the largest category of viewers, as shown in Table 2.8. (Older adults have been found to be one of the cohorts most likely to experience literacy difficulties²⁰).

Table 2.8 An Analysis of the Age Profile of the TV Viewing Audience

	Men 15-34	Men 35-54	Men 55+	Women 15-34	Women 35-54	Women 55+
Average Weekly Viewing Figures²¹	10,000	13,000	16,000	7,000	13,000	17,000

(Source: RTE, April 2007)

2.4 Interviewees' Viewing Patterns

2.4.1 Frequency of Viewing

39 of the 50 interviewees (78%) watched either Part 1 or Part 2 of the TV series. The frequency with which individuals watched the series varied, as Table 2.9 below shows. Only a small minority - 8% - of the 50 interviewees watched the programme *'every week'*. Just under half - 46% - however reported that they watched the programme *'most weeks'*, while 38% stated that they watched it *'occasionally'*. A small minority (8%) reported that they *'rarely'* watched it.

¹⁹ Rounded to nearest '000, as per RTE statistics

²⁰ <http://www.nala.ie/faq/>

²¹ Rounded to nearest '000, as per RTE statistics

Table 2.9 Frequency of Viewing: Stage 1 and 2

Viewing Frequency	Total Number of Interviewees (Stage 1 and 2)
Every Week	3 (8%)
Most Weeks	18 (46%)
Occasionally	15 (38%)
Rarely	3 (8%)
Total	39 (100%)

2.4.2 Time of Viewing

Almost two-thirds (23) of the 39 interviewees who watched the programme reported they were generally happy with the times the programme was broadcast, while 6 stated that they had no opinion about the time of the broadcast. 12 interviewees (7 in Stage 1 and 5 in Stage 2) stated that they would prefer the programme to be broadcast at a time other than its current broadcast times. Some of the criticism's of the Sunday morning timeslot in particular included:

- It clashed with Mass
- People are getting Sunday dinner ready
- Sunday midday is often time for visiting family members.

In the word of one interviewee,

"Sunday is a bit awkward as you often have people in the house at that time. And you can't watch that programme then. They'd be questioning you why you are watching it. I don't want anyone to know about my difficulties".

The time of the repeat (Tuesday after midnight) was criticised for being too late for people who had to get up for work in the morning. Indeed, 13 of the interviewees stated that they would like the programme to be broadcast early in the evening time, while 2 commented that it would be good to have it on during the weekday mornings or afternoons while the children are at school.

2.5 Interviewees' Reasons for Watching the TV Series

Reasons for watching the TV series varied among the 39 interviewees who reported that they watched some or all of the TV series, but most fell into one or all of the following three categories:

- i. To improve general or specific reading, writing, spelling and/or numeracy skills
- ii. To get general advice and information in relation to everyday literacy activities.
- iii. Because of a general interest in the programme topics.

29 of the 39 interviewees who watched the series stated that they did so because it provided help with reading, writing, spelling, and numeracy skills in general. Help with spellings in particular was highlighted by several of the interviewees. 19 interviewees also stated that they watched the series because they had a general interest in the topics or

features covered in each episode. Interestingly, for 8 of the interviewees, their decision to watch the series stemmed from a desire to support their children's education. Indeed 5 of the interviewees stated that they watched the series in order to be better able to help their children with their schoolwork, while 3 others watched the series so that their children would watch it with them and possibly pick up something from the programme.

A number of interviewees identified quite specific needs for which they hoped the TV series would provide help, namely:

- To get information on using the computer, and specifically on using the internet (4 interviewees)
- Tutor recommended it (2)
- To get advice on doing up a CV and applying for a job (1).

The following comments give a flavour of the various reasons that interviewees had for sitting down and watching the TV series:

"I left school in the 1950s. I could only write my name. We did everything through Irish. So I learned very little in school. But adult literacy classes changed my life completely. I could read a menu, fill in forms in a bank. I have more confidence now filling in forms. Because of that I'm always interested in literacy programmes" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I'm dyslexic. A few years ago I saw a guy called Ian on Read Write Now. A man of few words. He was very good. It made me go back to education. In 2003, I started asking where I could get help. I started with Read Write Now. I'm going to the VEC every week since. The TV programme is part and parcel of my learning" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"My daughter is in school, doing homework. She started asking me questions but I couldn't answer her. I couldn't read her textbooks. So I got the workbook and started watching the programme to be able to help her" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"For help with computers. It simplifies things very well. Its very easy to follow" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I was recently made redundant. I wanted to pick up tips on reading, writing, applying for jobs, doing up CVs" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I'm doing a communications course. It includes reading and writing skills. The tutor recommended it, said it might help. It did. Especially with letter writing" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

2.6 Pace of the TV Series

The majority of interviewees commented favourably on the pace or speed of the TV programme with 29 of the 39 interviewees who had watched the TV series stating that they felt that the pace of the programmes was just right and that they could keep up with what was being said. One interviewee also noted that the presenter speaks "*very well and very slowly and clearly. You can get what she says - I like that*". However, 5 (2 from Stage 1, 3 from Stage 2) interviewees felt it was a little too fast for them. For example, one thought the feature on ATMs was a little too fast but stated that they could always get their literacy tutor to go over it with them. Another said that they recorded the programme for this reason, so that they could rewind it if they missed something. On the other hand, 5 other interviewees (3 from Stage 1, 2 from Stage 2) felt it was a little too slow at times. One in particular felt that "*sometimes the programme is too dumbed down*". Two interviewees were quick to add that it was probably just right for other people. As one person said in relation to the pace of the programme,

"If it was going too fast, it would go over your head. It's slow enough to give you a chance to get it. It's better to have it too slow than too fast"

This difference in opinion as to the pace of the programme clearly illustrates a point made by one interviewee that "*there are a lot of different needs out there*". As such, it may not be possible for the pace of the programme to suit everyone's learning needs equally.

2.7 Most and Least Popular Items in the TV Series

The 39 interviewees who watched some of the TV series were asked if there were any specific features or episodes that they found particularly useful or enjoyable. 14 (6 in Stage 1 and 8 in Stage 2) stated that they liked it all, and that they could not pick one particular episode or feature as being better or more enjoyable than others. The remaining interviewees highlighted a range of different episodes or features that they found particularly useful or enjoyable.

Among the Stage 1 interviewees, guidelines for spellings were the most popular feature, with 6 stating that they found the tips for spelling most useful, and in particular, the tips for breaking down words. The guide to mobile phone texting was the second most popular item in Part 1 of the series, while the profiles of individual learners, the guide to reading and paying bills, and the guide to writing cheques were also identified by a small number of Stage 1 interviewees as being particularly useful. See Table 2.11 for analysis of the popularity of the different topics covered among the 16 Stage 1 interviewees who watched Part 1 of the TV series.

Table 2.11 Most Popular Items in Part 1 of the TV Series

Item	Number of Interviewees
Advice on spellings	6
Texting on a mobile phone	5
Profiles of individual learners	4
Reading and paying bills	3
Writing cheques	2
Filling in forms	2
Using an ATM	1
Reading the time	1
Using a dictionary	1
Celbridge Career Path Centre	1

Many of the Stage 2 interviewees had their own particular favourite episode or feature from Part 2 of the series. The one element of the TV series that received the most praise was the features on using computers, email, and the Internet. Table 2.12 below lists the most popular items in Part 2 as identified by Stage 2 interviewees.

Table 2.12 Most Popular Items in the TV Series Part 2

Item	Number of Interviewees
Using the computer/ email/internet/booking flights online	10
What to do at the airport	3
Doing up a CV/applying for jobs	2
Digital Music/MP3 Players	2
Writing letters	2
Learner profiles/interviews	2
Filling out betting slips	1
Getting things done in the community	1
Matching up word endings	1

Several interviewees, in both Stage 1 and 2, also highlighted the profiles or interviews with adult learners and spoke about how they found other people's stories "encouraging". Some of the comments in relation to this issue included,

"The people who told their stories were very brave. It was very encouraging" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I know one guy from Spiddal on the programme ... had been working in a factory for years but couldn't read or write. He got help, went to classes and wrote a book - amazing!" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"[They] spoke to people who had difficulties and who went to courses and shows how far they came along. That really grabbed my attention" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

There were very few criticisms of the TV series among the interviewees: one person commented that the programme was too short, while another stated that the spellings 'skill builder' in the last episode was too basic. One Stage 2 interviewee also made an interesting point in relation to the studio discussions when he said,

"I probably didn't like the studio discussion as much as the rest. I prefer to see them in the community, in the classes, than in the studio talking about it".

3 interviewees also mentioned that parts of the series were too basic for them, and therefore not relevant to their needs, but they were quick to highlight that this was not a criticism of the series as they recognised that it would be relevant to other people. Generally, when asked whether there was any particular episode or feature that they did not like as much or which they did not find particularly useful, the majority who watched the series firmly stated "no", with many stating instead that it was all interesting (at least what they saw), and/or that it was all useful, if not for themselves, but for someone else. Some of the responses to this question included,

"[There was] nothing that would not be useful to somebody" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"Some of it was very simple, but you would need that for different people" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"...something useful in every one for someone" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"Everything is good - it all depends what you want to use it for" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"[It was] all useful in everyday life" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

2.8 Overall Impressions of TV Series

The overall consensus among the evaluation participants was that the TV series was interesting, helpful and well done. All of the 39 interviewees who watched some or all of the 24 episodes of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* TV Series gave a very favourable response to the TV programmes, with 36 of the 39 stating that they would recommend the TV series to others. (Those that would not recommend it to others said it was because they would be too "embarrassed" to do so or because they didn't talk about their own literacy difficulties). The majority however said they would be happy to recommend it to others with literacy difficulties, and indeed many had done so already. One person also stated that they would have no problem recommending the programme to people who did not have any literacy difficulties, stating,

"Even if they could read and write perfectly, they could still find something in it".

The two words used most often by interviewees to describe the TV programme were "interesting", and "informative". The following comments are a sample of the most common types of responses provided by the evaluation interviewees in relation to the TV series:

"It's very, very good. It gives great guidelines. Its amazing what you'd learnt" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"You are learning all the time even if you are ok with reading and writing because it refreshes what you know already" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I found them all very good, very informative and easy to follow" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I couldn't criticize it. All done well. Some of it was very basic but you have to give everyone a chance. It worked from the bottom up" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I really think it was well put together. It was well done. I wouldn't be critical of it. It's always of interest to someone" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"They used ordinary person's language. I liked that" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I liked that it wasn't about one thing. They included several topics in one programme. I liked that it was done simply. They explained things very well" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

3 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Learner Workbook*

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides a review of the content of the 2 Learner Workbooks that accompanied the TV series. It outlines how the workbooks were used by the interviewees, as well as the extent to which they were used. The responses of interviewees to Learner Workbook 1 and 2 respectively are also discussed, as well as the responses from the Adult Literacy Organisers collected by NALA.

3.2 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Learner Workbook 1 & 2: Content and Style*

Each Learner Workbook comprised of an introductory chapter and 12 subsequent chapters - each of which corresponded to an episode of the TV series. The Introductory Chapter gave the reader an overview of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* project, and provided information on 1) the aim of the Project; 2) the TV series and when it was broadcast; 3) the contents of the website; 4) how and when to use the workbook; 5) the availability and purpose of the freephone support line; and 6) details on the VEC Adult Literacy Service. The other chapters contained a mixture of reading, writing and spelling exercises. Generally, the reading and writing exercises were related to a story or a feature in the corresponding TV programme, while the spelling exercises provided the reader with an opportunity to practise the type of spellings featured on the corresponding TV programme.

The purpose of the reading, writing, and spelling exercises were two-fold. They enabled the reader to practice and improve key literacy skills, and they also provided information to the reader on topics such as the history of the GAA, the importance of keeping fit, the train system, how to use an ATM, reading literature from banks, what is email etc. A number of chapters also contained exercises which aimed to improve the reader's numeracy skills, as well as their verbal communication and listening skills. Each chapter ended with a puzzle such as a word search, crossword, or quiz. In most cases, the chapter contained additional information and learning points included in the corresponding TV programme. The answers to most of the exercises were provided at the back of the book. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the content of each of the chapters in the Learner Workbooks 1 and 2.

3.3 Patterns of Use

3.3.1 Frequency of Use

41 (82%) of the 50 interviewees used either Learner Workbook 1 or 2. Reasons for not using the workbooks included:

- ❖ The book hadn't arrived yet;
- ❖ Had not started using it yet but planned to do so in the near future;
- ❖ A belief that the individual was more advanced than the workbook.

The frequency with which the 41 interviewees had used the workbook varied. As shown in Table 3.1, 16 of the 41 interviewees (39%) reported that they used it '*several times a week*', 13 (32%) used it approximately '*once or twice*', 8 (20%) used it '*once a week*', while just 4 (8%) reported that they used it '*every few weeks*'.

Table 3.1 Learner Workbooks: Frequency of Use (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

Frequency of Use	Total Number and % of Interviewees Stage 1 & 2
Several times a week	16 (39%)
Once a week	8 (20%)
Every few weeks	4 (8%)
Once or twice	13 (32%)
Total	41 (100%)

3.3.2 Extent of Use

The extent to which the 41 interviewees had used the workbooks also varied. 39% had completed three-quarters of either Workbook 1 or 2; almost 30% had completed a quarter, while 20% had completed half of Workbook 1 or 2. Only 12% of the 41 interviewees had actually finished the workbooks. See Table 3.2 for details.

Table 3.2 Amount of Learner Workbook Completed (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

Amount Completed	Number and % of Interviewees Stage 1 & 2
All of the workbook completed	5 (12%)
75% of the workbook completed	16 (39%)
50% of the workbook completed	8 (20%)
25% of the workbook completed	12 (29%)
Total	41 (100%)

3.4 Reasons for Ordering the Learner Workbook

The 41 interviewees who had used some or all of the Learner Workbooks provided a range of reasons as to why they decided to get the workbook in the first place. In many cases, interviewees' reasons for ordering the Learner Workbook mirrored their reasons for watching the TV series, namely: i) to improve their reading, writing and spelling skills, and ii) to get more information and help for a particular topic, e.g., applying for a job, writing formal letters, using the internet.

Interestingly, for 12 interviewees (30%), the main impetus for getting the workbook was because their tutor or classmates in their adult learning/literacy class had encouraged them to get it. The remainder had seen it on the TV and thought it would help either them or a family member (i.e. a child) to improve their literacy skills. The following statements provide a flavour of the different reasons the interviewees had for getting the workbook:

"I saw the ad for it on the TV and my daughter was fascinated by the TV programme which I was very surprised by. So I decided to get the book too" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"A few years ago I couldn't read or write. A local tutor came to see me. She got me 1-2-1 classes. I can now write letters, fill in forms etc. She encouraged me to get the first book. Each year since, I ring up for the latest book" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I was doing a computer course for work. It was mentioned there to get it. I was very bad with spelling, and needed help with reading and writing" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"Because I wanted to learn about grammar, punctuation, the alphabet. I thought I mightn't need it but when I got it I realized I did" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"It's just something to go along with the TV series. To help me follow the series. To help me keep up to date if I miss a few episodes" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I thought it would help me with the communications course. I saw the bit about letter writing on the TV. That made me decide to get workbook ... to get more on it" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"To get more on computers. I wanted to learn more about computers. I'm interested in computers" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

3.5 Methods of Use

The workbook was used in a variety of ways by different evaluation interviewees. 14 stated that they started at the first chapter and worked their way through the book, chapter by chapter (although some stated that they skipped sections that they considered to be difficult and came back to them later). More than half of the interviewees (22 of the 41)

who had used some or all of the workbooks stated that they simply "*dipped in and out*" of different sections that interested them or which they felt they needed to work on. Meanwhile, 3 reported that they just completed sections of interest after they saw them on the TV, while 2 stated that they had just '*flicked through it*'.

It is interesting however that only 8 of the 41 used the workbook directly in conjunction with the TV programme (i.e. either immediately or soon after watching the programme). (Although 2 Stage 2 interviewees stated that by the time they received the workbook, the TV series was almost over, and that they would like to get the series on DVD so that they could use the 2 together).

Interestingly, 4 interviewees also referred to the fact that they used the workbook as a resource for their own adult education class: 2 interviewees completed sections of the workbook as homework for his literacy class, another used it with his 1-2-1 literacy tutor, while two used it as an additional aid or a reference book for their class work. This is illustrated by the following comments,

"I'm doing it with my tutor my tutor gives me exercises which is great as it keeps me on track" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I use it whenever I have to do something and there is something in the book that might help. For example, last week in class, we had to write a letter of complaint. I used it then. I use it as a reference or guide for school work and other things, like opening a bank account"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

The remainder reported that they used the workbook when they had free time, most often at nighttime, or whenever they needed some information from the book. The following statements by interviewees give an indication of when and how the workbook was generally used:

"In the evenings in bed. I'd read my magazines and do this too" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I keep it to myself. I do not use it in front of the family or if someone else is in the house. If no one is in the house, I use it with the TV programme. I find it much easier to use during the TV programme. But I won't use it if someone else is there. I use it whenever I can when no one else is around"(Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I watch the programme separately and go through the book during the week"(Stage 2 Interviewee).

"From time to time when something comes into my mind - I pick it up and look it up in the book. I keep it on a shelf and I pick it up when I need something, for example, when I write Christmas cards or when I'm texting. I pick it up and check it"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

"[I use it] off and on when I get a few minutes. I have a cup of tea. I pick it up and do a few pages. I keep it on the countertop"(Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I set myself a plan. I try to get it out between 4 and 5 everyday, or else between 7 and 8 everyday. You have to do it everyday. Only way to learn. You have to be disciplined"(Stage 2 Interviewee).

3.6 The Most and the Least Popular Sections in the Learner Workers 1 & 2

When asked which sections of the workbook they most useful or enjoyable, 17 of the 41 interviewees who had used the workbooks said that they liked it all, and could not pick out one chapter or section as being better than others. Others had their own personal favourite sections within the Learner Workbooks, which reflected their particular learning needs and interests. . For example, 13 reported that they particularly liked the sections which focused on spellings, matching words, grammar etc, while 6 interviewees stated that the sections on using email, the internet, booking flights online were their favourite sections. A variety of different sections were selected by the remaining interviewees as being particularly useful or enjoyable, including: information on computers/internet; information on writing cheques; reading stories and answering the subsequent questions; crosswords; filling in the blanks; writing letters/formal letters; filling in forms; information on reading and paying bills; texting. The following statements are a sample of some of the interviewees' responses:

"I liked it overall, couldn't pick one section; each section was short and brief; just a few pages; it held your interest all the way through"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

"All of the sections done so far have been helpful, especially the spelling, reading and answering questions, filling in the forms"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I liked the crosswords and the section on computers especially. I'm computer illiterate. I read the whole chapter on ICT as soon as I got it. I "ate it up". I found it very good"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I loved the reading of stories and the questions afterwards. It makes you go back over the story and give you a full grasp of it"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

A small minority of the interviewees had some criticisms of the workbook. 5 Stage 1 interviewees felt that it was too basic, while 1 interviewee thought it was too difficult. The reason given for the series being too difficult related largely to the literacy level of the individual rather than to any particular part of the series. As the interviewee in question stated,

"It was a small bit (difficult) for me. My reading and writing is not up to full standard".

Other learners had limited interest in particular elements of the series. For example one individual stated that they had no interest in learning about mobile phones while another Stage 1 interviewee said he wasn't interested in reading about the GAA.

Only 1 Stage 2 interviewee had any criticisms of Workbook 2. This criticism related to the fact that the particular individual found it easier to watch someone using the computer (on the TV programme), than to read about how to use computers (as detailed in the workbook). As he explained,

"I find the computers on the TV better. Its better to see it in use than to read about it".

None of the remaining Stage 2 interviewees however said they could criticise those parts of the workbook which they had used. Some only used certain sections, stating others were too basic for them, but as was the case with the TV series, this was not viewed as a criticism of the workbook, as it was recognised that it would be useful for others, if not for them. Others liked the different levels of difficulty in the workbooks. This viewpoint is well illustrated by the following comments:

"It's grand for me to say parts are too basic, but its useful for others".

"It caters for all levels. I got what I wanted to do"

"It covers all of it. Some bits are easy. Others I had to think about. It has different levels all in one go."

"Some parts are a little basic but I'd prefer it to be basic instead of it being too difficult - that might put you off doing it".

3.7 Overall Response to Learner Workbooks

3.7.1 Independent Learners

The overall response among interviewees to the Learner Workbooks was positive, with all but two stating that they would recommend the book to others. Some had already done so. (Again the two people who would not recommend the workbook said this was because they didn't talk about their literacy difficulties with other people). The books were generally described as user-friendly, useful and interesting, as highlighted by the following statements:

"The structure is very good and easy to use. Its informative"(Stage 1 Interviewee).

"Its all brilliant. I love it. All of it. A lot in it. I found it good" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"It's a basis to work on. 80% of it is easy reading. The trouble for us is trying to find something to read. This gives you something to read that is manageable and interesting" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"It's very good, very good. It's a fine book. The print is good. It is nicely laid out. The pages are good" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"Some sections - you may already know it, already be comfortable with it, but that's ok. I'm happy with every aspect of the book" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I find it all good even if I knew what it was about. There's nothing irrelevant" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

3.7.2 Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs)

NALA freephone staff held brief telephone discussions with 33 Adult Literacy Organisers around the country (see Section 1.6 for details). Each of the 33 Adult Literacy Organisers had received copies of Workbook 1 and/or 2, which all but two had distributed to the tutors working in their Adult Learning Centres to use with their students. 24 of the 33 ALOs reported that the feedback from their tutors in relation to the workbooks was very positive, with the majority stating that their tutors were happy with the workbooks and had described them as either "very good" or even "excellent". As one ALO stated,

"[It's] great for giving ideas that one can adapt to the learner. It's a great resource".

Only 2 of the 33 ALOs had any criticisms of the Learner Workbooks - one felt that the sections on placing bets and playing poker were inappropriate, particularly as some of their students could have had addiction problems. A second ALO felt that the workbooks were suitable for students of a certain standard but not for students with very basic literacy needs. 7 ALOs had not received any feedback from their tutors in relation to the workbooks.

4 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Website*

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Series* website, the extent to which the website was used by interviewees, the reasons why they accessed it, as well as their opinions on the usefulness of the website.

4.2 Content of Website

The TV series and workbook were supported by an interactive website - www.rug.ie. The website which was developed by Biznet Solutions Ltd.²² became operational on September 22nd 2006. The website provided the user with opportunities to:

- Read general information about the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Series*;
- Send a request to NALA to order a copy of the Learner Workbooks 1 and 2 (between September 2006 and April 2007, 513 requests for a copy of the Learner Workbook were received via the website)
- Download individual chapters from both Workbooks;
- Interactively engage with individual chapters of the Workbooks;
- Download and watch each episode of the TV series (Parts 1 and 2) (this requires the user to have a broadband connection and RealPlayer software installed on their computer. The user can download a free copy of the RealPlayer software directly from the website);
- Practise various literacy skills by playing any of the 30 interactive computer games on the website;
- Read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and their corresponding answers;
- Read the contact information for NALA;
- Send a question or comment to NALA via the internet;
- Access NALA's own website;
- Access the www.literacytools.ie website.

4.3 Website Access Statistics

Statistics in relation to the access and use of the website were provided by Biznet Solutions. These statistics were compiled using a dedicated software package designed for this purpose. The statistics revealed that in the period of time between its launch and the 13th April 2007, the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website received a total of

²² Biznet Solutions Ltd is a provider of 'Intelligent Internet Solutions and Systems'. They have been hired by NALA to develop and manage the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* website. Further details about the company are available at <http://www.biznet-solutions.com>

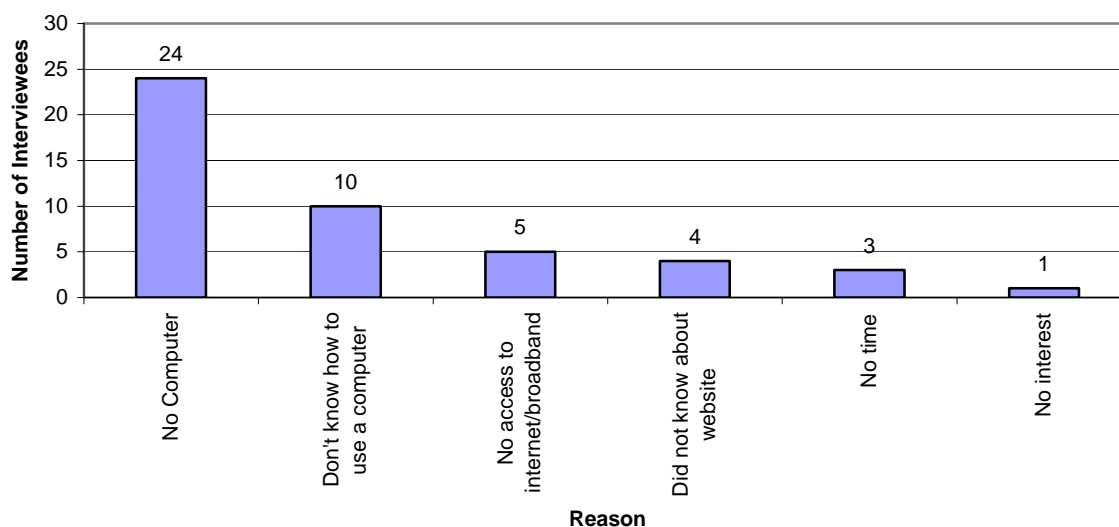
individual 6,457 visitors²³. This figure however is considerably lower than the total number of people who watched the TV series. For example, it equates to 8% of the average weekly viewing audience over the same time period. Between them, however, the individuals who accessed the website viewed 145,683 pages²⁴ on the website.

The statistics also show that the majority (77%) of people accessing the website were 'one-time/one off' users. Only 13% of those who accessed the site, accessed it more than once i.e. were 'repeat users'. Interestingly, although the actual number of repeat users was small, they accounted for 83% of total sessions on the website (a 'session' refers to a period of time that a visitor spends on the website at any one time). The average session duration was short, 1 minute and 3 seconds, with the home page recording the majority of sessions (63%). Individual pages of the website recorded a very limited amount of activity in comparison to the home page. The three most popular pages (i.e. highest level of sessions recorded), after the home page, were the workbook chapters (which could be downloaded from the website) on i) the GAA, ii) 'Making Learning Fun for Children' and iii) Mobile Phones.

4.4 The Extent and Frequency of Use by Stage 1 and Stage 2 Interviewees

Only 11 interviewees had used the website that accompanies the series - 1 in Stage 1 and 10 in Stage 2 (see Section 1 for details on how these 10 interviewees in Stage 2 were sampled). The main reasons why the 39 other interviewees had not used the website was because they had no computer (24 respondents) and/or did not know how to use a computer (10 respondents). 4 interviewees stated that they did not know about the website, 3 reported that they didn't have time to use the website, while 5 stated that although they had access to a computer, they did not have access to the internet and/or broadband. See Figure 4.1 for details.

Figure 4.1 Reasons for Not Accessing the Website



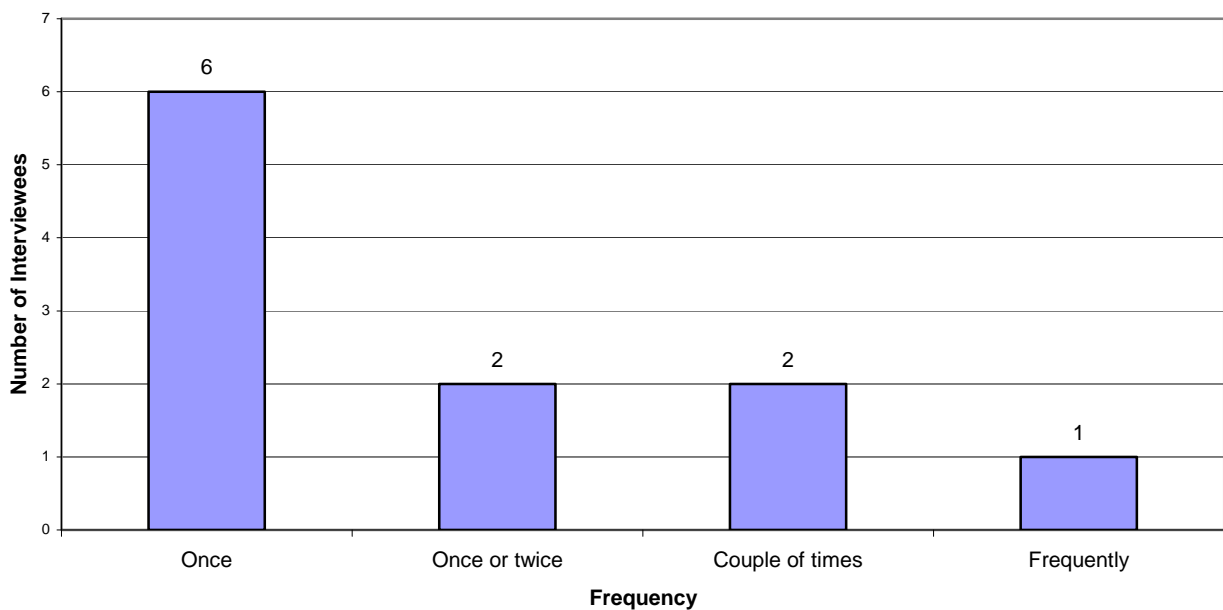
²³ 'Visitors correspond roughly to the number of people who visit the site and are tracked by their individual and unique IP address' (<http://biznet-solutions.com>).

²⁴ A page view is a request to load a single page on the website

On a positive note, the vast majority of interviewees (46 out of 50) stated that they would be willing to use the website if they had access to a computer, the internet and the necessary computer skills. (As stated in Section 3.3, of the 5,184 requests for the workbook received by NALA by April 2007, 792 came via the website). .

Interestingly, over half (6) of the 11 web users stated that they had accessed the website only once, 2 said they had accessed 'once or twice', while 2 more reported that they had accessed it a 'couple of times', while one person said they had used the website about once a week, but since receiving the workbook, had only accessed it about once a month. See Table 4.2 for details.

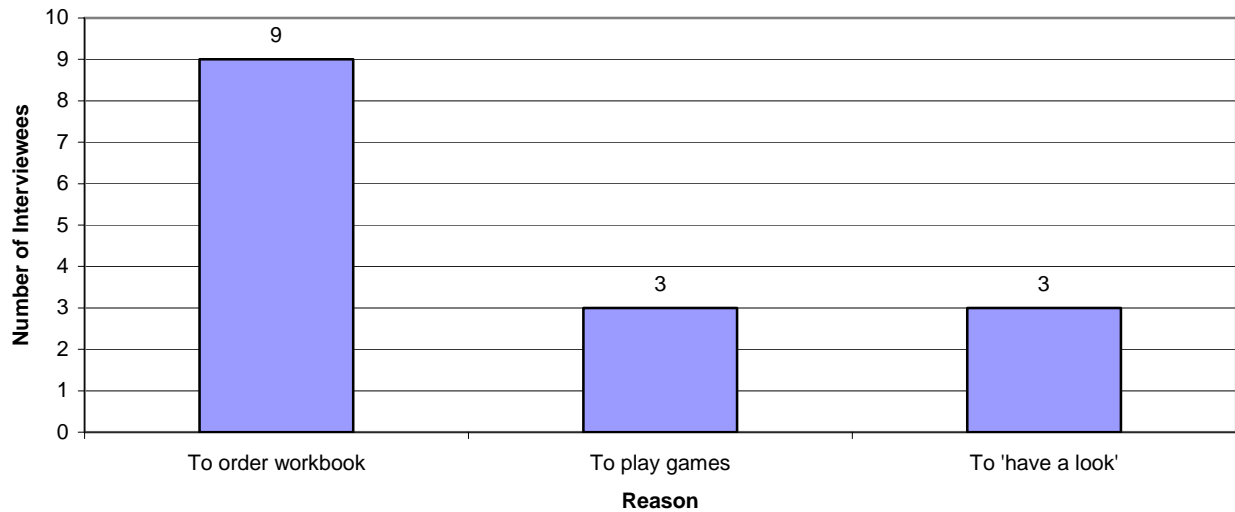
Table 4.2 Frequency of Website Access



4.5 Reasons for Accessing the Website (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

The most common reason for accessing the website among Stage 1 and 2 interviewees was to order the Learner Workbook from NALA. 9 of the 11 web users had accessed the website for this purpose. 3 said that they played some of the games on the website, while 3 others said the accessed the website, for no specific purpose, except to 'have a look' at what was on it. See Table 4.3 for details.

Figure 4.3 Reasons for Accessing the Website



4.6 Most and Least Popular Elements of Website (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

Given that only 11 of the 50 interviewees had accessed the website, 9 of whom did so just to order the workbook, and 8 had only accessed the website once, it is not possible to state whether any particular element of the website and its facilities (e.g., games, ability to download programmes and individual chapters of the workbook) was more popular than others. The majority of the 11 interviewees felt that they had not used the website enough to be able to make any judgement on individual elements of the website. Those that felt that they could comment on the website said primarily that it was '*easy to use*', while 7 said that they would recommend the website to others.

5 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Freephone Support Line

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers Series* freephone support line, the extent to which it was used by interviewees, the reasons why individuals availed of the service, as well as their views on the support line in general.

5.2 *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Freephone Support Line

The freephone support line was open between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. Individuals could call the line to request a copy of the Learner Workbooks and/or to receive assistance from literacy tutors in relation to the content of the workbooks.

Between September 2006 and April 2007, a total of 5,180 calls were made to the freephone support line by people requesting a copy of the Learner Workbook or looking for advice or information. If callers phoned when the line was closed they were asked to leave their name, address, and a message on the answer machine. Callers to the line who spoke to a free-phone tutor were asked for their name, address and telephone number, and were also asked whether they were availing of/attending other literacy supports. The majority replied that they were not. It was interesting therefore that the evaluation found that over one third (34%) of the 'independent learners' surveyed who had told the freephone tutors that they were not involved in other literacy supports were indeed involved in some form of formal adult education at the time of the evaluation interview. This discrepancy could in some part be explained by the fact that some individuals could have joined schemes/classes in the time period between requesting the workbook and speaking to the evaluators. It may also be the case that some individuals may simply not be willing to say that they are involved in a scheme, without some additional prompting.

5.3 Extent of and Reasons for Use

39 of the 50 evaluation interviewees had called the freephone support line. They all called to request the Learner Workbook. Only 2 had called the freephone support line for other purposes: 1) to get help with the workbook, and 2) for general advice on literacy tuition.

The two main reasons given for not calling the freephone support line were

- 1) Interviewees stated that they were not aware they could use the freephone support line for purposes other than requesting the workbooks. (This is despite the fact that every caller to the telephone support line was advised,

when they called to request the workbook, that they could call back for support or help.)

2) Interviewees stated that they did not need to call the line for assistance because either a) they did not need assistance or b) they received assistance from their tutor or family member.

One person stated that they could only call the line in the evenings after they had returned from work, at which point the freephone line was closed, while another said they didn't have time to do so.

5.4 Analysis of the Supports provided by the Freephone Service

The 2 evaluation interviewees who had used the free-phone service for reasons other than to request a copy of the workbook reported that they found it useful, helpful, and the freephone staff members "*supportive*". Given that only 2 evaluation interviewees has used the free-phone line for support purposes, it was not possible to comment with any certainty on the effectiveness of this particular form of support.

6 Impact on Literacy Skills

6.1 Overview of Overall Impact

"My reading, writing and spelling has improved. Yesterday I wrote Christmas cards and addressed them. I couldn't do that before. It has improved my quality of life immensely" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

The overall impact²⁵ of the series was assessed by asking the evaluation participants whether they believed their overall literacy skills had improved as a result of engaging with the series, and if it had, in what way. The substantial majority stated that they had experienced a general improvement in their overall literacy skills and confidence levels.

Others felt they were more informed and in turn better able to deal with a number of different situations and topics. Some of the evaluation participants identified one or two specific areas where they felt they had learned something new as a result of the series. Specific areas where improvements were identified included: general writing skills; spelling; general reading skills; knowledge of computers/the internet/sending emails; texting; letter writing; reading and paying bills and writing cheques.

Overall, the key impacts identified can be grouped as follows:

1. Improvements in literacy skills
2. Greater knowledge of computers and the internet
3. Greater knowledge of adult education
4. Improved general knowledge
5. Improved self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation for learning.

The following comments by interviewees provide an indication of the types of responses received under each of the headings:

Improvement in literacy skills

"My sentences are much better. I can put a sentence together that looks and sounds better. I'm using proper words in the sentence" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I've learned to slow down my reading and writing. I used to miss words and spellings before. I used to race away but now I slow down" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

²⁵ A comprehensive and scientifically valid assessment of the overall impact of the Programme on individual learners would require an assessment of the literacy skills of a representative sample of independent learners before and indeed some time after engaging with the series. This was outside the scope and budget of this evaluation.

"My reading has improved ten-fold. My confidence in my writing ability has also improved. My spelling not so much but I am a bit more confident in myself because I understand more" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

"I'd write my name very fast, in a scribble. Now I take my time and it shows up better. I'm beginning to write my name properly. I take my time doing it" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"I see words coming up on the TV and I can read them now" (Stage 1 Interviewee).

General knowledge of computers and the internet

"I've learned how to send an email. I can now use the Amazon website. I have bought books on line. I have bought tools online" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

Greater knowledge about adult education

"I've learned about things that are available - educational courses. Its good to know that there are courses out there for people like me" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"It's heartening to know that there are other people out there who can't read or write very well. I'm not alone" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

Improved general knowledge

"I'm a little bit more educated. I have learned a bit more. I am a bit more informed" (Stage 1 Interviewee)

"Some of the things I see on the news - I show interest in it now - government policy, TDs. I did not know who my local TD was before. Now I listen to it. I don't switch over any more. I've taken an interest" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"General useful information about everyday things" (Stage 1 Interviewee)

"I'm more confident in general about different situations" (Stage 1 Interviewee)

Improved self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation for learning

"I know more now that I did before the programme. I love education and learning but I still need more and more. I have more confidence" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"It would encourage me to do a course if I decided to go back to work. I thought it was very helpful, informational. It is a very good series to have" (Stage 2 Interviewee).

"Knowing that I am doing something for my kids, knowing that I am learning something, knowing that I can help them out" (Stage 2 Interviewee)

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this evaluation was to examine the relevance and effectiveness of the *Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* project content and delivery as a learning tool for independent learners. This evaluation has found that the response to the series by the vast majority of evaluation interviewees was overwhelmingly positive, with few expressing any criticisms of the series. The evaluation did however reveal a number of interesting findings in relation to how the series was used by independent learners.

Independent Learners with Basic Learning Needs

The series targets a wide range of learning needs, but it does require a certain minimum level of literacy skill in order to be able to engage effectively with the series, without some level of additional support. As such it is not suitable for independent learners with very poor literacy skills²⁶.

Reasons for Engaging with the Series

The three key reasons that emerged as to why learners engaged with the series, were:

1. To improve general or specific reading, writing, spelling and/or numeracy skills
2. To get general advice and information in relation to everyday literacy activities.
3. Because of a general interest in a certain topic.

Within each category, individual learners had their own, very specific reasons for engaging with the series, depending on their own specific learning need, which in turn impacted on how and to what extent they engaged with the series.

Levels of Engagement with the Series

Independent learners engaged with the series in different ways and at many different levels. Some only watched the TV series, others focused only on using the workbook. Some engaged with both the TV series and workbook, although only a minority did so simultaneously. Some watched all of the TV series and/or workbook while others only focused only on the specific topics that addressed their particular learning need (e.g. using the internet, texting, writing letters).

The Stigma of Literacy Difficulties

It was interesting to note that while the vast majority of independent learners would recommend the TV Programmes and the Workbooks to friends, the few that would not, would not do so because they did not want others to know of their literacy issues. It is also

²⁶ The series was designed to be most useful to learners at FETAC Level 2, i.e., those with the "ability to learn new skills and knowledge, including literacy and numeracy in a supervised environment and to act in a range of roles under direction". Learners at FETAC Level 1 (defined as the "ability to access and use a range of learning resources, to sequence learning tasks and to learn elementary tasks") may find the series content challenging. For further details on FETAC Levels, see www.fetac.ie.

the case that one independent learner would not watch the TV programme during the day when others were around because she did not want others to know of her literacy difficulties either. Clearly the stigma associated with literacy problems is an issue still for at least some independent learners.

Effectiveness of Overall Content and Delivery

The independent learners surveyed had very different reasons for using the series, and engaged with the series in different ways and at different levels. In general though, the interviewees surveyed stated that they found the series met their own particular needs. The diverse nature of the series content enabled a wide group of independent learners to engage with and to find something useful in the series for them. As several evaluation interviewees said - '*there's something in it for everyone*'.

The Relevance and Effectiveness of the TV Programmes

The TV series was considered interesting, informative, helpful and well done by almost all of the independent learners consulted. The message that there is help out there, and that getting help can be a very positive experience, was very clear.

The variety of topics covered also meant that there was something for every one. Among the most popular topics in the TV Programmes were: using the computer, email, internet booking/booking flights, advice on spelling, texting and the profiles of learners.

One drawback that could be associated with covering such a range of topics in standalone programmes was that people were not necessarily encouraged to watch the programme on a regular basis. The spiky profile of the weekly viewing figures would appear to support this view as did the fact that up to 46% of the independent learners surveyed reported that they watched programme either 'occasionally' or 'rarely'.

The time slot at which the TV Programme is aired has a significant bearing on the numbers watching the programme. The evaluation has found that lunch times on Sundays and after midnight on Tuesday nights were not really suitable for some independent learners.

Recommendation 1.: Different time slots should be sought for any future TV programmes. Evaluation participants suggested an early or late mid-week evening slot would be very accessible.

Recommendation 2.: NALA should consider the option of including a sequential piece that would link the different programme episodes and which may encourage people to get into the habit of watching the programme on a more regular basis.

The Relevance and Effectiveness of the Learner Workbooks

The two Workbooks were seen to provide good useful information to the user. The spelling sections were particularly popular but users dipped in and out of the workbooks to meet their needs. The Workbooks contained additional exercises in relation to some but not all sections of the TV programme. As such, there was found to be somewhat of a disconnection

between the TV programme and the Workbook. The evaluation found that only 8 of the 41 people who used the workbook used it in conjunction with the TV programme.

Recommendation 3.: There may be scope for NALA to consider how the Workbooks could be more closely linked to the TV programmes.

The Relevance and Effectiveness of the Website

While the total number of people who visited the website was small relative to the number of people who watched the TV series, the website had a substantial number of one-off users. On the other hand, repeat users, although smaller in number, accounted for the majority of website sessions (i.e. individual periods of time spent on the website). Few of the independent learners surveyed however had used the website despite the evaluators efforts to positively include website users in the evaluation. The main reason cited for the lack of use of the website was individuals' lack of access to a computer and/or the internet. Approximately half of the interviewees did not have a computer while 20% did not know how to use a computer.

Recommendation 4.: NALA need to highlight within any future series the various alternative routes through which individuals can access computers. NALA also need to continue to highlight the need for continued resources to be put into ICT literacy and broadband availability nationally

The Relevance and Effectiveness of the Freephone Line

The freephone Line was found to be used mainly to request the workbooks.

Recommendation 5.: NALA need to continue to promote the role of the freephone line as a source of practical learning and support for independent learners in particular. This could be done by emphasising the role of the NALA freephone tutors in the media advertisements for the series, within the TV series and again during the initial telephone conversations with learners when they call to request the workbook.

Recommendation 6. NALA should consider operating the free phone lines after hours a couple of evenings a week, so that those that might be working during the day might be able to access it. Records should be kept to monitor the number and the time calls are made at to assess the uptake of this evening service.

Recommendation 7. NALA need to undertake more formal recording of data on callers to the free-phone line, e.g., gender, approximate age, region, location, (i.e. urban/rural), and number and type of support queries received. NALA also need to consider how, through its freephone tutors, it could better prompt and support callers to state whether they have, are, or indeed are planning to attend/avail of other literacy supports.

Evaluation Fatigue

This is the sixth evaluation in a series of six NALA TV Series. All of these evaluations have involved formal adult literacy providers to a greater or lesser extent. This year there was a very low response to the invitation to participate in the evaluation from Adult Literacy Organisers, suggesting in some ways that they had nothing/nothing more contribute. There was also a very low response rate from NALA members.

Recommendation 8. NALA need to consider adopting a different evaluation approach focusing perhaps on tracking the progress of individual independent learners' outcomes as they follow and use the different elements of the series. This in depth work could be supplemented by a larger telephone survey of independent learners.

Appendix 1 TV Audience Viewing Figures

Part 1

Episode	Sunday		Tuesday		Total No. of Viewers
	No. of Viewers	% Audience Share	No. of Viewers	% Audience Share	
1	37,000	6.7	52,000	13.7	89,000
2	57,000	12.6	30,000	11.2	87,000
3	70,000	12.1	38,000	14	108,000
4	55,000	11.9	31,000	10	86,000
5	61,000	11.8	19,000	7	80,000
6	43,000	7.5	49,000	13.2	92,000
7	50,000	10.8	28,000	7.8	78,000
8	38,000	7	21,000	7.9	59,000
9	47,000	7.6	44,000	12.8	91,000
10	47,000	9.9	35,000	10.1	82,000
11	59,000	10.5	19,000	7	78,000
12	58,000	9.9	32,000	10	90,000
Average	51,833	10%	33,167	10%	85,000

Part 2

Episode	Sunday		Tuesday		Total No. of Viewers
	No. of Viewers	% Audience Share	No. of Viewers	% Audience Share	
13	34,000	7.6	44,000	11.2	78,000
14	52,000	10.4	67,000	17	119,000
15	43,000	8.4	29,000	7	72,000
16	41,000	9.5	37,000	13.3	78,000
17	51,000	10.4	21,000	7.8	72,000
18	42,000	9.6	28,000	9.3	70,000
19	47,000	9.3	38,000	15.4	85,000
20	59,000	11.4	16,000	6.1	75,000
21	46,000	8.7	24,000	6.2	70,000
22	44,000	8.8	26,000	12	70,000
23	35,000	8.4	24,000	8.5	59,000
24	52,000	14.9	37,000	12.5	89,000
Average	45,500	9.8%	32,583	10.5%	78,083

Appendix 2 Overview of the Content of *The Really Useful Guide to Words and Numbers* Learner Workbooks

Learner Workbook 1

Chpt.	Chapter Name	Reading Exercise	Writing Exercise	Spelling Exercise	Speaking Exercise	Listening Exercise	Numeracy Exercise	Puzzle
Introduction								
1	The GAA	Croke Park	Sentences Informal Letters	Compound Words Vowels Consonants				GAA County Nicknames Quiz
2	Getting Fit	Notices Alphabetical order - letters Alphabetical order - words		Using dictionaries	Making phone calls Calling for information			Call my Bluff
3	Making Learning Fun for Children	Sharing stories Cooking with children Weights Following instructions	Descriptions	Adding 'ing' to words				Word Quiz
4	Libraries	Your local library Fiction and non-fiction Words used in libraries Signs in libraries	Filling in forms Dates as numbers Filling in library forms					Crossword
5	Mobile Phones	The cost of mobile phones Topping up phone credit	Text messages Abbreviations	Abbreviations				Crossword
6	ICT	Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Parts of a computer The internet Web pages Search engines	Keywords	Plurals Plurals of words ending in -s, -sh, -ch, or -x				Wordsearch

Chpt.	Chapter Name	Reading Exercise	Writing Exercise	Spelling Exercise	Speaking Exercise	Listening Exercise	Numeracy Exercise	Puzzle
7	Saying No	Employment Rights	Notes Tel. messages	Shortened words	How to make your point			Word puzzle
8	Train Journeys	Trains in Ireland Timetables Time		Learning spellings		Answering machines Speaking timetables	Time	Wordwheels
9	Parent Teacher Meetings	Education in Ireland School reports Guidelines	Notes	Words within words Word building	Preparing for Parent Teacher meetings			Word puzzle
10	DIY	DIY Stores Cheques	Filling in cheques				Numbers as words Checking receipts Checking change	Word search
11	Bills	Electricity in Ireland ESB bills Abbreviations Paying ESB bills	Direct debit instructions				Meter readings	Word search
12	ATMs	Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) ATMs Personal Identification Numbers Parts of an ATM Following ATM instructions Using ATM safely Newspaper headlines Newspaper articles						Wordwheels
Answers								
Index								

Learner Workbook 2

Chpt.	Chapter Name	Reading Exercise	Writing Exercise	Spelling Exercise	Speaking Exercise	Listening Exercise	Numeracy Exercise	Puzzle
Introduction								
1	Booking Flights Online	Web pages Booking flights online Finding flights online Email Setting up an email address	Booking flights online Setting up an email address					Crossword
2	Buying a New TV	Advertisements for new TVs Newspaper articles Teletext Football tables					Rounding Off Estimating	Football Table
3	Dealing with Teenagers	Dealing with teenagers Taking notes	To, Two and Too Its and It's Other words that sound the same Words that sound the same					Wordwheel
4	Card Games	Posters Playing cards	Poker hands Apostrophes for missing letters Apostrophes for ownership					Crossword
5	Finding a Job	Situations Vacant Abbreviations Applying for a job	Applying for a job Filling out job application forms Signatures Application forms					Letter Sudoku

Chpt.	Chapter Name	Reading Exercise	Writing Exercise	Spelling Exercise	Speaking Exercise	Listening Exercise	Numeracy Exercise	Puzzle
6	Health and Medicine	Hospital signs Hospital leaflets Magazines Magazines covers Magazine articles	Sentences					Word Quiz
7	Placing a Bet	Form guides	Racing abbreviations At the races Betting slips	Rhymes			Odds and betting	Crossword
8	Meetings	Posters Language of meetings	Formal letters Proof reading					Word Search
9	Borrowing Money	Bank leaflets Banking words Interest rates			Terms and conditions		Calculators Percentages Borrowing money	
10	Getting Things Done in the Community	Community notice boards Finding information Recycling Email accounts	Emails		Surveys	Surveys		Word Puzzle
11	Catching Flights	Airport security regulations Airport words Departure timetables Check-in area Airport abbreviations	Airport words				The 24 hour clock	Wordwheel
12	Digital Music	Digital music Windows media player Digital music words		Silent t, k and b Silent g, l and c More silent letters			MP3 file sizes	Words within Words
Answers								
Index								

