

Integrating Literacy:
Guidelines for
further education
and training centres



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Integrating Literacy

Guidelines for further education and training centres

Revised edition 2013

Integrating Literacy

Guidelines for further education and training centres

Revised edition 2013

© National Adult Literacy Agency (2013)

ISBN: 978-1-907171-17-8

Written by: Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide

Published by:

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

NALA Cork
21 Lavitt's Quay
Cork
Tel: (021) 427 8669

Tel: (01) 412 7900

Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65

Email: info@nala.ie

Websites: www.nala.ie
www.writeon.ie (Distance learning website)
www.simplyput.ie (Plain English website)
www.makingcents.ie (Financial literacy website)
www.healthliteracy.ie (Health literacy website)
www.helpmykidlearn.ie (Family learning website)

Follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/nalairreland

Follow us on Twitter at: twitter.com/nalairreland

NALA's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/nationaladulthoodliteracy

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the IVEA –NALA Working Group on Integrating Literacy for its support in developing these guidelines. The members of the working group at time of publication are:

Inez Bailey, Director, NALA

Sean Conlon, Education Officer, Co. Clare VEC

Padraig Kirk, CEO Co. Louth VEC

Bláthnaid Ní Chinnéide, Integrating Literacy Coordinator, NALA

Anne O’Keeffe, CEO Co. Laois VEC

Pat O’Mahony, Education Research Officer, IVEA

John Stewart, National Literacy Coordinator, NALA

David Treacy, Education Officer, CDVEC.

We would also like to thank the ‘critical readers’ who gave us feedback on drafts of this document: Theresa Byrne, Kathleen Cramer, Moira Greene, Ann Hegarty, Pauline Hensey, Margo Kelly, Elizabeth McSkeane, Maria Morgan, Patricia Murphy and Daniel Sellers.

Contents

Acknowledgements	03
------------------	----

Section 1: Introduction 05

A note on terminology	06
Who are the guidelines for?	07
Policy context	07
What is 'literacy'?	08
What does 'integrating literacy' mean?	09
A whole centre approach	10
Why integrate literacy?	11
Underpinning values	12
The guidelines	12

Section 2: Centre systems and procedures for integrating literacy 15

Guideline 1: Develop a policy and plan based on shared understandings of integrating literacy.	16
Guideline 2: Provide continuing professional development in integrating literacy.	18
Guideline 3: Allocate resources and develop communication and timetabling systems to support integrating literacy.	21
Guideline 4: Do a literacy analysis of the centre's courses and services.	25
Guideline 5: Develop literacy-friendly access procedures.	29
Guideline 6: Develop literacy-friendly induction procedures.	30
Guideline 7: Develop literacy-friendly transfer and progression procedures.	31

Section 3: Integrated teaching and learning 33

Guideline 8: Integrate literacy support and development with subject teaching and learning.	34
References and further reading	59

Section 1: Introduction

A note on terminology

Different words may be used in different further education and training settings to describe the same role or concept - for example, 'learner', 'student', 'trainee'.

Here are some words we use in this document and what we intend them to mean:

Word	Refers to:
Literacy	Language, reading, writing, numeracy and everyday technology for communication (ICT). Literacy has personal, social and economic dimensions. See fuller definition on page 8.
Integrating literacy	An approach to teaching and learning within the various subjects and activities on further education and training courses. It involves learners, teachers, centre manager/s and other staff working together to overcome literacy barriers to learning and to develop course-related literacy.
Centre	Any centre providing further education and training for adults and young people. Alternatives include: 'college', 'training centre', 'school', 'project', 'community centre'.
Learner	Person taking part in an education and training programme. Alternatives include: 'student', 'trainee', 'participant'.
Group	Any group of learners. Alternatives include 'class'.
Literacy and/or numeracy tutor	Person whose main role in the centre is to provide tuition in literacy and/or numeracy. Alternatives in particular context might include: 'communication tutor', 'English teacher', 'maths teacher'.
Manager	Person who manages the centre. Alternatives include 'principal', 'director', 'coordinator'.
Subject teacher	Person whose main role in the centre is to help learners develop knowledge and expertise in a particular academic or vocational subject or other area of learning. Alternatives include 'vocational teacher', 'instructor', 'trainer', 'facilitator'.
Literacy facilitator	The centre team member who takes responsibility for promoting the integration of literacy support and development into all aspects of the centre's programme.

Who are the guidelines for?

The guidelines are intended for **managers and staff** in centres of further education and training - for example, further education colleges, youth education and development centres and community education centres.

They aim to help centres build literacy support and development into all phases of vocational or other courses. This helps make such courses more effective for all learners, including those who have the subject-related aptitude but experience difficulties with aspects of the course-related literacy or numeracy.

These guidelines will be relevant to you if the **main purpose** of the learners and the courses in your centre is **vocational, academic or other** learning. For guidelines on discrete literacy and numeracy provision, please see [Guidelines for good adult literacy work](#) (NALA: 2012).

Policy context

Since the first edition of NALA's Integrating Literacy Guidelines was published in 2002, there have been many developments in further education and training and in adult literacy work in Ireland. There is an increased policy focus on

- integrating literacy and numeracy across the curriculum for children and young people (DES: 2011);
- the integration of literacy into broader adult and further education programmes (DES: 2009; 2012); and
- embedding literacy and numeracy in programmes designed to address future skills needs (EGFSN: 2007).

At **provider** level, the IVEA and NALA have cooperated to advance the integration of literacy across VEC provision (IVEA 2012; IVEA-NALA 2012), and FAS has promoted an integrating literacy strategy in community based training, with support from NALA.

The focus of these guidelines is on **practice**, and particularly on the question: How can managers, teachers and other staff in colleges or centres of education work together to build literacy support and development into their courses?

What is 'literacy'?

NALA defines literacy as follows:

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

What counts as effective literacy varies across different contexts and purposes, and changes over time.

There are different literacies associated with different areas of life. The ways we use literacy...at home, in a learning environment, as part of a social or sports club, or in our community life, vary enormously. (NALA 2012: 6)

Becoming 'literate' is a life-wide and a lifelong process: we develop new language, literacy, numeracy and ICT as part of taking on new activities, purposes, identities and roles.

Any group at any level of education will have a mix of different literacies. The learners will have **different** strengths and needs in the particular language, literacy, numeracy and ICT used in the centre, the course and outside context to which the course relates.

Integrating literacy with vocational and other learning takes account of those differences, in ways that help everyone in the group to take part in the course and learn effectively.

What does 'integrating literacy' mean?

On further education and training courses, 'integrating literacy' means developing the subject knowledge and skills and the related language, literacy, numeracy and ICT as interwoven elements of a single process.

In the vocational or subject classes, it is a planned approach and a moment-by-moment attitude and practice on the part of teachers and learners. It involves the whole group, not just selected individuals.

In integrated courses, subject teachers and learners use differentiated active learning methods to engage with the course content (rather than relying solely on reading and writing). As part of learning the course content, they explicitly teach and learn its particular language, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Vocational teachers and literacy and numeracy specialists work together to integrate language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development with the various subjects and other centre activities.

Integrating literacy is not just the business of the subject teacher or of the literacy specialist, but is a whole-centre approach involving learners, managers, teachers and all staff.

A whole centre approach

In a whole-centre approach to integrating literacy:

- There is a centre policy and plan on integrating language, literacy, numeracy and ICT across the centre's programmes and services. It is based on shared understandings of literacy and driven by senior management.
- There is continuing professional development to help managers, teachers and all staff develop and sustain the approach.
- There are literacy-friendly procedures and practices at all phases of the programme: access, induction, teaching and learning, assessment, progression.
- Learners have course-related literacy support built into their vocational or subject classes, and they have access to specialist literacy, numeracy and ICT supports according to need.
- There is clarity on roles and a working partnership between all involved, particularly between subject teachers, literacy specialists and learning support staff.

The Department of Education and Skills in 2009 recommended the following features of a whole-centre approach to literacy:

- Teachers of the core subjects know and use inclusive, literacy-aware methods and materials. They take account of the specific types of language, reading, writing and numeracy the students need to engage with in relation to each topic or class. They choose and use methods and materials to explicitly support students to fully participate in the core learning programme.
- Students have access to a dedicated course-related literacy support service. This is provided by tutors who are trained and experienced in adult literacy principles and practice, and skilled in providing course-related language and literacy development in adult and further education programmes at all levels.
- There is effective and systematic communication between subject staff and literacy support staff to jointly plan how to support students with their specific needs.
- Management have systems in place to facilitate that communication and teamwork. (DES, 2009: 6)

Why integrate literacy?

Integrating literacy support and development into courses at all levels will help to:

- promote educational and social equality by overcoming literacy barriers to participation and learning in further education and training;
- make teaching and learning on vocational and academic courses more effective, by developing the content-related literacy;
- increase the effectiveness of specialist literacy tuition, by providing a meaningful context, authentic materials and daily opportunities for application and practice;
- enable progression by helping learners develop the specific literacy involved in their intended 'next steps' in education, training, employment or other context.

Research in the UK (Casey and others, 2006) found that integrating or 'embedding' language, literacy and numeracy into vocational courses led to:

- higher retention rates
- increased achievement of vocational qualifications
- increased achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications; and
- increased learner motivation.

Two NALA research projects (Hegarty and Feeley, 2009; McSkeane: 2009) found that integrating literacy and vocational teaching, learning and assessment had significant benefits for learners and for teachers.

In the USA, in experimental research studies in a variety of contexts over many years, Dr Thomas G Sticht found that 'integrating literacy works!' (NALA:2007)

Underpinning values

Integrating literacy and other learning will be most effective when the centre team works together on the basis of shared values, in particular:

- ◆ **A commitment to inclusion and equality**, based on the belief that learners who have the required subject-related aptitude can, with appropriate supports, engage with the course content and concepts.
- ◆ **A culture of care and of positive learning relationships** based on professional trust and respect. This includes relationships between management, staff and learners, and with external partners and networks.
- ◆ **Commitment to excellence** in learner-centred procedures and practices.
- ◆ **Respect for diversity** in language, literacy and numeracy in learning groups, and a commitment to draw on this as a positive resource for learning.

See also: *Guidelines for good adult literacy work* (NALA: 2012).

The guidelines

The rest of this document presents 8 guidelines, outlining key elements of a whole-centre approach to literacy on further education and training courses. The guidelines are presented under two main headings: Centre systems and procedures for integrating literacy (Guidelines 1-7), and Integrated teaching and learning (Guideline 8).

How different centres apply the guidelines will vary according to their particular circumstances and their learners' needs and aspirations.

Integrating Literacy

Guidelines for further education and training centres

Guideline 1: Develop a policy and plan based on shared understandings of integrating literacy.

Guideline 2: Provide continuing professional development in integrating literacy.

Guideline 3: Allocate resources and develop communication and timetabling systems to support integrating literacy.

Guideline 4: Do a literacy analysis of the centre's courses and services.

Guideline 5: Develop literacy-friendly access procedures.

Guideline 6: Develop literacy-friendly induction procedures.

Guideline 7: Develop literacy-friendly transfer and progression procedures.

Guideline 8: Integrate literacy support and development with subject teaching and learning.

Section 2: Centre systems and procedures for integrating literacy

In this section you will find suggestions on implementing Guidelines 1-7.

Guideline 1: Develop a policy and plan based on shared understandings of integrating literacy.

Developing the centre's integrated approach to language, literacy, numeracy and other learning requires a policy and plan, developed in cooperation by all involved in the centre.

Policy

- Take time to develop **shared understandings** of literacy and of integrating literacy, to underpin the policy and plan.
- Make a **policy commitment** to integrate language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development across all phases of the programme, such as promotion and recruitment, induction, teaching, learning, assessment and progression.
- **Involve** learners and all staff and management in developing the policy.
- **Set up a literacy integration team** to develop a **plan** based on the policy. The team should include a senior manager and be representative of learners, vocational teachers, the centre's literacy staff and learning support service, and staff from other departments or services in the centre.

Plan

Develop a **plan for phasing in the integrated approach** to literacy in the centre.

- **Review** current provision and practice in the centre in relation to integrating literacy. **Affirm** the current good practice of teachers and other staff in building literacy support and development into their courses and other work. **Share good practices** across the team and agree on areas for further development.
- Identify **objectives** based on your review. Specify **actions** that you can reasonably carry out, **review and evaluate** within the **timescale** of the centre's overall strategic plan. Consider actions that will:
 - ◆ build language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development into **subject teaching and learning**;

- ◆ enable learners have access to **specialist language, literacy and numeracy tuition** according to need;
- ◆ **provide access to other specific** supports according to need (such as assistive technology or other learning aids); and
- ◆ facilitate effective **communication and teamwork** between literacy and vocational teachers.

Build literacy into your overall systems of monitoring, recording and evaluating the programme.

- **Record** the integrated strategies and their **impact** on learning, teaching and assessment. Build literacy and numeracy into your regular review and evaluation meetings with learners and staff.
- Integrate literacy support and development into **the centre's other plans** and procedures: **for example**, quality assurance procedures, programme development plans and assessment plans for certification in the subject modules.
(See Guideline 4)

Guideline 2: Provide continuing professional development for staff and management in integrating literacy.

Integrating literacy across the centre's programmes requires continuing professional development for all concerned. This involves management and staff in working together to **develop a learning culture** in the centre, sharing experience, good practice and resources.

A mix of informal and formal approaches to professional development will help managers, teachers and all staff in the centre to:

- work together as a team focused on the course-related literacy needs of learners;
- develop and use inclusive, literacy-friendly practices at all phases of the programme;
- engage the multiple intelligences, literacies and strengths of learners, including those who experience difficulties with aspects of the literacy involved in the course;
- know the specific language, literacy, numeracy and ICT practices associated with their programme and its related 'real world' contexts;
- help learners develop skills to take part in those effectively; and
- make changes to teaching practice and observe the effects of these to inform future practice. (TEC: 27)

Suggestions for the focus of professional development

- Provide opportunities for **managers** to explore literacy issues and to identify practical ways to support staff in integrating literacy across the curriculum. Include a focus on
 - ◆ how to integrate language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development into **all phases** of the centre's programme - for example, induction;
 - ◆ ways of encouraging and facilitating **reflective practice** and an active **learning culture** in the centre; and
 - ◆ developing literacy-focused teamwork between staff, particularly between subject teachers and literacy specialists.

- Provide literacy awareness training for administration, reception and other centre staff, tailored to their role and work with learners.
- Provide opportunities for **teachers** to deepen understanding of the concepts underpinning the integrated approach to literacy and other learning, and to continually develop skills in
 - ◆ active and inclusive teaching and learning methods;
 - ◆ how to build language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development into subject teaching and learning; and
 - ◆ team teaching.

Some professional development strategies

The following are some examples of professional development strategies. Select or design strategies that suit your needs and situation.

Peer learning

Facilitate staff to learn with and from each other, sharing their good practice in integrating literacy. This can be organised in different ways, such as:

- Include literacy on the agenda of staff meetings, allowing time for teachers to share strategies they and their learners found useful.
- Facilitate teachers to meet with colleagues teaching the same subjects in other centres.
- Facilitate staff to carry **out action learning projects** on integrating literacy. This might involve trying out particular teaching and learning strategies in one 'pilot' course or subject or across courses; and/or trying new procedures on a particular phase of the programme, such as induction. Provide opportunities to share the learning from these projects with all staff.
- When staff take part in external training in integrating literacy, plan opportunities for them to share the key learning points with their colleagues.
- Provide training in teamwork between subject teachers and literacy specialists.
- Provide literacy awareness training for all new staff, tailored to their particular work role.

Professional development programmes

At the time of writing, the relevant accredited courses in Ireland include:

- ◆ the NUI Maynooth [Level 7 Certificate Course in Integrating Literacy](http://adulteducation.nuim.ie/). (<http://adulteducation.nuim.ie/>)
- ◆ The Waterford Institute of Technology Level 6 module in [Extending Literacy](http://www.wit.ie/ldc). (www.wit.ie/ldc)

You may wish to explore the professional development opportunities offered locally, particularly by the local **adult literacy service**.

NALA also provide introductory programmes on integrating language, literacy, numeracy and ICT with vocational and other learning.

Guideline 3: Allocate resources and develop communication and timetabling systems to support integrating literacy.

The main resources required for integrating literacy are committed and skilled **staff** and **timetabling** systems that facilitate teamwork in response to learners' evolving needs.

Staff

- Integrating language, literacy, numeracy and ICT with subject-teaching involves a whole-class approach. Ensure that the centre's **subject teachers** are supported to use, reflect on and continually develop inclusive, literacy-friendly teaching and learning methods.
- Designate an integrating **literacy facilitator**. The facilitator will be responsible for promoting a focus on relevant language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support and development across the centre. They cooperate with teachers and learners to identify and respond to course-related language, literacy, numeracy and ICT needs. They are an integral part of the centre team, and trained in the principles and practice of adult and youth literacy work.
- Employ or have a close working partnership with **literacy specialists** – tutors who are timetabled to
 - ◆ cooperate with subject teachers to plan integrated approaches to vocational and literacy learning; and
 - ◆ provide additional language, literacy, numeracy and ICT support to learners as required. (If your centre has just one literacy specialist, this person may also be the integrating literacy facilitator).

In addition to literacy support and development built into their subjects, learners should have access to 1:1 or small group work with the literacy specialist/s according to need.

Clarity of roles and an effective working partnership

An integrated approach to literacy and subject learning is most effective when there is a working partnership between literacy specialists and vocational or subject specialists. The literacy specialists might include literacy, numeracy and ICT tutors, and should include a 'literacy facilitator'.

The subject teacher or vocational trainer is likely to represent the learners' **main purpose** in taking part in the course, and has knowledge and expertise in the learners' main area of interest. They are therefore in a strong position to motivate and assist the learners to develop the relevant literacy. Their role is to **teach their subject** in literacy-friendly ways. That is, they use methods that

- ◆ overcome literacy barriers to learning the subject, by using active learning methods that engage learners' multiple intelligences and literacies; and
- ◆ help learners identify and develop the key language, literacy, numeracy and ICT essential to the subject and the real-life role to which it relates.

In this, they cooperate with and have the support of literacy specialists as appropriate to their learners' needs and the demands of their course.

The **literacy specialists'** role is to work together with subject teachers, as appropriate and as required in the particular situation, to support all learners' course-related literacy development. They also provide additional literacy tuition for learners who request it.

This inter-disciplinary partnership is likely to be structured, resourced and operated in ways that differ from centre to centre, according to different circumstances and needs.

Budget

- Allocate a specific budget for the integrating literacy strategy, with a particular focus on
 - ◆ staff development;
 - ◆ ensuring that literacy, numeracy and ICT specialists are part of the centre team; and
 - ◆ providing assistive technology for learning and assessment.

Materials and equipment

- The main materials and equipment needed to integrate literacy with the centre's programme are the **authentic materials** the learners, teachers and other staff use every day. For example, the forms used in the 'business' of the course, such as registration forms, the training allowance or pay slip; the timetables; the information on noticeboards; the centre's website or social networking page; and of course the textbooks or other materials used in the teaching and learning of the various subjects. All of these place particular kinds of demands on learners, and present opportunities for staff to scaffold learners' language, literacy, numeracy and ICT development.
- Provide a **space** where learners can get a range of supports to help them develop language, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Include access to educational software and to websites for self-directed learning and distance learning, such as www.writeon.ie for literacy and numeracy development, and sites related to the content of the centre's programme.
- Develop a **resource bank** of learning materials that have been developed by your centre's learners and teachers, or sourced and recommended by them. Provide storage and display space for **materials created by learners**.
- Provide **up to date digital tools for teaching and learning**, such as scientific calculators, smart boards and tablets (such as iPads). Ensure learners have access to assistive technology for learning and assessment according to need.
- Provide course-related books, handouts and other materials at **different levels of reading complexity**; in all cases, maintain the appropriate level of content knowledge and make sure the texts are age-appropriate.
- Make a **broad range of books** available to learners, including non-fiction, fiction and poetry. Some learners might be motivated to read fiction and autobiographies or biographies broadly related to their chosen subjects, for example. As well as encouraging reading for pleasure, reading around their vocational area can help sustain interest and learning on the course. Build an active **partnership with the local library** and over time develop a centre library.
- Equip and arrange each classroom or learning environment in a way that facilitates a mix of learning activities: whole-group and small group discussion, practical, 'hands-on' and creative work, and reading, writing and ICT activities.

- Provide tools and apparatus useful for **developing numeracy and maths**. Some will be found as part of the equipment used on the courses; others might be useful placed around the centre, for developing the maths related to temperature, time and space. Numeracy-related equipment might include weighing scales (including digital scales), place value blocks, rulers and tape measures, different timepieces, thermometers, measuring jugs and calculators.
- Make good use of centre **wall-space** for displaying posters and information helpful to literacy and numeracy development. For example, display posters showing mathematical concepts, such as the link between decimals, fractions and percentages.
- Ensure teachers in all subjects have access to relevant **teaching guides and resources**, online and in print.

Timetabling and communication systems

- **Explore new flexible timetabling options** for staff and learners, to support cooperation on integrating literacy across the curriculum.
- Provide regular **time for staff to work together** to
 - ◆ Identify the literacy demands of the centre's courses and services;
 - ◆ plan and review strategies to integrate language, literacy, numeracy and ICT development with the teaching and learning of course content;
 - ◆ select or write materials at the appropriate level of subject knowledge and at different levels of reading complexity;
 - ◆ develop cooperation and teamwork between subject teachers and literacy specialists;
 - ◆ develop models and templates for assessment briefs; and
 - ◆ carry out and evaluate the other elements of the centre's integrating literacy plan.

Guideline 4: Do a literacy analysis of the centre's courses and services.

Review the general context, the programmes, courses and other activities in the centre to identify the kinds of language, literacy, numeracy and ICT demands that learners have to handle at each point:

- Review **procedures and documents** in promotion, access, induction and progression to identify the language, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT demands that learners or prospective learners face.
- Plan to modify centre procedures if and as necessary to make them more inclusive and literacy-friendly. (See Guidelines 5-7)
- Examine the literacy **content** of vocational programmes and other activities learners will work on, including the **methods and materials** used,
- Allocate time for teachers to carry out the literacy analysis of their courses and, where relevant, of the role to which the courses relate.
- Allocate time for teachers to **plan** how they will integrate literacy support and development with teaching and learning and assessment in the subject area. (See Guideline 8)
- Identify the literacy demands of the methods and materials used in any summative assessments learners will engage in (for example, FETAC assessment briefs).

On the following pages you will find suggestions on doing a literacy analysis of courses and of assessment methods and materials.

A literacy analysis of courses

Suggestions for teachers

Every vocational or academic subject has its own particular language and concepts and requires different kinds of reading, writing, numeracy and ICT.

The first step in planning to build subject-related literacy development into your course is to think about the kinds of literacy involved.

- Review your course to **identify and record** the key **language** or terminology involved and the main **reading, writing, numeracy** and **ICT** that learners are expected to engage in.

Identify these in:

- ◆ the course **objectives**;
 - ◆ its **content**;
 - ◆ the **teaching and learning** methods and materials;
 - ◆ the real life vocational or other **context** to which the course relates; and
 - ◆ the **assessment** activities that learners will need to carry out in order to achieve certification for their learning.
- Identify which of these language, literacy, numeracy and ICT elements are **essential** to the subject or vocational area. (Take care with this step as some elements may at first seem to be essential, but they may actually arise from the choice of teaching or assessment methods).
 - Build those **essential** literacy elements into your course **plan** as **objectives**.
 - Think about your experience of teaching this subject: which of the important course topics and concepts did learners find **most difficult**?

What kinds of literacy activities did learners need to do as part of the teaching and learning activities at those points?

For each of those challenging topics and concepts, plan

- ◆ a variety of learning activities that do not rely solely or mainly on individual reading or writing, **and**
- ◆ activities to help learners understand and use the key language involved and the relevant reading, writing and ICT strategies they need to develop in your subject.

Some questions to ask about your course include:

What **language**-key words and concepts and types of spoken communication- do learners need to develop as part of the course objectives and in the role to which it relates? What terminology-academic or vocational-do you use on the course that might be new or unfamiliar to some participants?

What **specific** kinds of **reading** skills do learners need to develop as part of the course learning objectives and in the role to which the course relates? What kinds of reading strategies do they need to use as part of the teaching and learning activities, or for understanding assessment briefs or examination papers?

What **maths** concepts, knowledge or skills are embedded in the course objectives, materials and methods, and in the role to which the course relates? For example, are learners expected to interpret and use charts, tables, or graphs? In discussing the topics on your course, are there references to percentages or proportions or fractions? Are participants asked to measure, calculate or estimate?

What specific kinds of **writing** do learners need to develop as part of the course learning objectives and in the role to which the course relates? What specific kinds of writing are involved in the learning and assessment activities?

What **ICT** or digital literacy activities will learners need to engage in, as part of the learning and assessment activities and in the real-life context to which the course relates?

If your course leads to **certification**, what language, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are implied in each of the prescribed learning outcomes?

Integrating literacy with assessment for certification in the subject areas

As part of identifying the literacy demands of courses that lead to certification, consider what the learner has to read or write in order to demonstrate that they have achieved the objectives of the subject modules. If some learners have difficulties with the particular reading or writing involved in the assessment, it may not provide a true picture of their real abilities in the subject area. Teachers can help to prepare learners to meet these demands by including those elements in regular course work. (See Guideline 8).

Here are some suggestions on how to integrate appropriate literacy support into assessment for certification in the subject areas:

- Find out about and draw from the full **range of assessment methods and methods** that are allowed by the Awarding Body, and include some that do not mainly rely on reading and writing. **Select** assessment methods that suit the learners and the course requirements.
- Source or develop **models** of and **templates** for assessment briefs, to help teachers make them as clear and reader friendly as possible.
- **Provide staff development** in
 - ◆ writing clear assessment briefs;
 - ◆ pre-teaching the specific language and literacy strategies needed for the assessment briefs or examination papers; and
 - ◆ using a range of assessment methods and media.
- **Develop integrated assessment briefs**, where possible. These enable learners to evidence achievement in a number of their modules through a single project or other assessment activity. (For example, learners can demonstrate achievement in Communications and Mathematics modules as part of assessment in the subject areas, and vice versa).
- **Facilitate cooperation between staff** to co-ordinate the approach to assessment for certification in the subject areas.

Guideline 5: Develop literacy-friendly access procedures.

Access procedures include:

- ◆ entry requirements;
- ◆ methods of recruitment, promotion and advertising courses, and the materials used for this; and
- ◆ referral procedures between centres and agencies.

Literacy-friendly access procedures will help to remove barriers that may prevent people from starting or persisting in your centre's courses and other provision.

- Help all staff to become literacy-aware in their relations with the public and with prospective learners: for example, provide literacy awareness training on a whole-staff basis and/or as specific to particular roles.
- Literacy-proof and numeracy-proof your centre's publications: ensure clear language and layout in promotional leaflets, brochures, web pages, application forms, timetables and registration forms.
- In promotional materials and events, include information on your centre's learning supports. Highlight the centre's commitment to inclusive, literacy-friendly teaching and learning.
- Build a literacy focus into your **partnerships** with schools and with adult, youth and community education centres. Share information about your courses, including the course-specific literacy and numeracy demands. Together, **develop strategies** to help learners make the sometimes difficult **transition** from their familiar settings to your centre, where the context and culture might be unfamiliar or strange.

For example, develop **bridging or transition courses** to help learners prepare for the courses in your centre. The content of bridging courses will depend on the needs of the learners and the content of their intended courses. It would include a focus on learning-to-learn and on the specific kinds of language, reading, writing, numeracy and ICT involved in your courses.

Bridging or transition courses will also give learners and teachers the opportunity to get to know each other, to get to know learners' strengths and needs in relation to their intended courses, and to begin to develop appropriate **individual learning plans**.

Guideline 6: Develop literacy-friendly induction procedures.

The induction procedures and materials are opportunities for learners and staff to begin using the integrated approaches they will use throughout the programme. Plan to make your induction as inclusive, engaging and literacy-friendly as possible.

- Review and if necessary revise the **materials** used in induction, such as information on health and safety, the centre rules or code of conduct, materials on training allowances, grants, registration, and the learners' timetables. Make sure that **signage** in the building is clear. Use plain English or Gaeilge Shoiléir for such documents and signage. See www.simplyput.ie
- Pay attention to the personal, emotional and social dimension of literacy and of induction. Engage learners in activities that foster **positive learning relationships** among learners and between learners and staff.
- Use a range of **active learning methods** to help learners explore important issues such as health and safety, timetables, training allowances or grants. For example, use a mix of discussion, games, quizzes, drawing, 3D models and other activities, to involve learners in summarising key points, posing and solving problems and expressing opinions. (See Guideline 8).
- Include some reading, writing, numeracy and ICT activities based on the induction content, carefully designed to give a non-threatening 'taste' of the kinds of literacy that will be involved in the early stages of the course.

The integrated activities will help learners and teachers to:

- ◆ effectively teach and **learn induction content**;
 - ◆ get **early indications of course-related literacy strengths and needs**; and
 - ◆ begin to develop **group and individual learning plans**.
- Review the induction process with learners, to get their views on its effectiveness. Use learner feedback to plan how to continually improve future integrated induction programmes.

See the NALA research report, Living Literacy (McSkeane: 2009), for an example of integrating literacy teaching, learning and assessment with induction topics and activities.

Guideline 7: Develop literacy-friendly transfer and progression procedures.

- Build literacy-focused relationships with **other further education and training centres** to facilitate transfer and progression. Share information about:
 - ◆ the literacy demands of the courses to which your learners may progress or transfer; and
 - ◆ the kinds of literacy development strategies that you have found work well for learners on your courses.
- Share information related to individual learners **only when the learners have explicitly requested this** as a support for their transfer or progression.
- Build links with **employers** to identify the specific language, literacy and numeracy demands of work placements and plan how to help learners with these.
 - ◆ Identify any particular reading, writing, numeracy or ICT tasks within the job.
 - ◆ Plan to include those workplace practices in **your course activities** as preparation for work experience placement or for progression to employment.
 - ◆ Agree with employers how they can support learners in the workplace to develop competence in those particular literacy practices.
- Ensure learners have access to professional **guidance** to assist their progression choices. Develop a **phased transition process** for learners as they near the end of their time in the centre. Plan this around your learners' needs and their personal goals or intended next steps in education, training or employment. For some learners, a phased transition process could involve engaging in part-time work, training or education outside the centre while continuing to use some of the supports offered by the centre.
- Ensure that learners know the various literacy learning opportunities available to themselves or to their families or friends.

Section 3: Integrated teaching and learning

In this section you will find suggestions on implementing Guideline 8: Integrate literacy support and development with subject teaching and learning.

Guideline 8: Integrate literacy support and development with subject teaching and learning.

The main job of a subject teacher or vocational skills trainer is to help learners acquire confidence, knowledge and skill in the particular subject or vocational area.

The main job of a language, literacy, numeracy or ICT teacher is to help learners develop language, literacy, numeracy and ICT according to the learners' needs and goals.

An integrated, whole-centre approach to literacy within further education and training does not change that.

It means that all involved work together to

- identify the literacy demands that learners face on their courses;
- get to know learners' strengths and needs in relation to those;
- make course materials and methods as inclusive and literacy-friendly as possible; and
- help learners develop the language, literacy, numeracy and ICT essential to the course and to the real-life context to which it relates.

On the following pages you will find some examples of what 'integrating literacy' might mean in practice for teachers and learners. Not all of these examples will apply in every centre, or will suit every teacher or every learning group. What you find relevant will depend on your situation, the needs and strengths of your learners, the nature of your course/s and the teaching and learning approaches you already use.

Suggestions for the subject teacher or vocational trainer

Preparation and planning

- Take part in **staff development** in integrating language, literacy, numeracy and ICT with your subject teaching.
- **Know the literacy demands of your course.** Analyse the course to identify the most important language, literacy, numeracy and ICT that learners will need to engage with and develop as part of learning and assessment in the subject.

See Guideline 4 for steps in doing a literacy analysis of your course.

- **Know your learners' course-related literacy strengths and needs.**
Through the early phases of the course in particular, you will get to know learners' course-related literacy **strengths**. Be alert to and affirm the intelligences and abilities they bring to the learning situation. Help learners identify their relevant prior knowledge and experience, and highlight their competent uses of language, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Plan activities that help learners to value and use those strengths as they begin to take on the new language, concepts and literacies involved in the course.

Be alert to any support **needs** they may have, including in relation to the particular language, literacy, numeracy and ICT involved in the course, the centre and the workplace or other role to which the course relates.
- Build relevant literacy goals into your **course and lesson planning**, as informed by your literacy analysis of the course and your evolving knowledge of the learners' strengths and needs.
- Help learners to identify **personal** and **group goals and plans**. Build literacy into your **regular reviews of progress** with learners, revising goals and strategies as appropriate.

Cooperative and active learning

For each key course topic, enable learners to **interact, cooperate** and **collaborate**, using the combined resources of the group to improve learning for all.

- Use a mix of **individual** work, **small group** and **whole group work** for each key topic or task. 'Think-pair-share' routines might be useful, where learners can:
 - ◆ reflect individually on the topic or prepare part of the task, recording their findings or ideas in their own words;
 - ◆ form pairs or small groups to share their ideas or questions or decisions;
 - ◆ share these with the whole group. .
- Help learners to **build on** their relevant **prior knowledge and experience**. For example: When introducing a topic, ask learners to think about what they **already know** about the topic, and then what else they might **like to know**. Individually or in pairs or small groups, learners could create their own 'knowledge maps', using a choice of media (drawing, collage, 3-d model, computer graphic, two-column organizer). The combined knowledge maps can illustrate the whole group's prior knowledge of the topic, and the questions or interests that arise from that.

Such activities can:

- ◆ help learners build new knowledge on what they already know;
- ◆ awaken their interest or curiosity in relation to the topic;
- ◆ strengthen each learner's sense of themselves and of their peers as people with knowledge and experience to bring to the situation; and
- ◆ help to promote cooperative and constructive learning relationships.

This makes it easier for learners to engage with the new topic - including its language, literacy and numeracy - as individuals and as a cooperative learning group.

A variety of active learning methods

The best way of making sure that all members of the group engage with all of the subject content, especially the key concepts and learning points, is to use several different teaching methods to get the same message across.

Some people learn effectively by reading texts, listening to instructions and taking notes -and others do not. This does not mean that they cannot learn: rather, that people have different learning strengths and preferences. If you use a **variety of methods**, you will make sure that no one is left out or falls behind, either because of literacy issues or because their learning strengths are different to the dominant teaching methods.

Some teachers and learners find it helpful to think of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic ways of teaching and learning.

Visual: Looking and seeing

Auditory: Listening and hearing

Kinaesthetic: Acting and doing

Examples of **visual** methods of teaching and learning include:

- ◆ creating images-such as collages, drawings, paintings, mind-maps, flowcharts, posters, charts or graphs-to summarise key learning points, illustrate facts, processes, ideas, or pose problems and solutions;
- ◆ using images or statistical charts to trigger thought and discussion;
- ◆ search for relevant images and videos on the web; and
- ◆ taking photographs and making videos, to represent or illustrate key concepts, processes or information.

Examples of **auditory** methods include:

- ◆ using songs and poems related to the topic;
- ◆ asking learners to compose their own rhymes and raps to summarise key information, explain processes or concepts, express views and ideas;
- ◆ asking learners to find subject-relevant audio-recordings on the web;
- ◆ selecting or composing music (without words) to communicate the key learning; and
- ◆ asking learners to find simple mnemonics to remember phone numbers or other data.

Examples of **kinaesthetic** methods include:

- ◆ building 3D models of key facts and concepts;
 - ◆ using dance or mime or movement to convey main ideas and learning points;
 - ◆ forming group sculptures: members of the group form themselves into a human 'sculpture' that represents the main points they wish to communicate; and
 - ◆ creating and playing team games, quizzes, competitions, involving physical movement and a mix of materials and activities (for example, board games, computer games, card games).
- Remember to '**mix and match**'. For example, if the learners form a group 'sculpture' to demonstrate a learning point or convey an opinion, it can be photographed as a 'family portrait' - a visual reminder of the learning involved. Learners could use appropriate software to create digital photostories, adding audio-tracks, captions and subtitles as they find useful. Mixing media and activities can engage more learners more actively, while creating resources that will be useful to current and future learners.
- Such activities can be alternatives to print based methods and at the same time can directly support **literacy development**. In creating a subject-related board game, for example, learners might engage in:
- ◆ reading (books and web) to research the topic and identify useful challenges and questions and checking the accuracy of answers or solutions;
 - ◆ phrasing and writing the questions appropriately;
 - ◆ using the numeracy involved in making the equipment - for example calculating the dimensions of the board;
 - ◆ planning scoring systems or rules, and ways of recording scores;
 - ◆ working out the costs of manufacturing and retailing the game; and
 - ◆ planning some subject-related writing, numeracy and ICT tasks as part of the game's questions or challenges.

In such activities, subject-learning and literacy development are integrated with the thinking involved in constructing the game, and in playing it for enjoyment and learning.

You may also find it helpful to refer to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory (1983) as a useful aid to planning a variety of 'entry points' to learning in your subject area.

Language development and verbal communication

- Ensure learners have opportunities to hear, see and use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts, as part of deepening their understanding of the concepts and developing knowledge and skill in the subject or vocational area.
- Provide plenty of **opportunities for formal and informal discussion** in the subject classes, so that learner can express what they think, know and wonder about the concepts and topics you are exploring. When learners express in spoken language their thoughts and views and understandings, it helps them to clarify their thinking and develop communication skills. It will also help you as the teacher to hear and clarify any misunderstandings or questions that arise in relation to the topic.
- Encourage confidence and skill in verbal communication through activities **such as**:
 - ◆ role-play or simulations;
 - ◆ verbal presentations by individual learners to the whole group;
 - ◆ team games involving discussion and negotiation within teams and turn-taking in presenting the team's answers or solutions to the whole group;
 - ◆ structured group discussion;
 - ◆ debates;
 - ◆ learners teaching each other; and
 - ◆ asking learners to do some of the routine spoken communication that you would normally do yourself - for example, on a catering course, using the phone to place orders with suppliers.

Helping learners follow and understand a talk or verbal instructions:

A lot of learning can take place when the teacher summarises, describes, explains, and the learners listen actively and with a purpose. This method is most effective when

- ◆ learners do some initial preparation;
- ◆ talk is carefully structured and timed;
- ◆ listening is active, not passive; and
- ◆ follow-up activities consolidate learning.

Before your talk:

Introduce the topic, including any key words that might be new to the group. Ask the learners to **do** something to prepare to focus on the topic: for example, to think about what the key words might mean; to discuss what they already know about this

topic, or to say what they would like to know. You could also set a task for learners to help them focus on the talk: for example, 'listen carefully so that after the talk you can make a diagram summarising the three main points'.

During the talk:

- Explain any new or unfamiliar words, or words that may be familiar but mean different things in this context. **Revisit** and **remind** learners of these words and their meanings when the chance comes up during your talk.
- **Structure** what you say in ways that help learners to actively follow, understand and think about it. For example:
 - ◆ **Say how long you will be talking for** - how long the group will need to focus on your talk.
 - ◆ **Preview** the overall content of the talk: say how many **main points** you will cover and give a one-line summary of each.
 - ◆ **Break the talk** up into short, manageable sections based on the main points.
 - ◆ **Pause** after each section to **ask questions** to check out understanding, and to encourage questions so that you can clarify or briefly **recap** before you move on.
 - ◆ At the end, re-state the overall topic, give a one-line recap on each of the main points, and **summarise** the key learning point/s.
 - ◆ Invite comments and questions.

If you are going to speak for more than twenty minutes, **stop after ten minutes**, and again at ten minute intervals to give the listeners a small, quick 'energiser': for example, "discuss this question with your neighbour for 60 seconds," or fill in a checklist, change seats, ask questions.

After your talk:

- Allow enough **time** for the learners to process the main points and to formulate their questions, opinions and comments.
- Facilitate individual and group **activities** to help in this. Ask learners to **discuss** the topic in pairs and/or in small groups as time allows.
- Give a small number of questions to **focus and guide** their discussion. For example learners could individually identify, then share and discuss in pairs and small groups:

- ◆ one **main point** they learned from the talk;
 - ◆ two or three **details** associated with the main point;
 - ◆ one point they **already knew** and would like to comment on or add to; and
 - ◆ one **question** they have about the content.
- Ask learners to **do** something to sum up their learning from or response to the talk and the discussions. For example, they could make a 3-D model, paint a picture, make a mind-map, compose a rap, or write a 140-character tweet to help them understand and explain the main points.

Note-taking from talks

Taking notes on the content of a talk is a complex literacy task which involves several skills: the ability to listen; to write quickly; to use abbreviations; to summarise key points; and to tell the difference between main points and details and examples. If learners want or need to take notes during the talk, it would be worth spending some time sharing ideas and examples of how to do this, in the context of your subject area.

One suggestion could be to use a **graphic organiser**: a format or structure for recording the key points. For example, the template below might help some learners to listen out for and note the main points and important details from the talk, and any questions that occur to them.

There are many variations and alternatives possible. Learners could, for example, use **flow-charts** or **mind-maps**. Over time, in the early phases of the course, introduce learners to a few different formats for taking useful notes. The choice will depend on the purpose of the talk and on learners' preferences.

Example of a template or graphic organiser for taking notes

Topic:		
Main Points	Examples/Details	Questions?

Teaching how to use a graphic organiser

- ◆ **Clarify the purpose** of the graphic organiser or template.
- ◆ **Explain** how to use it.
- ◆ **Demonstrate** how to use it (on whiteboard or flipchart).
Work through an example. You may need a willing group member or another teacher to ‘give a talk’ on something for a couple of minutes, or perhaps play a very brief recorded talk downloaded from the internet, so that you can model how to use the graphic organiser. Talk through what you are doing: ‘think aloud’ each step as you construct your template or show how to use it. (“Now, I want to be sure that I get the main point, so I’ll...”; “I also want to get the key details, so...”).
- ◆ **Work through another example**, this time **with the learners**: as you go through each step ask the learners to say what you are doing and why, and what you should do next.
- ◆ Give **guided practice**: select a recorded talk, and ask learners to design and/ or use a graphic organiser to take notes from it. Observe and support them as necessary, with appropriate prompts, reminders and questions.

Reading strategies in the subject areas

Confident readers don't read everything in the same way but use different strategies depending on what they are reading and what the purpose is. For example,

- ◆ If we want to find out what time a TV programme starts, we do not read the whole TV page: we **scan** it quickly and home in on the right time and channel.
- ◆ If we want to find out if a health and safety booklet about our area covers the right ground, we do not read it from cover to cover: we **skim** through it quickly, looking at the table of contents, section headings and sub-headings, index if there is one, illustrations, captions.
- ◆ If we are following a new recipe for the first time, or assembling flat-pack furniture, we have to **read** text or pictures very **closely**, paying attention to every word and abbreviation.

You are already using these strategies yourself in your own reading of your subject-related texts, and you can pass them on to your learners in the natural course of your work.

- **Model** effective reading of the relevant kinds of material, in ways appropriate to your situation. **For example**, a catering instructor or cookery teacher can **think aloud** the steps in reading a recipe ('We're making lasagne for 20 people today... Let's scan the 'Contents' page to find the recipe...It should come under the '**Main Course**' section...Found it...Now, how much flour will we need...I'll just scan the '**Ingredients**'...Got it...')
- **Explain** how you are reading as you work with the group on a practical task. You can use 'read aloud and think aloud' strategy in relation to any reading, whether it is a short set of instructions or reading a chapter from an academic book.
- Guide learners' reading, in the theory or study part of the class, by drawing attention to the reading strategies most appropriate for the task: for example, "we don't need to read this whole page, just scan it to find the paragraph where x is mentioned and we'll read that."
- Use 'self talk' as you decide what to read and as you do the reading. ("Now, what's this chapter about; **wonder** will it help me in finding out about X or Y... What's the title? Okay...I'll just check the **headings**; okay; I'll just **skim** through to get the **gist**...I wonder does it say anything about Y...I'll just scan to see if it's mentioned...').

Model the things that effective readers of the particular material do automatically, before, during and after reading.

Before reading:

- Clarify the overall purpose for reading the particular handout or text: for example, “we are reading this in order to get important information about safety”.
- Agree a concrete task or choice of tasks that the learners will carry out after reading. For example ‘as part of this we will...’:
 - ◆ create a flow chart of the process;
 - ◆ create a bank of questions and answers for our board game;
 - ◆ find information, facts and figures about X;
 - ◆ prepare a presentation on Y; and
 - ◆ select key words and phrases and make a word wall or concept map or glossary.
- **Preview the text** with the group. Give an overview of its **content**, point out its **structure**, and indicate the **signposts** that guide the reader: for example, the headings, sub-headings, page numbers, any charts, graphs and illustrations.
- Explain any new, subject-specific **terminology**. Pay particular attention to common or familiar words that have one meaning in ‘everyday life’, but another in the context of your subject.
- Help learners prepare to read with more focus by providing, or helping them to identify, **specific questions** they could keep in mind as they read.
- Help learners to identify and draw on their **prior knowledge** and experience of the topic: for example, ask ‘what do you know about this topic already?’ and facilitate discussion and other activities on this. This will help learners to be ready to read with more interest, confidence and understanding.
- Clarify and discuss the reading **strategies** to use for the particular material: skimming, scanning, close reading?
- Read the piece aloud in a way that helps the learners to understand its meaning, and that also demonstrates what ‘good readers’ do when reading this kind of material.

During reading:

- Encourage learners to use '**self-talk**' as they read, pausing occasionally to ask themselves questions about what they are reading: What has the main point been in what I have just read? Do I understand it? What questions do I have about it?
- Encourage re-reading if necessary before moving on.
- Encourage learners to predict what might come next.
- Encourage and support learners to take useful notes as they read, as appropriate to the purpose.
- Encourage collaborative reading, in small groups. Brief learners to use the 'before and during' strategies you have modelled, in the context of a clear purpose for the reading.

After reading:

- Allow enough **time** for the learners to read and process what they have read, and to formulate their questions or comments before carrying out practical activities based on the text.
- Facilitate individual and group **activities** associated with the text.
- Ask learners to discuss what they have read, in pairs and/or in small groups. Give a small number of questions to focus and guide their discussion.
- Ask learners to **do** something to sum up their learning from or response to what they have read. Perhaps you and the learners agreed a particular task or challenge, such as those listed under 'Before' above. Learners could
 - ◆ translate the main points of the text into another format, such as a mind-map or flowchart or graph;
 - ◆ prepare a verbal presentation;
 - ◆ teach someone else in the group;
 - ◆ design a poster;
 - ◆ tweet a summary or a question; and
 - ◆ produce a video or a digital photostory illustrating the main points.

- Facilitate learners to develop a **glossary** of key terms for each topic.
- Where time allows, involve learners in making and using interactive **word walls**. Learners can identify key words and concepts in the course texts, and design a word wall that communicates their meaning visually and that can be a resource for varied learning activities. The word wall is not a static or permanent feature of the environment: learners redesign it to suit the topic in hand at any given time.

You could also ask learners to make a '**number wall**' or maths poster related to the topic they are exploring, to convey the relevant statistics, measurements, mathematical concepts or processes involved.

- Develop versions of subject handouts at **different levels of reading complexity** as appropriate to your learners' needs. Be sure to maintain the **appropriate level and complexity of content**.

Summary versions of texts are helpful for all learners in the group as a revision aid. Appropriately used, as part of a range of texts at different levels of complexity, they can help **scaffold learners' development of reading skills**.

- Encourage and support learners to work together to make teaching and learning materials.

Tips for making printed materials easier to read

- ◆ Use minimum 12 point font in a sans serif font such as Ariel, Verdana or Calibri.
- ◆ Leave plenty of space between lines and between paragraphs.
- ◆ Use sub-headings to help guide the reader.
- ◆ Use images when and if they help highlight the key points.
- ◆ Use a photocopier to enlarge published handouts and other texts if necessary.

Some learners may find some of the following helpful:

- ◆ Use coloured paper for handouts (pastel).
- ◆ Use different colours to highlight different learning points.
- ◆ Provide overlays or transparencies in different colours to cover reading material. Learners can choose the ones that suit them best.
- ◆ Provide written information in audio - or video-recorded formats.
- ◆ Show how to change the font size or background colour on the computer screen to make reading on-screen easier.
- ◆ Use icons and images as well as written labels and captions.

Writing in the subject areas

Different subjects and vocational areas make different writing demands on learners. When you have examined the essential literacy content of your subject, you will have a good idea of the kind of writing learners must be able to do as part of the relevant subject or vocational area. Consider whether all of the writing they do with you arises from the essential demands of the subject area, or from the methods and materials you are using, or from the requirements of assessment processes for certification.

When you have clarified what learners need to be able to write, you can help them to develop skills and confidence to handle the writing tasks that come up in the subject or vocational area.

- Clarify the different **types of writing** learners will need in your course: **for example**, making rough notes for plans; writing lists, labels, captions, sentences, paragraphs, extended prose.
- **Explain the various stages of writing** - planning, drafting, editing, writing and proofing. Explain and demonstrate how they apply to the specific kinds of writing learners do on your course and/or in the related workplace or other role.
- Explain the appropriate **structure** for the particular written task. **Demonstrate:** work through an example with the group. For example, agree a topic for a writing task and demonstrate how to **plan** the **content**. Help learners identify the possible **main points** they could make, and a few detailed points for each one. This will help learners to **structure** their written work appropriately.
- Facilitate **teacher-guided collaborative writing**, in pairs, small groups and whole group. For example, assign a different aspect of the topic to each group, asking them to research it and write a piece on it to (a) help their colleagues to understand that aspect of the topic well; and (b) contribute to creating a whole-group text that they and future classes can use as a resource for learning in that topic.
- **Develop routines of self-assessment and teacher feedback.** This is a strategy that applies to all areas of the work, not just to writing. In relation to writing, an example might be as follows:

Before asking learners to do written work in relation to the subject area, take time to develop and agree with them the **criteria** for the work. Do this by encouraging learners to ask themselves, How will I know if this is good enough? Help the group to develop an agreed short checklist to answer that question. Ensure they pitch the **agreed criteria** at a reasonable level for the group at that time: challenging and achievable with effort by your learners.

After the learners have completed the written work, encourage them to **self-assess** their work against the agreed criteria, forming their own judgement of its strengths and of where they might make improvements.

Give your own feedback **based on the agreed criteria**.

This process of self-assessment and teacher feedback helps learners to develop learning-to-learn skills as well as specific writing skills, as part of working on the course content.

- If learners present written work in your subject which appears untidy or is difficult to read, do not assume that this is carelessness or laziness. Often, it can represent a lot of learner time and effort. Respond respectfully to learners' written work; focus on the content, and give guidance on presentation, spelling, punctuation and other aspects as relevant to your course objectives and to your learners' needs.
- Encourage learners to keep a **learning journal**. This will reinforce the subject learning and it will give useful, relevant practice in writing and will also help learners to take increasing control of their own learning.
- Discuss in the group a range of strategies for learning spellings. Explain that what works for one person may not work for another: the important thing is to know when it is important to have accurate spelling, to try out a range of strategies for learning spellings, and to use those that work best for us. Encourage learners to use the **key words** on **word walls** and in **glossaries** as a resource to aid learners with spelling. Have a printed dictionary available to learners at all times, and encourage them to use their smartphone or tablets to access **online dictionaries**.
- Share suggestions in relation to other sub-skills of writing, such as punctuation, as appropriate to your learners. You could have a 'tip of the week' approach, focusing on particular punctuation or spelling points as relevant to your learners' needs.

Numeracy in the subject areas

- Many courses require learners to acquire and apply numeracy skills of various kinds. For example:
 - ◆ Catering courses require learners to be able to weigh accurately, to calculate quantities and proportions, to calculate costs.
 - ◆ Woodwork, metalwork and construction courses require learners to understand and accurately use linear measurement, to calculate area, to calculate costs of materials, to estimate the cost of a particular job.
 - ◆ Horticulture and agriculture require learners to be able to carry out a range of calculations - the quantities of seeds, plants, fertilizer are needed for a given area, the area a farm building should be if it is to accommodate a given number of animals in accordance with regulations.
 - ◆ Interior design, fashion and furnishings courses require similar skills of measuring, estimating, calculating, costing.

Learners need to be skilled at the practical, applied numeracy needed for the job. They need to be able to read and understand the mathematical symbols and language that arise in your subject area; to be able to make appropriate records of their own calculations, costing or measurements; and to decide what degree of accuracy is essential for the particular purpose.

- Check whether learners understand the relevant maths terminology and signs they may meet in your subject area (for example, plus, minus, division, multiplication, equals and all their synonyms). Teach or reinforce these as you would other terminology related to your course content.
- Recognise that many learners may have bad memories of maths learning. Some ways to reduce learners' fear of maths are:
 - ◆ Be patient and take time to explain concepts using different examples and language. Allow learners time to think and to discuss possible solutions to any maths problems before seeking their responses. Discussion encourages reasoning and understanding; it encourages collaboration; it erodes the notion that the teacher alone has the expertise, and helps learners to see how much they already know and understand, and how much they can learn from one another.
 - ◆ Highlight relevant examples of numeracy as they arise in the vocational skills work or the subject content.

- Use higher level questioning in relation to number problems that arise in the course. Instead of asking “What is ...[the answer]?”, try to ask more searching questions that encourage reasoning and visualisation; for example: “When else might you use ...?” or “Can you suggest times when this might not be the best way to solve this problem?”
- Create an atmosphere in which learners feel safe to make mistakes. Mistakes should be seen as valuable ways to learn, showing misconceptions that learners and teachers can rectify together, without fear of embarrassment.
- Help learners to view their subject or vocational area through ‘maths eyes’. Help reinforce the relevance of maths to the particular subject area and also to the learners’ everyday lives. Ask learners to notice when they and others are using maths in their activities inside and outside the centre. Do the learners have to fill in grants or allowance claims or other such forms? Do they need to write their own timetable or to keep to one already drawn up? Encourage learners to observe the maths embedded in their subject, in their recreation activities and in the work of the administration, catering and other staff in the centre. See www.mathseyes.ie for more on real world mathematics.

ICT in the subject areas

- Become familiar with the digital technology involved in your course, and in the real life role to which the course relates. Build the relevant ICT development into your course as learning objectives, and cooperate with colleagues as necessary to support learners with this. Get to know the everyday technology for communication and information that your learners use, and try to update your skills in this area if and as necessary.

If your learners have smartphones or tablets, plan how to encourage and support them in using these as a learning resource on your course. Facilitate learners to use the smartboard (if available in your situation) as an interactive resource for learning.

- Find out about websites relevant to your subject and encourage learners to use these. For example, before beginning teacher-led work on a new topic on the course, ask learners to do some advance research online in relation to the topic and to prepare a short introductory lesson on it. Depending on your learners, they could do this individually or in small groups, as 'homework' or as an in-class activity. Be sure that you have identified appropriate sources online first, so that you can give the learners some relevant links to start their research. Learners can then lead the first lesson in the particular topic, presenting their findings, views and questions on the topic based on their research.
- Inform learners of online resources for developing literacy and numeracy, such as www.writeon.ie, so that they can use these as distant learning resources. Use blended learning approaches as far as possible in your situation – a mix of independent online learning and face-to-face teacher-guided learning.
- Sometimes, learners may be more familiar than the teacher with the latest digital tools for everyday communication, while the teacher may be more comfortable with using print literacy. Using both digital and print literacies as resources for learning can give opportunities for reversing 'teacher-learner' roles and for making literacy development a normal part of learning for all.

Materials

In vocational education and training programmes, as far as possible use the **authentic materials** and real-world reading, writing, numeracy and ICT activities that are used in the workplace or other role to which the course relates.

While it is possible and advisable to develop a supply of re-usable support materials, preferably as an online resource for tutors and learners, keep in mind that the most effective materials are those that arise from and respond to your current learners' work, needs and objectives. Therefore as much as possible **involve your learners in creating integrated learning materials**.

For example, learners could work together to create, with your guidance, a range of materials such as those listed below.

- **Glossaries** of course-related terminology:
 - ◆ Involve learners in creating the glossaries.
 - ◆ Encourage learners to use the glossaries as required to check understanding, usage and spellings.
 - ◆ Show the words in the context of relevant sentences or phrases (not just single words).
 - ◆ Give a definition and explanation.
 - ◆ Illustrate with graphics if useful.

Templates to help learners become familiar with the structure of key writing assignments

Models of written work and **summaries** of key texts

In vocational courses, especially those run within short timeframes, skills such as spelling and punctuation and basic numeracy are not the main responsibility of subject teachers. However, when and if appropriate to your learners and course, you could facilitate learners to design and use materials for practising those skills. Learners could, for example, design comprehension, cloze, sentence completion and other exercises centred on the key terminology and concepts of your subject. Learners could also create numeracy resources such as multiplication squares or ready-reckoners.

Motivating and encouraging learners to use and develop literacy

As a teacher in the subject or vocational area that is the learners' main interest, you are in a good position to help learners develop the particular literacy they need on your course and in the outside role to which it relates. As an expert in the subject or the vocational area, learners may see you as representing the role to which the learner aspires (NRDC: 2006). This relationship of respect and trust means that, as well as building literacy development into your own classes, you may be able to motivate and encourage learners to use any additional supports available to them.

- **Build in opportunities for your learners to experience success in using literacy, numeracy and ICT for meaningful purposes** as part of your course. Depending on your situation and learners, perhaps some of the routine tasks you do yourself as part of your vocational course could be carried out by group members? For example, in a catering course, could learners help prepare and send written or emailed orders for materials, ingredients, equipment? Could they use the phone, internet or email to arrange a class outing or to invite guest speakers to the class?
- Meet regularly with the literacy facilitator in your centre, to discuss your learners' needs and progress. This will help you in integrating literacy into your coursework; it will also help ensure that specialist literacy tuition includes an informed focus on the learners' course-related literacy needs.
- You can encourage learners to find out about and take part in specialist literacy and numeracy tuition if they so wish, for example by
 - ◆ showing a positive approach to developing your own literacy, including digital literacies for communication and learning;
 - ◆ showing a high regard for the centre's literacy service, or the local adult literacy service; and
 - ◆ sharing information on how learners – and any of their friends or family or neighbours – can access that service.

It might be helpful if you explain to learners that

- ◆ people's literacy needs vary over time, according to the tasks or roles we take on in life;
- ◆ people starting further education and training at all levels often need to brush up on their literacy skills or develop new ones to meet the demands of the course; and
- ◆ it makes sense to avail of the specific literacy support on offer.

Suggestions for literacy and numeracy specialists working as part of a cross-curricular team in further education and training centres

The literacy facilitator

In order to provide an effective integrated literacy service, the centre should have a designated staff member whose responsibility it is to promote a literacy focus in all aspects of the programme and to facilitate staff in integrating literacy.

The literacy facilitator should be familiar with and skilled in

- ◆ adult and youth education principles and practice;
 - ◆ aliteracy and numeracy development methodologies; and
 - ◆ integrating language, literacy, numeracy and everyday ICT across the curriculum.
- Contribute to the development and review of the centre's strategic plan for literacy.
 - Promote literacy awareness among management, staff and learners. Facilitate the literacy strand of staff and learner induction; design relevant in service training.
 - Cooperate with subject staff to identify the literacy elements of the courses available in the centre and of the various phases of the programme. Ensure these are recorded and are accessible to subject staff, literacy staff and learners.
 - Cooperate with subject staff and learners in identifying learners' course related literacy needs. Jointly plan how to address these. Possible models for a team-based, integrated response include
 - ◆ supporting subject staff in developing integrated lesson plans and materials;
 - ◆ team-teaching: subject staff and literacy staff jointly facilitating classes; and
 - ◆ ensuring that the specialist literacy sessions include a focus on identified course-related needs.
 - Cooperate with subject staff and literacy staff to develop integrated literacy materials.
 - Develop proposals for and participate in **whole-centre activities** to promote literacy and numeracy development. These might include
 - ◆ producing a centre magazine or newsletter;
 - ◆ organising reading days, with guest poets and writers;
 - ◆ showcasing learners' work (plays; readings; exhibitions); and
 - ◆ organising regular team games, quizzes, competitions with staff and learner involvement and including a literacy and numeracy focus.

- Develop proposals and materials for **cross-subject routines** designed to provide literacy practice and promote literacy development. These might include
 - ◆ consistent procedures for learner evaluation of classes and courses (written, oral, graphic);
 - ◆ all staff facilitating learners in keeping a learning journal; and
 - ◆ all staff encouraging learners to keep a personal dictionary related to the various skills or subjects.

- Literacy-proof centre materials for use in learner induction. Ensure that key documents such as Codes of Conduct, Rules and Regulations, Health and Safety documents are in plain language and that literacy support materials related to those topics are available.

- Ensure that individual learners and class groups are met during induction, to:
 - ◆ identify any concerns about the literacy demands of their course; and
 - ◆ inform them of the supports available in relation to these.

- Build links with the local Adult Literacy Service, with other further education and training providers and with any employers involved in the course, to ensure that the progression needs of people with literacy difficulties are addressed.

- Ensure that a learning plan is negotiated with each learner and each class group, which includes a focus on personal and course-related literacy.

- Ensure that records are maintained of learners' literacy work within the subject area and within the specialist literacy session. Facilitate learners and staff in reviewing learners' progress in relation to literacy, on a regular basis and with reference to the individual learning plan.

- Ensure learners with special needs have access to appropriate specialist assessment and tuition and to exam supports.

Literacy and numeracy tutors

- Literacy and numeracy tutors on vocational education and training programmes should be familiar with and skilled in adult and youth education principles and practice, and in literacy numeracy development methodologies.

- In the specialist literacy and numeracy sessions, an integrated approach means that the tutor will
 - ◆ be aware of the key language, literacy and numeracy demands of the centre's programmes and courses and include work on these according to the learners' needs;

- ◆ liaise with subject staff – either directly or through the centre’s literacy facilitator - to keep abreast of course-related literacy and numeracy requirements and with learners’ progress in relation to those, and to jointly plan how to support the learners;
- ◆ ensure that materials available within the dedicated literacy and numeracy session include subject-specific materials; and
- ◆ work with learners to identify and address other literacy development goals, not directly related to their courses.

Conclusion

NALA has published these guidelines as a resource for centres working to integrate literacy support and development into their courses and other services.

We welcome feedback on the document, which we expect to regularly update and revise in the light of ongoing research and practice.

If you would like to discuss the guidelines or would like further information about NALA's training and support work on integrating literacy, please contact us. Our contact details are:

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

NALA Cork
21 Lavitt's Quay
Cork
Tel: (021) 427 8669

Tel: (01) 412 7900
Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65
Email: info@nala.ie

References and further reading

Casey, H. et al (2006). “*You wouldn’t expect a maths teacher to teach plastering...*” *Embedding literacy, language and numeracy in post-16 vocational programmes - the impact on learning and achievement*. National Research and Development Centre (England)

Department of Education and Science Further Education Development Unit (2009). *Promoting access and progression in adult learning: Guidelines to Enhance Cooperation between Back to Education Initiative and Adult Literacy Programmes*. http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Back-to-Education-Initiative-BTEI-/btei_adult_literacy.pdf

Department of Education and Skills (2011). *Literacy for learning and life: the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020*. http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Literacy-and-Numeracy/lit_num_strat_summary.pdf

Department of Education and Skills (2012). *Adult Literacy Programme: Operational guidelines for providers*. <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Adult-Literacy/Adult-Literacy-Operational-Guidelines-to-VECs.pdf>

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2007). *Tomorrow’s Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy*. Dublin: Forfás. http://www.skillsstrategy.ie/pdfs/egfsn070306_skills_strategy_report_webopt.pdf

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Hegarty, A. and Feeley, M. (2009). *Literacy-friendly further education and training*. NALA: Dublin. <http://www.nala.ie>

IVEA (2012). *The Integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy in VEC Further Education Courses*. IVEA.

IVEA -NALA (2012). *A Policy and Strategy for Integrating Literacy and Numeracy into FET: Proposal to SOLAS*.

McSkeane, E (2009). *Living Literacy: a whole-organisation approach to literacy in a vocational training setting*. NALA: Dublin. <http://www.nala.ie/resources/living-literacy-whole-organisation-approach-integrating-literacy-vocational-training>

NALA (2009). *Curriculum Development; an evolving model for adult literacy and numeracy education*. NALA: Dublin.

NALA (2012). *Guidelines for good adult literacy work*. <http://www.nala.ie/resources/search?keys=Guidelines+for+good+adult+literacy+work>

Sticht, Thomas. (2007). *Integrating Literacy Works!* Presentation at NALA-NUI Maynooth Conference, January 23rd 2007. www.nala.ie

TEC (Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand) (2008). *Embedding Literacy and Numeracy: Theoretical Framework and Guidelines*. https://ds.unitec.ac.nz/dsweb/Get/Document-559/Acad+02c_4+Embedding+Literacy+and+Numeracy.pdf

The National Adult Literacy Agency

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is an independent member-based organisation, working on improving adult literacy in Ireland since 1980. We are:

- the voice of adults wishing to improve their literacy skills, and
- committed to raising adult literacy levels.



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

NALA Cork

21 Lavitt's Quay
Cork
Tel: (021) 427 8669

Tel: (01) 412 7900

Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65

Email: info@nala.ie

Websites: www.nala.ie

www.writeon.ie (Distance learning website)
www.simplyput.ie (Plain English website)
www.makingcents.ie (Financial literacy website)
www.healthliteracy.ie (Health literacy website)
www.helpmykidlearn.ie (Family learning website)

Follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/nalairreland

Follow us on Twitter at: twitter.com/nalairreland

NALA's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/nationaladulthoodliteracy

