



Literacy Matters

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Adult Literacies Funding Awards

4 Successful bids

Highland Libraries have been awarded £4,239 for making computer software for literacies learners, recommended by ABE, available in every library in Highland through the People's Network. Librarians, ABE staff, tutors and learners will be given training on how to use these resources.



Highland Libraries – Inverness Area have been awarded £7,334 to allow them to provide resources for adults with low literacy and numeracy skills and to promote library resources to target groups. They also plan to provide resources in other venues to reach those who would not normally go to a library. They will provide awareness raising training for all library staff and will establish stronger links with other agencies.

The libraries projects will run from April to December 2004 although, of course, the resources will continue to be available after that.

Eden Court Theatre has been awarded £1,540 to finance a project of Adult Literacy through theatre visits. Eden Court's Outreach team will provide six weekly workshop sessions for up to 12 learners. The sessions will explore a variety of theatre topics and will involve some elements of written communication made at the individual group member's own level. It is hoped

that these sessions will appeal to learners who are not served by more formal methods. The project will run from May to June 2004.

Adult Basic Education has been awarded £112,000 to enable it to maintain, and possibly extend, the increased hours for the Area Co-ordinators for the next financial year.

The expansion of Adult Basic Education over the last 2 years has been a great success. Several ITALL courses have been delivered with a subsequent increase in the number of volunteer tutors available which in turn has led to an increase in learner numbers. This has also allowed capacity to accommodate the increase in learner numbers during the first phase of the national Big Plus Campaign. ABE also now has the potential for staff to liaise with other agencies to provide advice and practical support to other literacies initiatives.

Funding Deadlines

The next deadlines for applications for Adult Literacies Funding are:



- Friday 28th May
- Monday 23rd August
- Monday 4th October
- Monday 6th December

Decisions will be made about a fortnight later and successful applicants informed as soon as possible after that.

An updated application form was issued in January and is available both in hard copy and electronic format. We would be grateful if all applicants for funding would use this new form.

If you have an idea for a project but you are not sure of how to carry it forward, please contact us at the Adult Literacies Office as we would be very happy to discuss it with you.

CAVSS

Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills

CAVSS is a new approach to literacy and numeracy support for vocational students, aimed at improving and



enhancing outcomes for all students enrolled on vocational training courses. It was developed in 1999 by the Western Australian Department of Education and Training and has been successfully employed by them for the past four years.

The Traditional Approach

Traditionally, support has been thought of as remedial support for 'students who have literacy and numeracy problems', generally the two or three in the group whose skills were so limited that, without help, they would be unlikely to pass the course. Usually, these students were withdrawn from practical or workshop sessions for remedial sessions or they attended out-of-hours tutorials for remediation.

However, being singled out as needing support makes students vulnerable to the reaction of their peers and can have a negative effect on their confidence and motivation. They resent missing out on their vocational training, especially the practical aspects where they can perform equally with their peers. It is also difficult to ensure that remedial support offered in isolation is relevant to the industry training. Not all remedial teachers have acquired a knowledge of industry competencies and how literacy and numeracy are applied to these tasks.

The CAVSS Approach

The CAVSS approach recognises that vocational training makes many literacy and numeracy demands on every student. Some of these demands relate to the workplace competencies being taught while others relate to

teaching and assessment methods and materials used by lecturers, many of which may be more difficult than those encountered in the workplace. Almost every student will have some problem with at least some of the demands.

The CAVSS teacher's role is to teach students the literacy and numeracy skills they need to pass the vocational module. The CAVSS lecturer spends up to four hours per week teaching in the classroom or workshop alongside the vocational lecturer.

CAVSS delivery is a collaborative undertaking. The two lecturers share the role of instructor, usually taking it in turns to instruct the whole group while the other lecturer moves among the students and provides advice and support to individuals or small groups. Students are not singled out according to their need for support and neither lecturer is relegated to just teaching the students with the weakest skills.



The vocational lecturer teaches the vocational competencies as usual and the CAVSS lecturer teaches all the students to select and apply literacy and numeracy skills, as necessary, for the successful completion of those competencies. For example, if the students are learning how to draw up plans for a building project, the CAVSS teacher might focus on measurement skills and basic geometry.

As a result, students have access to an extra teacher with specialist literacy and numeracy teaching skills for a few hours every week to help them apply theoretical skills and knowledge directly to their vocational training and assessment activities. The literacy and numeracy skills they need are taught when they need them, as they need them, and in the context of applying

those skills to actual industry tasks. No student need do extra work, be withdrawn from class, miss out on practical sessions, take on extra hours of study or do any extra exams or assignments. Discussing, revising and learning literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the vocational training becomes a normal, unremarkable activity which means that students are not self-conscious about needing to revise maths or literacy skills.



Students welcome and make good use of CAVSS and evidence suggests that a few hours a week of CAVSS can make up to a 30 per cent improvement in vocational course outcomes. Although CAVSS will not meet all the literacy or numeracy needs of every student on every vocational course, it will, when applied by a suitably skilled CAVSS teacher, improve outcomes in mainstream vocational delivery and it is applicable to a wide range of students and client groups.



In the North of Scotland, CAVSS is currently being used at Banff and Buchan College, Aberdeen Prison and North Highland College. It is hoped that other providers of vocational education and training in Highland will also try this approach. Adult Literacies money is available should any provider wish to pilot a project in this area. For more information about CAVSS, please contact us at Adult Literacies.

Visit by Simon Kisira

Education Action International - Uganda

In February this year we were asked by Education Action International if we could provide some practical examples of literacy learning for a literacy worker from Uganda who was to visit the Inverness area.

Simon Kisira who works with Education Action International is in Britain doing some post-graduate studying for a few months and was primarily visiting Inverness Royal Academy where a previous connection had been made. He himself is involved in adult literacy in Uganda so he was keen to gather any ideas for the teaching of adult literacy that he could find.

As it happened, the day he was with us had been earmarked for a Learners' Forum in Inverness. Simon, and Oliver Kemp who accompanied him, were able to attend this event being run in the Spectrum Centre by Jill Crawshaw, the ABE Co-ordinator for Inverness. Consulting with learners about their learning is one idea he is going to take back to Uganda with him, he said. Another is the potential of using culture in literacy learning after the learners' group expressed a wish to learn more about Uganda. He also took back the very warm welcome that the learners gave him (despite both visitors struggling with the local accent!)

The Inverness folk were as keen to find out about literacy in Uganda as Simon was to find out about literacy in Scotland and hopefully a future email connection may be set up between learners in both countries. Certainly literacy learning in Uganda is a very different ball game. Many adults have had no schooling at all and often have to be taught the very basics from how to even hold a pen or pencil. Adults sit in on children's school classes and this can increase class sizes from an official maximum of 110 (including up to 30 adults) to anything up to 180 (including up to 70 adults). And although a school building programme is in operation, often classes are held outside in the shade of mango trees.

The adults who accompany their children may be parents but the majority are probably grandparents, as a combination of AIDS and hostilities has decimated the younger adult population. The adult learners are also predominantly men. They work in the fields from early morning till the sun gets too hot and then have the leisure to sit with the classes in the shade. The women are usually too busy with family and catering to enjoy this luxury (something that may strike a chord the world over, I suspect!)



In the afternoon the visitors spoke with Norman Ross, the Prison Literacy Liaison Officer and Julie Simmons, ABE Strategy Officer and then they went to Dingwall, through flurries of snow which delighted them, and spoke with Mark Richardson from the Alness/Invergordon Family Literacy Project, Norma Christie, the ABE Co-ordinator and Sheena Paterson of Ross-shire Libraries. Everyone found the visitors' stories of literacy in Uganda interesting and the video they showed of people engaged in their project was inspiring. There was an exchange of ideas and an agreement to keep the contact that has now been established going. Hopefully learners in both countries will benefit from this.

If anyone would like to see some pictures of the Ugandan project in Bugiri, with which Simon is involved, some information is available on the Education Action International website at www.education-action.org

Adult Literacies – The Celtic Connection

Nairn 24th and 25th March

Learning Connections, together with the North of Scotland Literacies Partnerships, recently organised a one and a half day conference at the Newton Hotel, Nairn. The event was attended by over 80 literacies practitioners from the 7 most northerly partnerships in Scotland.

The programme was introduced by Lillias Noble, Head of Learning Connections and there followed an inspiring talk by Inez Bailey, Director of NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) the Republic of Ireland. Inez spoke about the Irish experience with particular emphasis on providing literacies support in rural areas. For us in the North of Scotland, the Irish situation provides many useful lessons about how to move forward in literacy. Delegates also attended 3 workshops each over the 2 days, selected from a choice of 8 covering a diverse range of literacies topics.

The second day started with a speech by Stephen Sandham from the Scottish Executive and finished with Stephen, and Inez, taking questions from the floor. Stephen also promised that fuller answers would be posted on the Communities Scotland website on www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

Action Plan 2004-06

On Wednesday 24th March we received formal confirmation from the Scottish Executive that the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan for 2004-06, submitted by us on behalf of the Highland Community Learning Partnership, was satisfactory. We would like to thank members of the Partnership whose hard work has gone in to ensuring that the Plan met the required standard.

The Scottish Executive expects the Partnership to deliver the outcomes, outputs and quality improvements specified in the Plan and they will seek annual reports on progress made, with explanations of any variations from what is set out in the Plan.

They wish to ensure that the resources being provided are delivering real improvements in the capacity and quality of provision and that they are making a difference to individuals' lives. Outcome tracking and effective evaluation of programmes will remain a priority. The Executive expect all partnerships to record the number of learners completing their individual learning plan (ILP) and the number who leave provision before completing their ILP. Numbers of new learners will be paramount.

Training Courses



The session is free and open to anyone who is interested. To book your place, please telephone or

Email Chris McLintock at the Highland Adult Literacies Office.

TUESDAY 4TH MAY 2004
11.00 am – 1.00 pm followed by lunch

Learners know best!

Come and take part in this virtual presentation by Dr Juliet Merrifield on 'Listening to Learners' and find out how you can involve learners to improve the learning you offer them.

(Originally presented for the Learning Connections Practitioner Seminars series in September 2003)

Location: Council Chamber, Highland Council HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

If any adult literacy tutors are interested in getting free training in autism and/or general learning disabilities, please would you get in touch with us and this can be arranged.



M-learning update

Recently, mentors from the partner organisations (Adult Basic Education, Prince's Trust, Calman Trust, Ross Country Football Club, and Gypsy/Traveller Development) taking part in the m-learning pilot came together for a training day at Ross County Football Club. Trainers from the Learning and Skills Development Agency, Ultralab and CTAD led the day. After the project was explained to them, the participants were given the opportunity to use the equipment themselves. This consisted of XPD11, P800 and P900 mobile phones. Everyone was very impressed and excited by the possibilities of delivering literacy packages to young adults through the use of this new technology.

An Information Session on 'M-learning for Learning Practitioners' will take place at Ross County Football Club on **Thursday 13th May**. To book a place or for more details about the session, please contact Chris McLintock.

What is Adult Basic Education?

Some reflections by Jill Crawshaw, Co-ordinator for Inverness

Adult Basic Education? A fairly devaluing term for adults who, for one reason or another, missed out on perfecting the skills of reading, writing and numeracy at school.

Two words do apply, however. ABE is involved with education, but most importantly, *adults*. Any adult should appreciate that even without competent reading and writing skills they would still retain an adult perspective combined with a wealth of experiential learning.

An ABE learner in Highland was asked to contribute his thoughts on the subject.

'If I had had a book at school that was of interest to me, I may have left school being able to read.'

'Most adults who had difficulties with learning spent a lot of time being put down by teachers when they were at school.'

He goes on to comment about the importance of teamwork between educator and learner.

'It is very easy as a student just to sit and switch off if there is no interaction'.

That *'being able to understand why I am learning something is half the battle'*

and that *'each person has different goals and what works for one may not work for another: time spent getting to know each other is very important.'*

As ABE co-ordinator for Inverness, I have little more to add.

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ABE News



2-day Fast Track ITALL

The 2-day fast track, non-accredited course, to enable partners and practitioners to know what is involved in ITALL, is now ready and delivery will take place in Dingwall on **Friday 14th May and Friday 11th June**. This course is not suitable for new tutors but may be of interest to experienced ABE tutors who trained under the old system. If you would like to attend the course, please contact us at the Adult Literacies Office.

Australian Pen Pal Link

ABE learners in Inverness are writing to learners in South Headland, Western Australia. If you have a learner who would like an Australian pen pal, please contact Jill Crawshaw who will be able to put them in touch.

The Big Plus



The first phase of the Big Plus generated 58 enquiries in Highland and enabled us to put 54 potential new clients in touch with their local ABE co-ordinator. We are now preparing for the second phase of the campaign to be launched this May.

To monitor the effectiveness of the initiative, the Scottish Executive is asking partnerships to record the number of new learners engaged both directly through the Big Plus national helpline and indirectly as a result of the Big Plus campaign.