

Report on Scotland's Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2007/2008



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Foreword from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

I believe that lifelong learning is crucial to our ambitions for a smarter, more successful Scotland.

In September 2007 I launched this Government's lifelong learning strategy. *Skills for Scotland* sets the objectives for a cohesive lifelong learning system, centred on the individual and responsive to employer needs.



Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to this strategy and are part of the bedrock on which we can build a confident, outward-looking Scotland.

Across the country, adults have sought to improve their reading, writing and number skills to improve their prospects at work, support their children's learning and play a greater role in community life.

Individuals' successes depend on the availability of high quality learning opportunities in the communities where people live and the places where they work and learn. These opportunities often rely on partnership working. With the new relationship between the Scottish Government and local authorities, partnership working is more important than ever.

This report is evidence of why we should be proud of how Scotland approaches literacies learning for adults. It contains many examples of dynamic partnership working achieving what it should: inspirational learning programmes that deliver powerful stories of learners' successes.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to adult literacies work in Scotland during 2007/2008. Working together we can continue to make a difference.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fiona Hyslop".

Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

A focus on outcomes

The overarching purpose of the Scottish Government is to focus all public services on creating a *more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*. The Concordat between central and local government, signed in November 2007, describes a new way of working between local and national government towards an agreed set of national outcomes.

The Government's move to an outcome-based approach means that all public services are now expected to be able to demonstrate how they contribute to the Government's purpose and strategic objectives, through a national performance framework.

Over the last three years Learning Connections, along with other partners, has developed a range of work to strengthen the focus of Community Learning and Development (CLD) practice on outcomes, and to improve the evidence base of the outcomes that CLD delivers. This includes research into the wider outcomes of CLD; the publication of *Delivering Change* – a framework which sets out the outcomes we would expect CLD to contribute to; the development of tools that can support retrospective research; and a programme to support outcome-focused practice in CLD. This work has become increasingly important as Government moves to an outcome-based approach to public service delivery and performance management.

New Knowledge

In March 2008, the Scottish Government published a report based on UK-wide research. *New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* provides important new information about the literacies levels of adults in Scotland.

The 2004 round of the 1970 British Cohort Study provided a snapshot of the lives of 9,665 cohort members at the age of 34, focusing for the first time on their literacy and numeracy skills. The initial UK report on this survey, *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy*¹, showed that those with poor skills experienced much higher levels of social and economic disadvantage than other adults. It indicated that there are some differences between the performance of adults in Scotland and those from other parts of the UK. This new report presents the findings of that analysis for the 891 survey participants living in Scotland in 2004.

The analysis of the Scottish data provides valuable insights into the social, educational and economic circumstances of adults in Scotland who have not yet mastered literacy and numeracy skills to the level demanded by modern life. The report shows the association between poor educational achievement and its impact on all areas of life, including employment, health, community participation and family life.

It provides information for policy makers and providers in all educational sectors and reinforces the messages in *Skills for Scotland* of the interdependence of skills and economic and social outcomes. It is also of interest to services such as Health, Social Care and Social Work. The report also offers employers insights into the causal links between learning achievement, employability and the efficiency of businesses.

The main report was published on the Scottish Government website in January 2008:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/22131652/0.

A Summary Report has been published to provide a more accessible extract of the information. The Summary is also available from www.aloscotland.com and the report and summaries of the UK analysis can be found on the website of the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy at www.nrdc.org.uk.



¹ Bynner, J. and Parsons, S. (2006). *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy*. London: National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Also see www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=78

LEARNER PUBLICATIONS

During 2007/2008, Learning Connections gave 13 grants of £3,000 each to support the publication of learners' writing. The final products show the richness and variety of contexts for adult literacies learning in Scotland. Ten copies of each title were sent to literacies partnerships in August 2008. This year's publications were:

Grave Tales from Glasgow

Chilling ghost stories by adult learners from Glasgow.



Write On Buddies

Stories, poems and reminiscences written by learners in Renfrewshire.



Little Book of Little Stories

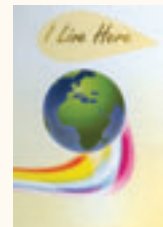
Children's stories, written and illustrated by a group of young parents from Dundee, for their young children.



I Live Here

North Lanarkshire ALN Book Group

Learners' writings from Lanarkshire and Europe, introducing the 'ECLER' method of writing (Write, Communicate, Read, Express, Reflect).



You Are So Lucky

Writing from learners at Flourish House, BUDS and Move On projects in Glasgow.



I'm a Mum – now what?

A magazine-style book about bringing up young children, written by young mums in West Lothian.



All Together – walking and talking with deafblindness

Writings by deafblind literacies learners from Glasgow.



Live, Learn and Be Healthy

North Ayrshire writers' reflections on the importance of healthy living.



Rainbow Journeys

Life stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender literacies learners from Glasgow.



Saughton Stories

A set of seven illustrated books written by and for beginner readers. Written by inmates of HMP Edinburgh and illustrated by third-year students from Edinburgh College of Art.



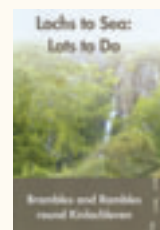
The Man Inside

Prose and poems by inmates of HMP Glenochil.



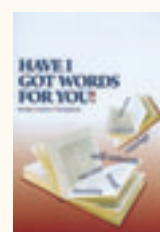
Lochs to Sea: Lots to Do

Poetry and prose inspired by walks around Kinlochleven.



Have I Got Words for You!

Stories, poems and illustrations from learners in the Scottish Borders telling us what it means to be successful.



THE BIG PLUS

The Big Plus is Scotland's national adult literacy and numeracy awareness-raising campaign.

The principal objective is to encourage more people to improve their reading, writing and number skills by taking part in the wide range of free tuition which is available throughout the country.



The secondary objective of the campaign is to raise awareness of the widespread literacy and numeracy issues amongst the general public. This achieves two things:

- ① an overall reduction in stigma attached to the subject;
- ① active encouragement of third parties – employers, work colleagues, friends and family – to help reach members of the target audience and point them in the right direction.

Lastly, a high profile, national campaign has the additional benefit of underpinning the local promotional activity of the 32 adult literacy and numeracy partnerships across the country.



Highlights and results during 2007/2008:

The total number of calls to the helpline for the year was 10,160, 79% up on the previous year. (The total number of calls from January 2004, when the campaign started, to March 2007 was 27,840.)

National TV advertising took place from September to November and again from January to March.

A Big Plus sponsored offer in conjunction with Quick Reads ran in The Daily Record newspaper in July. The objective was to build on the successes of the advertising activity with a free book offer. The promotion was well received with 5,288 requests for the books and information – 4,022 through the helpline and 1,266 by post.

Radio advertising was carried out in support of the launch of the new range of Quick Reads in March.

Endorsement of the campaign by Celtic and Rangers football clubs included a poster campaign and a range of communications to supporters of both clubs via email, text messaging and editorial in magazines and on websites.

Supplies of Big Plus-branded promotional items were distributed to ALN partnerships to support their local marketing activity.

Research carried out to measure brand awareness was positive:

- 10% of respondents (the highest figure to date), when asked to spontaneously name organisations who provide learning advice, named The Big Plus;
- this figure jumped to 19% amongst those with literacy/numeracy needs; and
- equally, when prompted, the figures increased further with rates of 37% and 49% amongst respondents generally and those with literacy/numeracy problems, respectively.



Literacies Co-ordinators share their experiences of 2007/2008

Nancy Heubeck, Shetland

We've had another busy year with well over 300 learners! We've developed workplace learning and work with young people by training workers from other agencies to support literacies. We also took part in a peer evaluation with the Western Isles Literacies Partnership, which resulted from our involvement in the North Connection group. Alongside this the Partnership took on board gearing up for over 200 new ESOL learners. We even welcomed the First Minister to a couple of ESOL classes early in 2008!

Towards the end of 2007 the Concordat meant we had to deal with changes in the way we plan things. Happily, the Partnership was involved in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) from an early stage and the planning done for literacies for 2008/11 meant we were in a good position to feed into the SOA. We're also linked into the new local Skills and Learning Strategic Plan, which is being prepared in response to *Skills for Scotland* and we hope this will provide new opportunities to develop family, numeracy and workplace learning.



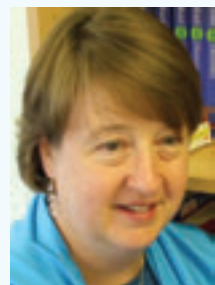
Connie Crawford, East Lothian

Overall, this has been another positive year in East Lothian. ALN is now firmly established within East Lothian Learning Partnership and recognised as an essential service. Also, our long awaited move to new premises in Haddington is complete and we are now settled in bright and spacious accommodation that is very central and easily accessed by the public. Facilities are much improved. We now have an admin/reception area, a spacious teaching room with ample space to display and store resources and an adjoining computer suite with internet access. There is also another small meeting room used for student interviews and 1:1 tuition. Feedback has been extremely positive and the move has been a great morale booster for everyone.



Catharine McKinlay, Falkirk

Although 2007/2008 was quite challenging with uncertainties around future funding, I feel that the Partnership has risen to these challenges, refocusing where necessary and developing a clear sense of purpose and direction. Staff morale has been given a huge boost with the confirmation of permanent posts for the Adult Literacies Team and we're feeling positive and motivated for the future.



George Burt, East Dunbartonshire

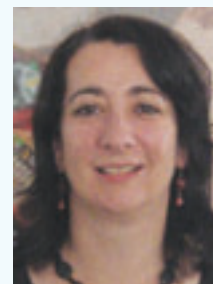
Like many colleagues we've been through changes this year, and that has inevitably brought with it a bit (yes, just a bit...) of uncertainty and anxiety. However, when in doubt, the good work done by our tutors and learners keeps us moving in the right direction.

A welcome trend has been the increasing number of learners who move on to college or employment and have the confidence to spread the word about the benefits of literacies work to fellow students and colleagues.



Frances Bradley, Glasgow

In 2007/08, the Glasgow ALN initiative was delighted to have worked with over 14,000 learners. The continuing dedication and enthusiasm of everyone involved meant that learners were encouraged and supported in learning programmes across the city. Partners from voluntary, local authority, Further Education, health, Higher Education and employability/workplace sectors continued to plan, manage and deliver learning in a diverse range of venues. Literacies networks, staff development training and events, consultations, quality assurance and development, learner events and the further development of our Glasgow's Learning website and helpline all supported the delivery of a dynamic range of literacies learning experiences.



Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum Wheel provides an active tool for putting into practice the principles which inform adult literacies provision in Scotland, as set out in the Curriculum Framework. The interactive CD-ROM version of the Wheel, which was launched at the Innovations Conference in Stirling in June 2007, brings these ideas and principles to life.

Since then Learning Connections has distributed the CD-ROM through the literacies partnerships, developed a training session to familiarise practitioners with its content and co-delivered the training with some partnerships. The training session is available on Adult Literacies Online, as is an online tutorial which covers the content of the training session for those who can't for whatever reason attend training.²

Presentations on the Wheel CD-ROM have enabled colleagues in the college sector, SQA and Learning Connections networks to try out some of the features and think about how they might use the Wheel in their context.

North Lanarkshire Learner Representatives are particularly experienced in talking about the Wheel having taken part over the last two years in a European Union Grundtvig 2 programme project focused on Literacy and Empowerment. They travelled to European countries to meet with other learners and practitioners from Belgium, France, Switzerland and Spain's Basque Country as well as hosting a visit to North Lanarkshire.

The Europeans were very impressed by the Scottish approach and the Wheel. As a result the ALN Curriculum Framework was translated into French!



² www.aloscotland.com/alo/39.html

Assessing and measuring literacies learning

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework outlines six different types of assessment:

- alerting;
- placing;
- diagnostic assessment;
- formative assessment;
- summative assessment; and
- evaluation.

Learning Connections were keen to discover good practice in using assessment for learning and the extent to which learners in Scotland have opportunities for progression to qualifications.

Learning Connections commissioned Edinburgh University to undertake research on the availability of accreditation for literacies learners within ALN partnerships. Their findings, in the report *Credit Where Credit's Due* suggested the main challenge in developing and delivering accredited learning is the need to 'grow the professional field'.

Those areas most successful in delivering accredited learning have staff with a dedicated remit for this work. Many ALN staff are still in part-time or sessional posts with little time available for staff development, but further training and support is required if ALN partnerships are to take this forward. The report recommended the identification and/or development of training and learning resources to support accredited learning. Opportunities for accreditation should be a choice available to ALN learners.

SQA's introduction of the new ten hour core skill units at SCQF level 2 and 3 makes qualifications more accessible to learners. In order to deliver these new units, there is a need to create support systems and infrastructure for tutors.

Work has begun in this area. ALN partnerships in Glasgow, Highland, Inverclyde and Scottish Borders provided case studies for the Edinburgh research. Other partnerships have expressed interest in taking this work forward. For example, Highland, North Lanarkshire and Aberdeen ALN partnerships have been working together to develop training in assessing and measuring literacies learning. This training was piloted in all three areas and has the potential to form the basis for further development across Scotland.



Margaret Tierney, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

2007/08 has been a particularly exciting time for SQA, developing our standards and resources to support adult literacies learning in Scotland. Our work aligns with the aims of ALNIS to improve literacies levels and to professionalise the workforce. It also reflects the more recent skills strategy *Skills for Scotland*, in driving forward participation and achievements in key areas for economic and personal growth.

For learners we have:

- modernised the Core Skills Framework and all Core Skills Units to bring them up to date with current thinking. We have also created smaller units in Communication and Numeracy SCQF Levels 2 and 3 to improve access to accreditation for learners. We have worked closely with adult literacies tutors and colleagues in Learning Connections to develop these new units;
- launched a new suite of Personal Development Awards (PDA) which are designed to be learner centred and for many learners, can link comfortably to their ILP; and
- developed a National Progression Award in Digital Literacy at SCQF Level 3 which is designed to engage and encourage learners to use and achieve a basic understanding of digital technology in everyday contexts. The three Units making up this award carry the Core Skills of Information Technology, Communication, Problem Solving and Numeracy at SCQF Level 3.

For tutors we have:

- revised the PDA: Introduction to Adult Literacies Learning (ITALL) and offer extensive support in its assessment, available on-screen 24/7, through the SQA Understanding Standards website;
- developed a new PDA entitled: Developing Literacies Learning Programmes for the Workplace. This PDA is designed to give practitioners the knowledge and skills they need to engage employers and employees in adult literacies learning and ultimately develop and plan the delivery of contextualised literacies learning in a specific workplace context.

Learner Outcome Tracking Information System, Glasgow

The HMIE inspection in the Pollok/Pollokshaws area of **Glasgow** highlighted the potential of the Learner Outcome Tracking Information System (LOTIS), a data collection tool developed and implemented by Glasgow's Adult Literacies Partnership to ensure that social renewal outcomes are coherently pursued. Inspectors viewed LOTIS as a cutting edge system to track personal learning journeys and suggested its potential use at a national level to track the outcomes of ALN on learners' lives.

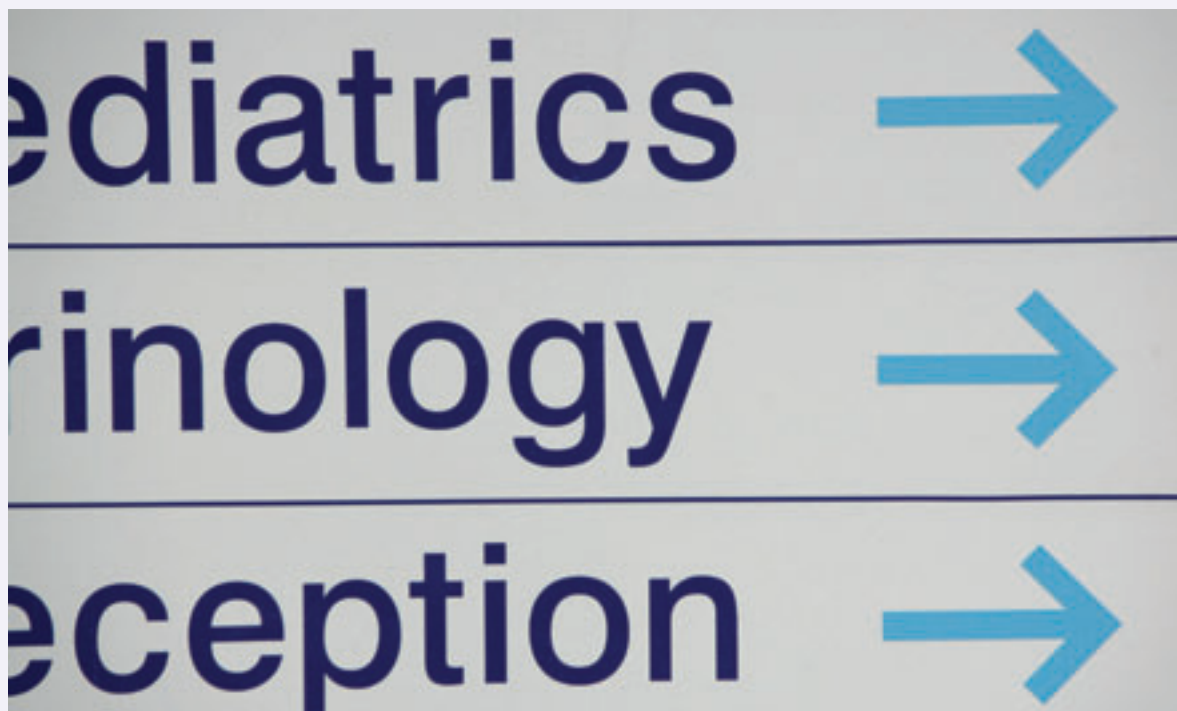
LOTIS is a quantitative data collection tool which demonstrates the outcomes and effectiveness of Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) provision as identified by adult learners themselves. In addition to providing information on the numbers of learners progressing onto other learning, training, volunteering and work opportunities, LOTIS will identify desired and actual improvements to:

- ALN skill development (e.g. improved reading, writing and numbers);
- learners' personal, family, work and community lives; and
- mental and/or physical wellbeing and financial circumstance as a result of ALN learning.

Inspectors also commented on training courses piloted with Culture and Sport Glasgow staff and partners (*Introduction to CLD* and *Introduction to self evaluation using How Good is our CLD?*) which were seen as valuable first steps in developing a shared understanding of CLD in the area.

The Glasgow literacies partnership have offered to share LOTIS with other adult literacies partnerships.

Literacies and Health



Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee and Ayrshire and Arran have all developed work on Literacies and health.

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They have developed in different ways, but all have some similar features. A common strand is literacies awareness raising with groups of health staff eg community pharmacy staff and health visitors/midwives. In **Dundee**, literacies awareness raising has been delivered to 1st year nursing students at Abertay University.

The Get Ahead project in **Glasgow** supports NHS Nursing Auxiliaries in their own literacy and numeracy, in particular working on spelling and grammar, essay writing and basic computing skills. Get Ahead also provides embedded numeracy provision to all nursing staff involved in the IV Drug Calculations Education Programme.

In **Glasgow**, a Senior Development Officer for Literacies and Health has responsibility for developing a strategic approach to literacy and numeracy services within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. A programme of work has been developed to raise awareness of literacy and health and initiate pilot work to inform systematic approaches to develop this area of health inequalities. This includes making strategic and operational links with the Keep well project. An extranet site for sharing information on literacies and health has also been developed www.phru.net/literaciesandhealth.

Both **Edinburgh** and **Aberdeen** have Learning Advisors, who are based in health clinics/GP practices. The Learning Advisors talk to people in waiting rooms about the learning opportunities available and support them to access provision.

In **Glasgow** there is a Learning on Prescription worker who offers a similar service.

Learners in **Aberdeen** www.healthwise-aberdeen.com have participated in a variety of groups on topics including healthy food and drink, budgeting skills, physical activity and fitness, mental well-being, keeping safe, parenting skills, child development and First Aid for Under 5s. Both in **Aberdeen** and **Edinburgh** individual literacies learning is on offer, which often makes the difference to a learner moving into group provision.

All projects have assisted health staff on how to enhance communication with patients who may have low literacies skills.

In **Ayrshire and Arran** www.mhnyrshireandarran.org guidance has been developed to assist workers develop materials for specific groups in the community, such as ex-offenders and homeless people. Discussions have taken place with these clients to determine what alternative formats could be used to deliver information.

Health Counts

Learning Connections and National Health Education for Scotland (NES) jointly funded 9 health and numeracy projects during 2007/2008, culminating in '**Health Counts**', a dissemination event held in Stirling on 6th March 2008. The event featured a marketplace with stands from all 9 projects where they gave mini presentations on their work. Many of the projects concentrated on numeracy for drug calculation.

The organisations involved were:

1. Stow College, Glasgow
2. Forth Valley College
3. Jewel and Esk Valley College
4. University of Glasgow
5. University of Dundee
6. North West Lothian Health Partnership
7. Angus College
8. Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS
9. Borders College

Reports on these projects are available on www.aloscotland.com³

³ Resources from the Angus Health Academy are also on the website and a CD-Rom with the Forth Valley/Jewel and Esk resources has been sent out to all ALN partnership coordinators, all Scottish colleges and universities.

Catriona McKay, Financial Inclusion Team, Scottish Government

Many people in Scotland don't know how to manage their finances and can't access and use the right financial products and services (financial exclusion). Those with literacy or numeracy difficulties are especially vulnerable. The *Curriculum for Excellence* will help young people at school, but we need to also help those who have already left school to gain, maintain and update their skills to meet the demands of our ever more complex financial services. Working with Learning Connections, we have been able to map what is already available and identify the gaps we need to fill for the future. There is a lot of good work already out there: now we need to make sure it is spread more widely.

Mike Sabin, NHS Education for Scotland (NES)

NHS Education for Scotland has been working on a number of healthcare and numeracy projects over 2007/08.

These include collaborative working with Scottish Wider Access Project (SWAP) and a UK-wide expert group on the development and piloting of a numeracy benchmark assessment for nursing practice. One particularly fruitful collaborative project was the joint NES/Learning Connections Healthcare Numeracy Project Awards. This project supported a number of innovative educational projects focused upon enhancing numeracy learning opportunities for a wide range of healthcare staff and students. The different, but complementary, focus of each organisation has resulted in high quality projects and enhanced cross-boundary working. Building learning materials which reflect the occupational context within which staff and students are working provides both a clear rationale for knowledge development (enhanced practice, patient safety) and boosts staff confidence through meaningful application of their new learning.

Financial Inclusion and Literacies

During 2007/08, Learning Connections, together with the Scottish Government's Financial Inclusion Team, have joint-funded the production of interactive case studies of adult financial learning projects taking place across Scotland.

The case studies describe work taking place in a variety of settings, including:

- ① community learning and development;
- ① prisons;
- ① workplaces;
- ① credit unions; and
- ① citizens advice bureaux.

They provide evidence that financial learning with adults is most successful when it emerges through partnership working. The case studies also demonstrate that adults are often most motivated to take part in financial learning when they are at a stage of life transition: for example, going back into employment, leaving prison, or developing a community organisation.

The case studies are intended to be useful to:

- ① adult learning and youth workers who want to find out about effective resources and teaching ideas (such as websites, games and other activities);
- ① development workers in communities and organisations responsible for attracting adults into learning who want ideas about potential partner organisations; and
- ① policy makers.

Read the case studies on www.aloscotland.com



Literacies work with offenders and ex-offenders

Conferences

In April we had the first **Offender Literacies conference** in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS). The conference was attended by a wide range of people and organisations working in this area. There were practice based workshops followed by discussion groups based around the 8 Community Justice Authority areas.

The follow up conference took place in March 2008 and Kenny MacAskill, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice gave the opening address.

Offender Literacies Practitioners' Network

The offender literacies practitioners' network was established in 2007 and has met three times. Topics covered so far are:

- ① What are the Community Justice Authorities?;
- ① The social practice model in adult literacies learning and how we apply this to our work; and
- ① 'Throughcare' services.

Learner Publications

Two prisons – HMPs Edinburgh and Glenochil – were granted Learner Publication Grants from Learning Connections. See pages 4/5 for further details.

Last year's Learner Publication from HMP Barlinnie *Home from Home* has been cited as an example of good practice in a joint thematic inspection by HMI Prisons and HMI Education.

Links to other strategies

As part of the *Skills for Scotland* strategy launched in September 2007, there will be an offender learning strategy.

Under the Reducing Reoffending: *National Management of Offenders Strategy* one of the outcomes is improving offenders' literacies skills.

Highland ALN Partnership has funded a Prison Literacies Liaison Officer since 2004. He has been steadily increasing the numbers of learners he works with both within Porterfield prison and outside. Work at Porterfield has always been difficult because many prisoners are there for only a short time and the past year has shown that partnership work with established agencies and proven referral systems are vital to effective practice in offender literacies both inside and out.

'Word of mouth' has been successful in engaging new learners and a peer mentoring system has been developed which is proving successful for additional learner support. One proof of the success of this way of working is that repeat offenders are now spontaneously referring themselves to the Literacies Liaison Officer if they re-enter the system.

In the community, a more constructive approach has been taken to Community Service in that the client can improve literacies while involved in carrying out their sentence. A newly set-up project with Apex is providing literacies support for young ex-offenders on their release into the community.

Family Literacies

Over the past year **MALANI** Family Learning has consolidated partnership working with Midlothian Sure Start Projects. Learners have developed skills in new areas such as using IT and digital recording equipment. They have produced song books together with recordings of songs, which the children learn in the playroom, and have used IT to produce recipe books for children, to encourage healthy eating. In one Sure Start project a group of seven dads requested to complete the SQA Communications and Numeracy qualification.

Their other main area of work is with parents in schools and nurseries. After a slow start this is now beginning to reap rewards. One group has developed from storytelling to creating a parents' library and is now involved in storytelling with P1 classes at Golden Time. As new parents bring their children to school they are encouraged to take part. This has been appreciated both by teachers and children, who vote with their feet to join the parent for the story. In other schools time has to be spent getting to know key people, making relationships with parents and drawing them in. This worked successfully where a small group of parents organised a Breast Cancer Care Strawberry Tea and invited all parents and local residents. The event gave literacy staff the opportunity to talk to people in a relaxed setting. Many indicated that they would come along to a group as a result of having met the tutor in this informal way.



Literacies learning for young people

Write 2 Speak Conference – young people speak out about literacies

Youth Literacies is an emerging area of work in Scotland, and it was time to hear what young people themselves had to say about it. Young people aged 16–25 were invited to attend a conference at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh and share their views. The conference began with World Café discussions, with participants recording their ideas on the tablecloths. Young people commented that 'literacies actually matter' and 'Literacies is not just about books, it's more than that. It's about your life and things you do'. A clear message from the young people who attended was that they have a role to play in supporting and promoting literacies learning for other young people.

A series of integrated literacies workshops were held, giving young people the opportunity to try something new. A video diary gave young people a further opportunity to have their say and a DVD has been produced to support youth literacies practice. Literacies Matters: young people speak out about literacies DVD, is available from Learning Connections.

Mapping Youth Literacies Practice in Scotland with the 16-25 age group

Learning Connections' research on youth literacies practice was carried out by a team from the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and provides an overall picture of youth literacies learning in Scotland with the 16–25 age group. The report paints a diverse picture of literacies learning and teaching with young people, across a variety of settings, while highlighting common principles. It also identifies some of the positive ways in which young people's services provide opportunities for young people to engage with literacies learning and how this engagement supports them to make important life choices.

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Youth Literacies Network

The Youth Literacies Network provides an opportunity for practitioners involved in literacies work with young people to meet and share practice. Themes for discussion have ranged from the *More Choices, More Chances* strategy to the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum. Network members have agreed to meet biannually in the future. More information is available from Sheila Doogan (Learning Connections).



Glasgow. Youth Literacies: Castlemilk Youth Complex

July 2007 saw the launch of "*Thoughts meander*" a collection and celebration of the literacy, photographic skills and talents of about twenty young people from Castlemilk. Half the group were adult literacy learners, with the other half having some other connection with Castlemilk Youth Complex, be it in a volunteering, paid sessional work or another capacity. The themes of the project were negotiated and agreed with the young people prior to the project's inception.

The effect of this project was to raise the profile, awareness and uptake of youth literacies in the Castlemilk area of Glasgow. There was also a bringing together of young people from different ethnic backgrounds – both in terms of writing the publication and at the launch.

More recently, young people were involved in distributing their publication to other youth organisations with the help of Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector and Glasgow libraries staff. It is hoped that the publication will be used as an ALN resource to support the further development of youth literacies in Castlemilk and other areas in the city. The project was made possible through a £5000 grant from Awards for All.

The Sport and Literacies Project was the product of a partnership between Perth YMCA and **Perth and Kinross Council** Adult Literacies Team. It was supported by the Scottish Community Foundation Sport Relief Fund. Twelve young people took part voluntarily in the programme which was delivered one day a week over a twelve week period. The project was designed to develop the literacies skills in young people using sport as a vehicle for engagement and learning. Participants identified sports they wanted to do and literacies skills they wished to develop – numeracy featured strongly. As part of the programme participants planned and organised activities – this included ingeniously arranging a Ten Pin Bowling trip to Dundee – transport, entrance fee and a sit down lunch for fifteen people on a budget of £150!

Workplace Literacies

Professional Development Award

In March 2008, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Learning Connections jointly launched the new *Professional Development Award (PDA): Developing Literacies Learning Programmes for the Workplace*. This PDA provides opportunities for participants to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding of the principles, process and practice of planning for the development and delivery of literacies learning in the workplace. It is aimed at tutors, development workers, union learning reps and trainers who already have knowledge/experience of literacies learning. To find out more, contact SQA on 0845 279 1000.

Pilot projects

The eight pilot projects, which were funded and supported by the Lifelong Learning Directorate to engage employers and employees in literacies learning in and for the workplace, finished in March 2008. The aim of the projects was to develop models for addressing workplace literacies learning, including guidance, which would provide employers with a 'consistent one-stop-shop' approach – from initial awareness raising to delivery of learning. Materials and resources produced by the following projects are available on www.aloscotland.com:

- ① Dumfries & Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership
- ① Fife Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership
- ① Glasgow Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership & Strathclyde Police (partners include the eleven Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships in the Strathclyde region)
- ① Glasgow South West Regeneration Agency
- ① Scottish Borders Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership
- ① Stow College Glasgow
- ① Workers' Educational Association (WEA) Scotland (ESOL literacies in the workplace)
- ① UNISON (Care Sector project)

Talented ER was co-ordinated by East Renfrewshire's Jobs Action Team, in partnership with the Adult Literacies Team, Voluntary Action, Substance Misuse Team, Libraries and Renfrewshire's Association for Mental Health. The aim of the project was to prepare participants for entering employment or further training. Training groups included kitchen preparation staff, waiting staff and administrators. At the induction stage all trainees identified skills that they felt they needed to improve, including literacies skills. For the first few weeks trainees worked together to prepare for college and took part in team and confidence building classes. Offering literacies and other support holistically to everyone at this stage worked really well and meant that no one was being singled out for literacies or other support.

On the 31st March 2008 the group of trainees successfully prepared and delivered a four course meal to local employers.



Corporate Training Awards Ceremony

Glasgow City Council's Corporate Training Awards Ceremony celebrates and recognises achievement by young people and adults who have gained qualifications through various training programmes. This year three "Achievement in Literacies" Awards were presented to learners who demonstrated real staying power, overcoming tremendous barriers to their learning.

It is very encouraging that workplace literacies is now part of this prestigious council ceremony and this is testament to the quality and dedication of the tutors who have worked with employees on various literacies programmes in the last year to help staff improve their skills.

It was incredibly difficult deciding who should be nominated for an award as all 120 of our workplace literacies programme attendees could have easily been short-listed.

Tutors Talking

Jenny Reekie, West Lothian

Playing games is a great way of learning, or at least that's my excuse. This year, I've been using everything from darts and dominoes to Brain Training on Nintendo DSs to engage learners in numeracy. And when a game doesn't exist, you have to invent it. I got together with the local Credit Union Forum to make a financial learning board game. What was meant to be a one-off resource has become a well-used means of getting people to talk about money. We were able to demonstrate it at the Adult Numeracy Seminar and are now looking at mass-production.



James Tate, Falkirk

Six years ago I naively volunteered the information that I knew a wee bit about computers – that's when I was appointed ICT person for Falkirk Adult Literacies Team. The great thing about ICT is that most of our adult learners are happy to help in developing new ideas.



During 2007 we piloted our 'Tales for Tots' video storybook project – parents writing for and with their children as well as using ICT as a complementary resource. Creating video storybooks is now an established literacies activity and I'm always on the lookout to explore new ways of using ICT in literacies.

Sean Hurl, Glasgow

The past year in the East End of Glasgow, *Positive About Literacies* (PAL), has been all about getting the learners 'into print'.

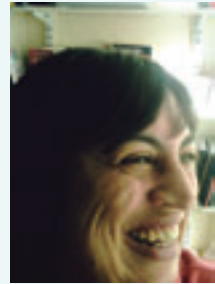
To promote issue-based learning, we have used videos like 'An Inconvenient Truth' or 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' to discuss and learn about the environment and racism. The films would be watched in their entirety and then followed by discussion, reflection and reading/writing. We looked at a number of ways that film can lead or follow a much wider debate about events going on in the world today.

One learner was involved in the production of 'Grave Tales – Glasgow Ghost Stories' (see pages 4/5) which has boosted his confidence while another learner got into reading for the first time as an adult by reading the Barrington Stoke publication 'Kill Clock'. An 'invitation to a meeting the author' event was taken up by this learner at the Aye Write festival. This in turn, led to him making his first ever visit to the newly refurbished Mitchell Library – the jewel in the Glasgow Libraries' crown.

PAL have sought to develop the learner to engage with their world, their city and their learning and it's borne out by results.

Jenny Kermally, Angus

Learners who've been prescribed tinted glasses are all experiencing an immediate benefit. It's certainly brightened Angus up, although it's created some difficulties in making sure that glasses don't clash with clothes! It's been good to know that students have been getting a comprehensive visual check-out and we've all learned a lot about the mechanics of visual perceptual dysfunction and how it affects reading.



We've always assessed people with coloured overlays, but the cost of tinted glasses and a comprehensive visual dysfunction assessment is prohibitive for a lot of learners who can't get financial support from other sources to meet the high costs. The research and tutor training was helpful for developing our understanding as literacies tutors, and we are hoping that resources can be provided so that learners can get the treatment that makes more effective learning possible.

Developments in ICT in adult literacies learning

Encouraging and developing the use of ICT in adult literacies work in Scotland continues to be a major theme for Learning Connections.

In June 2007, we held an ICT and adult literacies conference where we were able to review three years of funding for a range of ICT Innovations projects and also published an evaluation of the programme, highlighting the lessons learned. During the period 2004-07, 26 different ICT and literacies projects had been supported, from Shetland and the Western Isles to various locations around the central belt. The evaluation concluded that the Innovations Programme was an effective way of getting to know the needs and strengths of the field and identified the support needed to further develop innovation.

Several options for the future were considered and it was decided that for 2007-08, an ICT Support Programme would be set up to widen the impact of the projects already funded and to attempt to take a more local approach the use of ICT. We provided support, training and advice at a local level, with the option of limited grants to kick-start activities. This resulted in funding for twenty different projects and the opportunity for practical support in a number of other areas.

We developed a further ICT workshop, Number 7 in the series *Using ICT in Adult Literacies Learning* on the theme of working online with adult literacies learners. This was delivered in 4 locations around Scotland. It looked at the practicalities of teaching online and used the Open Source Moodle Virtual Learning Environment as an example of an online learning platform. A number of partnerships around the country are now seeking to develop online learning for literacies learners.

Adult Literacies Online, the online resources website for adult literacies practitioners around Scotland, was moved to a new server and upgraded to provide improved access to learning and teaching resources, training materials for tutors and reports and research.

Summer 2007 saw the NRDC's publication of Diana Coben's report, *Greater than the sum ...* The report described Learning Connections' action research project into the use of ICT in adult numeracy teaching in Scotland.⁴



⁴ www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=107

Specific Learning Difficulties – Highlights of 2007/08

Dyslexia CD-ROM

In April 2007 Learning Connections launched a CD-Rom, "Adult Dyslexia: Understanding the Difference"⁵ for use as training material and as a self-standing information resource. The CD-ROM gives an insight into how dyslexia can affect people and provides information on ways even simple techniques can reduce barriers to learning and improve working life. The film contains contributions from the main Scottish dyslexia support organisations, trainers, tutors and adults with dyslexia from different parts of Scotland.

The CD ROM was awarded the top prize for the Best Use of Interactive Media at the CiB Scottish Corporate Communications Awards in February 2008.



Awareness Raising Training in Adult Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties

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This Learning Connections Awareness Raising Training was extended and revised in 2007 to include the CD-ROM and was successfully piloted in 6 ALN Partnership areas. The revised training can be found on the ALO website.

Professional Development Award

In July 2007 the SQA Higher National Units in adult dyslexia were approved as the Professional Development Award "Supporting Individuals with Dyslexia in Learning and Workplace Settings" (Group Award Code: G8LK 47). The PDA was launched at an event with an invited audience from Colleges, STUC and ALN Partnerships in Glasgow in November 2007.

In March 2008 a pilot run of the full PDA course began in Stirling for representatives from ALN Partnerships. This is due to be completed in autumn 2008.

Scottish Adult Dyslexia Conference

Learning Connections funded the first Scottish Adult Dyslexia Conference, which took place at the Stirling Management Centre on 27 October 2008. The conference was jointly hosted by Dyslexia Scotland and Dyslexia Scotwest, Learning Connections and STUC and attracted representatives from ALN Partnerships and trades unions as well as adults with dyslexia.

⁵ The video clips on the CD-Rom are now available in DVD format.

Research Project: Undetected Visual Problems

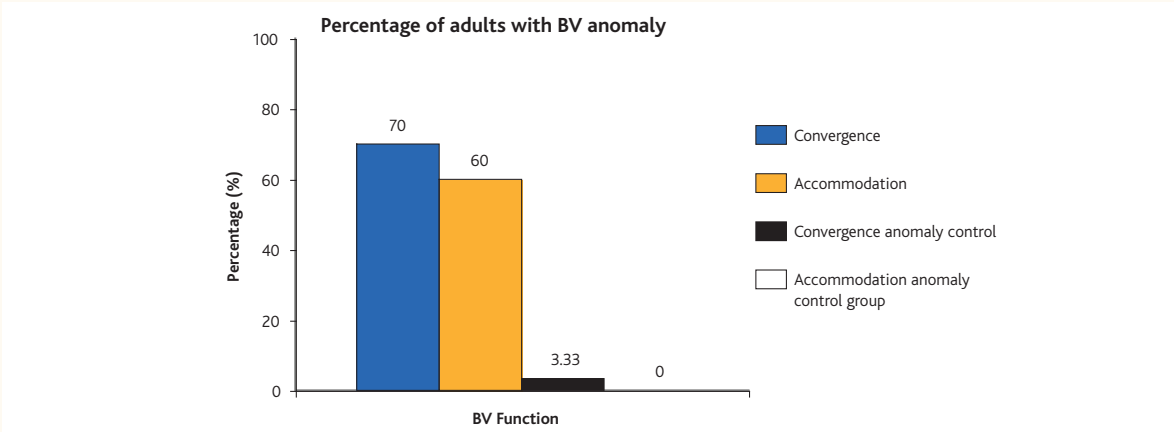
The Learning Connections' research project looking at the incidence of undetected visual problems in adult literacy continued throughout the year. Eye specialists from Glasgow Caledonian University examined over 100 adult literacy learners from across Scotland and a control group of adults for a range of visual and visual perceptual problems which would affect reading efficiency.

The study, which will continue through 2008, aims to establish whether visual problems which would not normally be identified in a standard eye examination are significantly more common in adults with literacy difficulties and whether treatment of these problems can improve the individual's literacy abilities. Areas of vision screened in the study include binocular vision, eye movement, stamina and how the brain interprets information from the eyes.

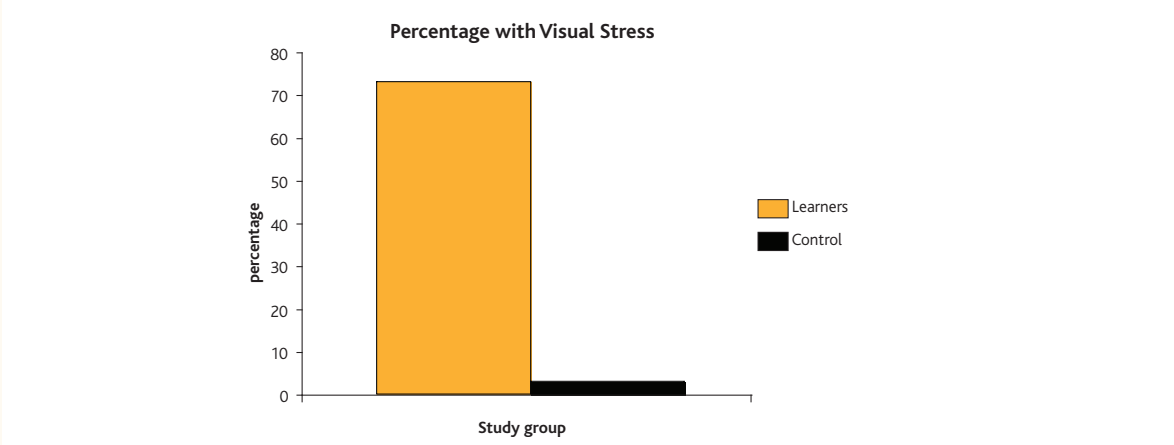
Examination of the incidence of difficulties in the study group against the results from the control has now shown that visual problems are present in the vast majority of adults with literacy difficulties while such problems are virtually absent in adults without literacy difficulties.

The following diagrams show comparisons between the study group and the control group in the areas of binocular vision and visual stress:

Binocular Vision Anomaly

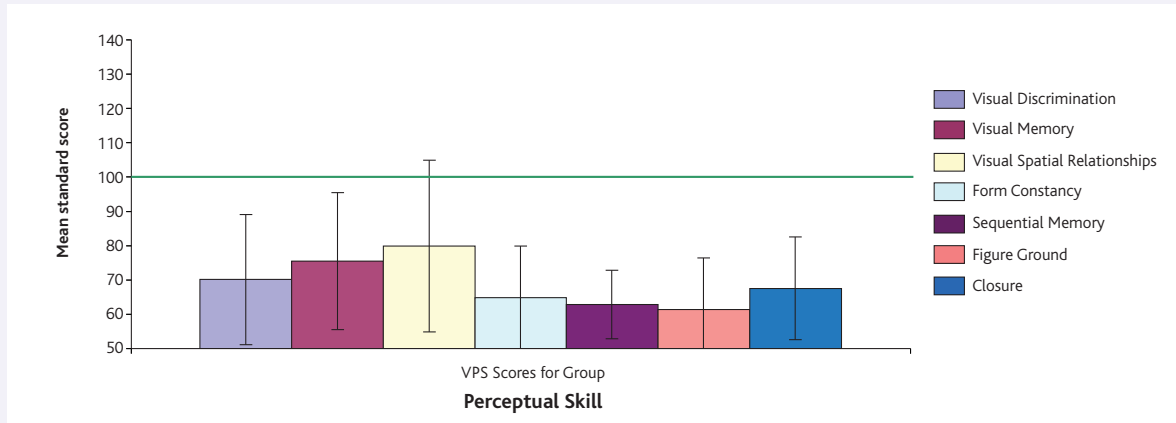


Visual Stress



The diagram below compares the efficiency of visual perceptual skills in the study group with the average for the general population (100)

Visual Perceptual Skills



Developments in ESOL Literacies

North Highland College offered the PDA in ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy in Inverness. For the past two years the college has attracted ESOL teachers from Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles and some of the more remote areas of the Highlands interested in developing the knowledge and skills in working with adult literacies learners whose first language isn't English. They offered a model of blended learning which consisted of three residentials mixed with online learning. Seven students successfully obtained their PDA. On completion of the PDA, one of the trainees has now moved into full time employment, others have indicated that the qualification has opened doors for them in terms of more work.

Fife. The first Burns Supper of the Adult Basic Education and English for Speakers of other Languages groups in Kirkcaldy went with a swing on Burns Night in the Hunter Hall.

Tutors and learners danced the night away and the Address to the Haggis and a recitation of Tam O'Shanter went down a treat!

How do you provide support for Absolute Beginners in English?

Adult Learning staff in **South Ayrshire's** CLD team faced a steep rise in clients who could speak no English at all. The standard approach of once-a-week classes couldn't cope with demand, so staff devised a two-week intensive Survival English course.

Nine evening sessions of two hours each provided learners with key vocabulary about things that mattered – accommodation, work, family, shopping, health, social life. Each learner received an illustrated workbook supported by an interactive CD which allowed them to practise reading, writing and speaking in between sessions.

Finishing off with guidance from Careers Scotland and Ayr College built in to the last session, learners gained sufficient confidence to apply for (and get!) jobs and accommodation, make friends and generally settle in. Many continued on to accredited ESOL learning at the College.

Effective Learning for Adults with Learning Difficulties

The report of this research was published in 2007. The research looks at how engaging carers of adults with learning difficulties in the learning process can enhance the learning experience and support the development of greater independence.

To promote the widest possible dissemination, we have produced a Summary of findings, a Research Summary and a DVD entitled 'learning for life' that includes a leaflet with discussion suggestions.



This research suggests the need for fundamental changes in the way we approach provision for learners with complex needs.

The research shows that:

- ① collaborative working between agencies providing support for adults is necessary if literacies learning is to be purposeful and effective;
- ① this collaboration entails deliberate and sustained effort to establish cooperation but that the effort is worthwhile;
- ① understanding the learning process benefits the work of care and support staff as well as learners; and
- ① literacies tutors gain considerable satisfaction from work that helps their learners to make progress.

The research report also explores the processes of engaging with other agencies/services and highlights the challenges. It shows that changes in practice cannot be achieved by any one service or sector: agreement is needed between practitioners and between the management of their agency/organisation.

The research findings are being taken forward in a number of adult literacy and numeracy partnerships across Scotland.

The main Report, Research Summary, Summary of findings and worksheet to support discussion, are available on www.aloscotland.com

Limited numbers of the DVD are available on request.

Highland ALN Partnership gave funding in June 2007 for Lead Scotland to develop a project to build sustainability into literacies provision for people with learning difficulties, focusing on collaborative work with the Social Care sector.

Literacies Awareness Raising Training was written with a strong emphasis on Social Work Strategy and national initiatives such as the document "Changing Lives" and a flexible means of delivering the practical applications was devised as an Open Learning Pack.

During the training period, staff at the Isabel Rhind Centre in Invergordon decided to use the material to support clients developing a Community Café. This was a very positive acknowledgement and recognition of the value of the training. Clients seemed pleased with the progress they had made and there have been positive outcomes. One man said that his memory was improving and he enjoyed speaking to people again.

The agencies and organisations involved have found that working together enriches knowledge, raises awareness of challenges and leads to effective solutions more quickly in most situations.

"Literacies – with Care" has had a positive impact on everyone involved in its development and processes. It is hoped that even more prospective learners will gain confidence and personal independence from this collaborative approach which is continuing.

Teaching Qualification in Adult Literacies (TQAL)

The first ever TQAL programme is nearing a successful completion. Thirty-three students, in 4 groups (at the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Strathclyde and Forth Valley College), are now in the final stages of the programme, which will culminate in a celebration at Newbattle Abbey College in September 2008. A second pilot programme will start early in 2009.

The programme runs on a part-time basis over 18 months and consists of four 30 credit modules taken in sequence:

1 Learning Worlds

The programme begins with the aim of encouraging participants to enrich their understanding and appreciation of learners in relation to their social context. As well as undertaking a small case study of a literacies learner, they are asked to reflect on themselves as learners and to consider the value of informal learning for professionalism.

2 Making Mental Models

In the second module, participants explore the 'what' and the 'why' of adult literacies teaching rather than the 'how'. Theory figures strongly in this module; theories are not presented as recipes for practice however, but ways of understanding practice. We all have 'theories' which influence how we respond to and interpret our experiences; in this module participants explore their own ideologies as well as those which are embodied in policy. They also begin to consider the kind of research processes whereby we can investigate practice so as to generate new ideas and 'models'.

3 Expanding Our Repertoire

In the third module, the focus is on developing strategies for ALN teaching, learning and assessment, through sharing and reflecting on practice. The course assignment is a small Action Enquiry project, the purpose of which is to learn *about* practice *from* practice.

4 The Enabling Net

The final module is about developing a shared vision and collective action as literacies professionals. Principles of partnership and networking are considered, specifically in the context of local ALN partnerships. Participants are supported to build on the Action Enquiry process with a small scale research project related to adult literacies in their own area.

The blended learning programme involves:

- ① practitioners coming together in study centre groups for 4 days per module;
- ① work-based learning in which the principles of the programme are explored in practice; and
- ① a virtual learning environment which supports ongoing communication and collaboration across the whole national group.

Practitioner enquiry and action learning are key strands within all the TQAL modules. This aspect of the programme has raised awareness amongst practitioners of the potential to learn lessons and disseminate good practice by means of research. It is hoped that the wealth of practitioner research generated in the programme can be made more widely available.

In the pilot, twenty Practice Tutors have offered support and mentoring to TQAL students. This group could also undertake a Practice Tutor Award which comprises 30 credits offered at SCQF Level 11.

The TQAL programme addresses priorities set out in ALNIS which identified the requirement for a "system that learns" and a commitment to "provide national training standards for all staff and volunteers whose roles relate to literacy and numeracy". The evaluation of the pilot programme confirms the benefits of the TQAL approach to professional development. In feedback and reflective tasks students routinely identified the merits of the programme both in facilitating their learning and in influencing local practices. As a mark of professional status the programme has now been approved by CeVe (Community Education Validation and Endorsement).

In conclusion, the TQAL, as advocated in ALNIS, is now firmly established and is intended to be the main professional qualification for adult literacies tutors in Scotland.

"The last few weeks have been an interesting journey. I have read loads of articles and texts relating to learning environments I have found the process useful as it has impacted on my work and it has involved people I work with on a daily basis who understand the setting I work in. However in a positive sense I have no doubt that this was the purpose of the Expanding Our Repertoire module i.e. to get us to think beyond the ways that we currently do things."

"We ask learners to go outside their comfort zones in their learning, without this it is difficult to progress, so why should we not be pushed outside ours? And it's good to see how this feels (on reflection of course!) and be reminded of how valuable it is to face challenges."

"We will all take many positives from our TQAL experience I am sure but the most positive aspect for me is that we are more active in our practice, more critically aware of how and why we practise and apply more critical analysis to our profession."

For more information about the programme or if you are interested in participating in the next group, please contact the TQAL Project administrator mabli.hall@strath.ac.uk



Practitioner-Led Action Research

During 2007/2008, Learning Connections funded a separate project to support twenty-two practitioners to undertake action research into the individual learning planning process with adult literacies learners.

The **Practitioner-Led Action Research (PLAR) project** was led by the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Among other questions, projects considered:

- whether learners felt that the interactive wheel was a useful tool for individual learning planning; and
- how to use individual learning plans with learners with learning disabilities.

The model of Practitioner-Led Action Research used during this project (running from January to May 2008) was developed in response to a number of lessons learned from a similar project two years earlier. There were a number of key characteristics:

- participants were organised in clusters by employer or place of employment;
- support was provided through a series of face to face meetings between clusters and key contact;
- the timetable for the project was a half day meeting per week for ten weeks;
- recruitment involved two meetings with practitioners, and the first meeting also included line managers to ensure organisational buy-in;
- the project did not lead to any accreditation, in an attempt to maximise flexibility; and
- the focus of this project was on the individual learning planning process.

Interesting implications for future Scottish literacies PLAR projects have emerged from this project. PLAR does work for professional development and for knowledge generation. However, expectations about the amount of research training individuals receive within a short time scale have to be realistic. We believe that the new approach to PLAR which involves clusters of practitioners working together is more effective. We intend to slightly expand the timetable and duration of meetings following comments of participants. Learning Connections intends to continue to support practitioner research in the field. We hope that the findings of this project will help us improve our approach to practitioner research in future.

The practitioners' findings will be published in autumn 2008.

As part of this project, practitioners have translated the Wheel into Polish for use with ESOL students!

Continuing Professional Development opportunities

The **Numeracy Practitioners' Network** continued to grow, with nearly one hundred and fifty members receiving regular emails with news of resources, learning and teaching ideas, new research and events. Members of the Network met twice during this period. Feedback from meetings suggested that attendees found the contact with other practitioners motivating and useful.

October 2007 saw the first meeting of the **Literacy Practitioners' Network**. Practitioners identified the aim of the network as being to 'improve the quality of learning and teaching by enabling those delivering adult literacy learning to share knowledge, expertise and resources in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support.' At a lively meeting in Stirling in February, practitioners explored 'games for learning', taking part in games for reinforcing spelling, hearing about the *Mearnside Murder Mystery*, which offers a wide range of opportunities to read and write while having a lot of fun, and working in small groups on collaborative writing. Although not all of the network's seventy members attend meetings, information and feedback are circulated by email and local dissemination.

The **4th Scottish Adult Numeracy Seminar**, December 2007, showcased the Maths4Life project *Thinking Through Mathematics*. Dr Malcolm Swan, University of Nottingham, and Susan Wall, National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, demonstrated some of the active learning approaches from the project.

Feedback from the Seminar suggested that numeracy tutors wanted more hands-on experience of the *Thinking Through Mathematics* approaches. Learning Connections invited Susan Wall back to Scotland to deliver **continuing professional development** for tutors. Susan worked with over one hundred tutors during the week, visiting Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Feedback was excellent and Learning Connections are now looking at ways to embed active approaches into numeracy learning and teaching in Scotland.

International Literacy Day 2007

ILD 2007 was marked by a series of local events hosted by ALN Partnerships across Scotland and supported by Learning Connections.

Many partnerships took the opportunity to celebrate the efforts of tutors and learners and to share ideas and practice.

Examples of the varied and innovative events include:

The **Pan Ayrshire** literacy learners' conference, Ayrshires' Learning, was a collaborative event bringing together learners from North, East and South Ayrshire. Literacies learners from each of the three partnership areas addressed the conference with accounts of their learning experiences. As well as workshops, the conference included a video "diary room" of learners' inputs which was later compiled into a DVD.

Video conferencing between learners and tutors in **Argyll and Bute** and tutors in Karachi, Pakistan. Learners and tutors learned a great deal about how literacies is addressed in another country and how approaches compare with those in Scotland. Differences were obvious, but so were similarities!

Moray's celebration of Buckie Doric, "Doric – fit's it a' about?" attracted the public of four generations giving them a chance to join in celebrating, sharing and learning Buckie Doric. The event featured the celebrated poet and storyteller, Margot Henderson.

Community Voices Conference: In September 2007, a group of twenty learners from across the **Western Isles** came together at a conference in Stornoway where they had the opportunity to meet other learners from different areas and share their learning experiences.

Over the course of two days, the learners participated in a number of workshops where they had the opportunity to voice their opinions on how they learn; participate in a Q&A session with one of the local councillors and develop their creative writing skills which has since resulted in publication by the Western Isles Learners' Forum of a booklet of learners' writing. The conference was a great success and the Western Isles Learners' Forum hope to make it an annual event.

Scottish Literacies Going Global

The report, "Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills" was published in February 2008 by OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. The focus of the project was on formative assessment in adult education with adults in literacy and numeracy programmes.

The report is a synthesis of country background reports prepared by each participating country and an analysis of case studies.

Seven countries identified case studies of exemplary classroom practice: Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, England, France, Norway, Scotland and the United States. Nine countries contributed background reports detailing the challenges and policy responses for adult foundation skill learners. They include Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, England, Norway, New Zealand, Scotland, Spain and the United States. Scotland's three case studies came from work-based learning, college-based learning and community-based learning.

There is growing recognition in education that tests (summative assessment: assessment of learning) do not provide an accurate measure of progress nor do they contribute directly to learning. Formative assessment (assessment **for** learning) engages teacher/tutor and learner in a dialogue which uses feedback, questioning and scaffolding to explore what is being learned, how it is being learned, the use to which learning is applied, and what further learning is required. It ensures that learning programmes are relevant, that learning is being embedded and enhances metacognitive skills.

The report draws general lessons from across participating countries and identifies seven interrelated principles for strengthening policy and practice:

1. Promote active debate on the nature of teaching, learning and assessment;
2. Strengthen professionalism;
3. Balance structure and flexibility: formative assessment as a framework;
4. Strengthen learner-centred approaches;
5. Diversify and deepen approaches to assessment and programme evaluation for accountability;
6. Devote the necessary resources: people, time and money; and
7. Strengthen the knowledge base.

Links to the OECD report, the case studies and country background reports are available on www.aloscotland.com

Did you know that the Curriculum Framework Wheel has now been translated into French **and** Polish?

Last Words from Learners

Leah Rossvoll, Buckie Essential Skills

In the past I struggled with a variety of challenges involving money. Now I've conquered my confidence barrier by working through a programme that consisted of refreshing the basics of working with money and role-play situations.

Half way through the programme the Job Centre offered me a placement at the "British Red Cross Shop" in Buckie. I was really nervous about it to start off with but once I got used to it I began to gain some more self-belief that I could actually venture into a job working in a shop. My tutor Margaret visited the shop and we were able to make some

changes to my learning programme to fit in with my placement, such as pricing of items and quick tally methods. I gained skills on operating the till, doing till checks and cashing up. I can handle change with ease and feel that my cash handling fears have gone for good! I'm now applying for jobs in retail.



Michelle Connolly, Kirkintilloch

I had always wanted to join the police but I felt I had quite a few gaps in my education and I didn't have any confidence.

Page 40

Last year I decided I might be ready to look at going for the police exam so I enrolled on a college course. The course was really good and prepared you for the interview but not the test. I failed the Language paper (19 out of 40) but passed the Numbers and Information Handling.

After that I contacted The Big Plus. I started at the Learning Centre in Kirkintilloch and decided to give it my all. They have been absolutely brilliant. They have given me my confidence. I was terrified and now I feel I can pick up a dictionary on my own and even find a word now. I was in a group of five. There were people in the same situation as me and older.

I was going over my stuff and out of the blue they told me about the Strathclyde Police SET course. It's just meant to be! My aim now is to pass the test and that's what the course caters for!

Alex Gurmin, Angus

I'm 58 years old. If I'd had a cold, there would be symptoms. I've just found out that I have had visual stress all my life and hadn't had the same kind of obvious symptoms.

You assume that you're the same as everyone else. I couldn't understand why people could read better than me, learn faster than me and why they could see things faster on a piece of paper than I could.

Some of the symptoms of my visual stress were rebellion against teaching one way or another, arguing and fighting with people around me, falling into a well which I couldn't climb out of because I didn't know how. You think it's your personality rather than your problem. People react to that and, in the old days, it was assumed you were deciding not to learn rather than that there was a problem that made learning difficult.

Finding out that I had visual stress lifted the weight of the world from my shoulders. The researchers were able to pinpoint something and I nearly had a mental breakdown when I found out that I had a problem that hadn't been detected. Nadia has given me an understanding of the problem by explaining what I'm seeing, the problems I have (I needed a second pair of tinted glasses that were a different colour) and exercises on the computer. I've now learned how to cope with it, understand it and deal with it.

Now when I'm reading, I can read for a lot longer without my eyes hurting. It's easier to check and double-check that the numbers are correct in a phone call, I'm starting to get more pleasure from reading and I wish I'd known when I was younger what I know now!

I feel that I'd have been far further on in my life if I'd known about this earlier.

(See pages 29/30 for more on undetected visual difficulties in adult literacies learners.)

George Harper, HMP Glenochil

I come to classes six times a week. I work on Maths, Communication and IT. I wanted to improve my skills and gain confidence because my children are growing up and I want to help them. I really enjoy my classes and I want to keep going to the end of my sentence. My family are really pleased with my progress. I have even done Dad's Storytelling for my boys.



The Scottish
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