

# Session 1: Literacy Landscape in Ireland & Theorists

## Objectives of Session

Having completed this session, participants will have:

* A greater understanding and knowledge of the literacy landscape in Ireland
* Explored definitions of literacy
* Covered theories relevant to Adult Literacy
* Utilised reflective practice and a shared learning environment throughout

## Session Content

|  |
| --- |
| * Overview of six week Literacy Awareness programme * Expectations of participants & technology required for online delivery |
| * Definitions of literacy |
| * Where literacy provision sits within the FET sector |
| * Theories relevant to literacy education * Extension Activity |

## Resources for this session

|  |
| --- |
| * Hand-out 1.1 Template for programme * Hand-out 1.2 The CDETB & Adult Literacy Services * Hand-out 1.3 Malcolm Knowles * Hand-out 1.4 Lave & Wenger * Hand-out 1.5 Jack Mezirow * Hand-out 1.6 Extension activity |
| * PowerPoint presentation * Session plan * Zoom and Internet access |

## Slide 1: Adult Literacy Awareness

*\*10 minutes*

Facilitators introduce themselves and welcome participants onto the programme.

Allow participants the opportunity to share their role, area of work, and what they would like to gain from participating on the programme. Depending on numbers, this may be done by giving each person the chance to speak briefly, or it may be more useful to ask everyone to type into the chat box giving their name and a brief outline of what their work entails.

## Slide 2: Overview of course

*3 minutes*

This programme evolved when the Adult Literacy Service in City of Dublin Education and Training Board recognised the opportunity to provide essential Adult Literacy Awareness training to adult education staff within their own organisation. Many ETB staff regularly encounter individuals with unmet literacy needs. It can be a challenge to know how best to support those students.

It is important to note that the Adult Literacy Services are available, not only to support students, but also to support staff and stakeholders throughout their communities and empower services to be literacy-friendly. There is a key role for each Adult Literacy Service in their locality for the sharing of expertise and support.

\*There may be deviations in how services operate locally as against. Facilitators should prepare and edit the content contained in each presentation accordingly.

Introduce briefly the outline of the six sessions. The aims of each session are stated in the course outline within the handouts.

## 

## Slide 3: Expectations of participants

*3 minutes*

Take a few minutes to run through all house-keeping matters, including what is expected of participants, as outlined on the slide.

The course is designed to be participative, with reflective practice embedded throughout. As such, sessions will not be recorded.

The course will be delivered by two facilitators t. Facilitators should outline how best questions or comments may be fielded throughout. For example, will everyone be expected to stay on mute? Can participants unmute to make comments or ask questions arising?

Participants are expected to be in attendance and to be involved in discussions and exercises.

With a view to participation, there will be regular opportunities to interact throughout the sessions. This may be in the form of open-floor discussions, breakout rooms, or Mentimeters. Every participant will have valuable experiences to share with the group, that will enhance the learning and exploration for everyone on the programme.

There will be an Extension Activity at the end of each session. There is no requirement to write or submit any notes, but participants are expected to take a little time between sessions to complete the extension activities. At the beginning of each session, there will be time given to share, reflect, and give feedback on the experience of each extension activity.

*\*Timings are a guide, may vary depending on group dynamics, two hour sessions in total*

## Slide 4: Tech Tools

*3 minutes*

\**Edit according to your service's usage – you may choose to use other tools*

There will be a couple of pieces of technology that participants will need to become comfortable with using during the sessions, if they are not already familiar with them. Reassure that time will be given separately to anyone who needs support in becoming comfortable using any technology platforms required throughout the course. Ask that participants make contact after the session if they need some time to run through particular tools. (This should also be offered in advance of the course beginning).

Tech Tools will include:

* Zoom - Chat box, Breakout Rooms, Annotate
* Menti.com - This is probably most simply used on a second device, i.e. a mobile phone or tablet, but it can be used on a second tab on your browser window too.
* Microsoft Teams - Facilitators may use MS Teams or another platform to share the course content and any additional materials or media from week to week. Participants may be encouraged to engage in posting on the MS Teams wall between sessions to share learning or interesting tools that they come across

## 

## Slide 5: Overview of session

*3 minutes*

In this session, we will explore what ‘literacy’ is and look at some definitions for discussion.

By the end of the session, you will have a reasonable overview of the literacy landscape in Ireland.

We will explore three theories that guide our ethos and ground our practice adult literacy education. We will look at three more next week.

We will also be taking time throughout to discuss and reflect on what the term literacy means to us and what it encompasses in practice.

## Slide 6: Menti.com (Brainstorming and shared ideas)

*8 minutes*

**“What words come to mind when you think of Literacy?”**

Introduce the Menti, which should take the format of a ¨Word Cloud¨ Menti, allowing three words to be submitted per participant. Share the Mentimeter.com presentation on screen so that all participants can: (1) see the Menti code to enter, and (2) see the words being submitted. Give participants the opportunity to talk about their ideas and to make observations on similar and contrasting words that have come up. Facilitators should add any comments that may be important for inclusion and noting.

## Slide 7 & 8: Literacy Definitions

*5 minutes*

There are numerous definitions of what literacy is. People often think of literacy as being solely about reading and writing, but it really encompasses a far wider range of skills, as well as the confidence to use these skills in difference settings and contexts.

In discussing how definitions of literacy are "broad and contextual", we can talk about this in a couple of ways. Firstly, confidence can vary depending on the setting. For example, it may be easy to sing in the shower, but not in public. The same may go for filling in a form at home, compared to doing the same thing under watchful eyes in a public space. Secondly, it is worth remembering that each one of us is regularly required to learn new literacies. There will always be circumstances where we may be required to learn, for example, the vocabulary of a new subject, or how to use and navigate a new piece of technology.  In understanding how we define literacy, we can begin to empathise and address the stigma that has impacted the lives of so many in our communities.

## Slide 9: European Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning

*5 minutes*

ELINET[[1]](#footnote-1) (European Literacy Policy Network) uses a multi-layered definition of literacy, from baseline literacy to functional and multiple literacy:

* Baseline literacy means having the knowledge of letters, words and text structures required to read and write at a level that enables self-confidence and motivation for further development.
* Functional literacy[[2]](#footnote-2) is the ability to read and write at a level that enables an individual to develop and function in society, at home, at school and at work.
* Multiple literacy corresponds to the ability to use reading and writing skills in order to produce, understand, interpret and critically evaluate written information. It is a basis for digital participation and making informed choices pertaining to finances, health, etc.

In May 2018, the EU adopted a recommendation identifying eight key competences[[3]](#footnote-3) essential to citizens for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion. This provides a reference tool for education and training stakeholders to support all learners in reaching their full potential.

These eight competences are: (1) Literacy, (2) Mathematical, science, technology and engineering, (3) Multilingual, (4) Digital, (5) Personal, social and learning to Learn, (6) Citizenship, (7) Entrepreneurship, and (8) Cultural awareness and expression. Although literacy is expressed as a standalone competency, all other competences often correlate.

## Slide 10 & 11: Literacy quiz

*8 minutes*

Introduce the Literacy in Ireland Quiz, consisting of three questions.

Ask participants to annotate either using the digital pen, text or stamp to mark what they think is the correct answer for each question.

Once everyone has had a chance to annotate, proceed to the answers slide, before clearing the annotations. This will allow everyone to see what the correct answers are compared with the answers given by the participants.

Note how accurate or divergent the answers were? Is there anything to note regarding assumptions made or the changing literacy landscape in Ireland?

Ask participants if they are surprised by any of the answers. Take three or four minutes to give participants the opportunity to share their thoughts and realizations from the quiz. Facilitators should add any comments that may be important for inclusion and noting.

**Literacy - 2012**OECD Survey of Adult Skills :: **1 in 6**

* 450,000 people in Ireland at Level 1 Literacy
* reading timetables, the labels on medicine bottles, or calculating and estimating quantities

**Numeracy - 2012** Central Statistic Office (CSO) :: **1 in 4**

* 25% or 1 in 4 Irish adults score at or below level 1 for numeracy.
* At this level a person may have problems doing simple math calculations.

**Digital Literacy - 2020** Cedefop :: **55%**

* More than 1 in every 2 Irish adults have low digital literacy skills.
* <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3081>

## Slide 12: Situating the Adult Literacy Service within FET

***5 minutes***

*\*Edit to suit your own ETB*

Further Education and Training (FET) in the Education and Training Boards encompasses such a broad range of services and educational offerings that it can be difficult, even for those working within the organisation, to get a clear overview of all that is available. The exact structure can vary between ETBs.  It can be very useful to understand where your Adult Literacy Service is located and what supports can be offered both to staff and to students. (We will cover this in more detail in Session 4: Referrals and Boundaries)

When we view the entire FET offering in the context of Literacy Awareness, it is worth noting that the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024 identifies that 50% of unique learners have literacy difficulties, and that 20% are in QQI Levels 3 and 4. It is important to acknowledge that a large proportion of FET leaners will require support for their literacy, numeracy, and/or digital literacy.

Give participants the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the structures and location of services within their own area. Do participants know their local Adult Literacy Organiser or any of the staff within the Adult Literacy Service? Have they engaged with them for support previously?

# Slide 13: 5 minute break

## Slide 14 : Breakout discussion

***25 minutes***

***3 minute Intro***

***10 minutes in Breakout Room***

***3 minutes / group x max 4 groups***

Introduce the Breakout Room.

**Task:** Discuss the importance of core skills. Why are listening and speaking, numeracy and digital literacy included in definitions of literacy?

Group 4 or 5 participants to each room to allow everyone the opportunity to get to know each other and to share ideas, observations, and experience from their own practice. Groups should identify one person to takes notes and feedback at the end.

# Theorists

## Slides 15 & 16: Malcolm Knowles

***6 minutes***

Play this three minute video outlining Knowles' 6 Assumptions of Adult Learners.

Take time to discuss aspects of the video. What from the 6 Assumptions (outlined below) resonates with participants, either from their own learning or in their teaching practice and delivery?

1. **Need to know:**Adults need to know why they are learning what you are teaching.
2. **Self- concept:**As the person matures, they move from being dependent to becoming self-directed. Adults learn best when they can act autonomously. To learn well, adults need to be provided with the right tools and level of instruction to guide their self-direction.
3. **Experience:**The wealth of experience that adults possess becomes an increasing resource for learning. Experience forms the basis for reflective learning and can also direct what the adult is interested in learning.
4. **Readiness to Learn:**Adults learn best when they can immediately apply their learning. Adults become increasingly oriented to the developmental tasks of their social roles.
5. **Orientation to Learning:**Adults are task-centred and problem-centred in their orientation to learn. Adult learners want to know how their learning can be applied to daily life. In adult learning, the time perspective changes from postponed to the immediate application of knowledge.
6. **Motivation to Learn:**As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal. They learn best when it help their lives in some way or solves real-world problems.

## Slide 17: Knowles cntd

***8 minutes***

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching children.

Take a few minutes to discuss the differences between the theories of pedagogy and andragogy.

How might the childhood experience of learning affect the returning adult's view of formal learning? How might a young adult begin to change in their orientation to learning? Are there aspects of this theory that resonate with participants?

## Slide 18: Communities of Practice

***2 minutes***

Lave & Wenger's concept of Communities of Practice was first developed in the 1990s. A community of practice is any group of people that come together around a common interest, sharing experience and knowledge, and learning together through their practice.

\*Facilitator speaks to handout

## Slide 19: What constitutes a community of practice?

***3 minutes***

Overview of Community of Practice:

*Domain - The things that matter (In own case, literacy)*

* + Common ground
  + Shared identity
  + Shared interest
  + Relevance
  + Value
  + Purpose

*Community - The social fabric of learning (The centre, tutors, learners)*

* + Mutual respect
  + Communal identity
  + Willingness to share
  + Regular interaction
  + Open to questioning
  + Goodwill

*Practice - Developed, shared & maintained knowledge (The teaching & Learning)*

* + Information
  + Lessons learned
  + Knowledge
  + Tools
  + Documents

## Slide 20: Community of Practice visual

***3 minutes***

Lave and Wenger's Theory of Situated Learning explores how the novice learner enters the community on the periphery. Through their collaboration, interaction and engagement with the rest of their community they begin to gain expertise. This is through the support of all other members of the community, not just the experts or masters.

\*Facilitator refers to handout

## Slide 21: Jack Mezirow

***3 minutes***

Transformative Learning Theory was first introduced by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s.

An important part of transformative learning is for individuals to change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. This process is fundamentally rational and analytical.

When Mezirow talks about "autonomy" he is referring to the understanding, skills and dispositions that people need in order to become critically reflective of their own assumptions. "Habits of mind" limit our thinking and actions. According to Mezirow's theory, "disorienting dilemmas" can cause us to reformulate our Meaning Perspectives. This can be a very painful process, requiring us to let go of long-held beliefs. Disorienting dilemmas can be triggered by a dramatic life transition, or by predicaments created by a teacher.

\*Facilitator references handout

## Slide 22: Jack Mezirow

*7 minutes*

Play this four minute video outlining Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory.

Take time to discuss aspects of the video. Have participants experienced transformative learning, either from their own learning or in their teaching practice and delivery?

## Slide 23: Extention activity

*3 minutes*

Introduce the Extension Activity to be practiced between now and the next session.

**Task:**

Before next week spend at least four hours going about your normal daily tasks and activities either:

A: without reading or writing, or,

B: being aware of how often you need to read, write and use numeracy.

Remind participants to set aside some time for this practice. Suggest that participants may like to take some notes for sharing on our next session.

1. <http://www.eli-net.eu/about-us/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/gaml4-functional-literacy-numeracy.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)