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Literacy Matters

ESOL Information Day

Wednesday 11th June

We are holding another ESOL Information Day at the Town House, Inverness on Wednesday 11th June from 11.00 am until 6.00 pm. The day will be held as a marketplace of organisations and groups to display what services and provision they have to offer to people who are new to the area and whose level of English language skills might make finding this information difficult. Relevant organisations have been invited to take part.

Kinlochleven Book Launch

A joint project involving Adult Basic Education in Lochaber and Adult Literacy and Numeracy in the Oban area was celebrated with a book launch in Kinlochleven on 27th March.

Lochs to Sea: Lots to Do (Brambles and Rambles round Kinlochleven) was the result of collaboration between learners from the two areas and may be a first “cross border” adult learner project for Highland. The publication of the book was made possible through a grant from Learning Connections.

The original idea was to write up to date directions of the way-marked walks in the area but, as often happens, things took a different direction. After planning meetings to talk about how they wanted the project to

work, the learners chose walks in Kinlochleven and practised their literacy skills writing advice on safety in the outdoors, poetry and descriptions of their walks.



Two residentials in the local hostel were opportunities to work together (and to sample the local hospitality!) We hope to build on this project and work together in the future. Following on from this some tutors in both areas are attending a Walk Leader Course with Step It Up Highland to make sure that we are all prepared for any future rambles with learners groups.

Funding Awards

Literacies Awards

Lead Scotland has been awarded £28,467 for the development of a completely new Literacies Support Module in Health and Social Care SVQ levels 2 and 3, in partnership with Inverness College and the Isobel Rhind Centre. They will roll out Literacies with Care training to social work and voluntary sector and unpaid carers Highland wide. They will also mentor ABE staff to assimilate and subsequently incorporate delivery of Literacies with Care training into its core work. The project runs until March 2009.

Lairg Local Learning Centre Association has been awarded £24,626 to build on its already successful work and to provide 10 hours per week of literacies and ICT tuition at its Brora, Lairg and Assynt Learning Centres and at North West Training. The project runs until July 2009.

ESOL Awards

Basil+ has been awarded £10,410 to continue to provide programmes for ESOL learners in each of its 3 learning centres to enable them to build up confidence with their English and possibly progress to

SQA qualifications. The project will initially run to October 2008 prior to a review of ESOL provision in Badenoch & Strathspey.

Highland Opportunity has been awarded £7,739 to work with the Skye and Lochalsh Migrant Worker Forum to produce 13 'ESOL on the air' programmes to be broadcast on Cuillins FM. They will initially produce 6 half hour sessions, plus one live show, targeting learners from beginner to lower intermediate level. A review of these sessions will inform the production of the next 6 sessions.

Followers of the broadcasts will have a simple workbook and those returning their work will be entered in a draw for a small prize. The broadcasts will be monitored by tutors and learners to ensure quality and effectiveness. The project runs until June 2008.

Funding Deadlines

The closing date for the next funding rounds are:



Wednesday 21st May
Tuesday 19th August

SCQF Training Project

Highland Adult Literacies have been leading on a project over the past year with Aberdeen and North Lanarkshire Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships, to develop training for literacies tutors in assessing and measuring learners' work without pressurising them, but using it to show progress and to encourage progression. In the current climate of evidencing outcomes for learning, it is also going to go no small way towards satisfying funders that progress is being made with the money that they are allocating to literacies activity if progression through the SCQF can be shown.

To bring the project to an end, Prue Pullen, formerly of Learning Connections, will be delivering a national Train the Trainers session in Stirling on the 19th May. This will be attended by literacies trainers from around the country. Following this day, there will be cascades of the training in Highland and it is hoped that all literacies tutors will have an opportunity to take advantage of this training in order to be able to support and encourage learners, where it might be beneficial, in this element of learning.

This project has been funded by the Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland.



WEA ESOL Tutor Workshops

An Introduction for Working with ESOL Learners – Short Course

An introductory course, regarded as a first step to tutoring in ESOL. The course is designed primarily for tutors or tutor assistants who are working, or about to start working, with ESOL learners, but who do not hold a qualification in teaching ESOL such as CELTA or Trinity Certificate. **The course comprises four sessions to be held on 13, 20, 27 June & 4 July 2008 from 10 am – 1 pm.**

The following workshops are free-standing

Thursday 22 May 10.00 – 12.00

ESOL Listening

Tuesday 3 June 11.00 – 13.00 followed by lunch

"New Scots' Perspectives"

An opportunity to put questions to a panel of people from different countries now living and working in the Highlands.

Thursday 19 June 10.00 – 12.00.

ESOL pronunciation. Raising awareness of some of the difficulties ESOL learners face with pronunciation in English and introducing some pronunciation exercises that can be used with learners.

Thursday 3 July from 10.00 – 12.00

Teaching Mixed Ability Classes. How to deal with different levels in the ESOL classroom while trying to keep all learners involved.

Friday 18 July from 10.00 – 12.00

ESOL Reading Skills. Exploring different reading skills and introducing reading tasks that can be used with learners at different levels.

Tuesday 5 August 10.00 – 12.00

ESOL Writing Skills. The difficulties lower level learners may face with 'free' writing and introducing some writing tasks that can be used with learners at different levels.

Wednesday 20 August 11.00 – 13.00 followed by lunch

'Try it, it works': short ESOL activities demonstrated by various tutors.

Other Locations

In addition to the above, a workshop or series of workshops can be repeated in other locations in Highland on request. For further details or to book a place at any of the workshops, please call **Gillian Scott, ESOL Development Coordinator, on 07828 101987 email g.scott@weascotland.org.uk**

All workshops are **FREE** and will be held at the **Beaufort Hotel, 11 Culduthel Road Inverness**

Booking of places is essential as teas, coffees and, on occasion, lunches have to be ordered

The Road to Group Work

Why group work? What are the benefits of developing it and how can we use it alongside one to one provision to offer more choices for learning?

After meeting so many interesting and articulate people engaging as learners with our service over the last few years, I continue to be troubled by the stigma that persists around literacy. How can we contribute to breaking down that stigma? The answer lies, I believe, in developing a sense of community, a community of learning if you like. I believe that group work is at the heart of this.

I certainly have not, as yet, found comprehensive answers to these questions but I am working, together with learners, tutors and partners, towards progressing in this direction. If this all sounds aspirational but vague then bear with me.

If we have no group work and one to one learning dyads are spread across the week who is meeting who? Without learners and tutors meeting other learners and tutors, can we claim to be a community? I don't think we can. In this scenario, learners and tutors are both, potentially, quite isolated. Learners could walk away with the impression that they alone are working on improving their literacy or numeracy.

I fully recognise the need to respond sensitively to requests for private space in the early stages of one to one (I know how nervous learners, and often tutors, are in the early days). I would, however, argue that remaining separate in the longer term, while it may be necessary for some learners, on the whole places our practice at best in a neutral position regarding efforts to dismantle the stigma that we unfortunately have to grapple with.

My own past efforts to enthuse learners about group work (with mixed results) have taught me that a transition period is necessary. It has to be "as well as" and not "instead of" for a time. This has time and funding implications of course, but I believe that it is worth it and can not be bypassed.



I'd like to share some of my latest efforts in progressing learners onto group work. In September 2007, I started by offering a week of optional taster sessions for existing one to one learners. Library and Museum services were partners in putting together a successful week. The learners taking part were especially enthusiastic about the museum session and, at the evaluation workshop, the formation of a history group emerged as the way forward.

Come Christmas, nothing had happened. The learners were growing restless and, to be frank, started nagging me about "what had happened to the group". They were finding a voice, a voice that I was delighted to hear. I hadn't designed it that way though. The history group had got stuck on a "to do" list of mine (for a couple of months). The result though really encouraged me.

We're now in May 2008 and the ABE History group is going strong with 8 current members. The partnership with the museum service continues to flourish and a field trip to the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore has been a recent success.

It's not been a straightforward route to group provision though. Learners have been lost along the

way and hard questions are being asked about whether the provision has to be amended to remain inclusive or if the provision is right and individual learners are just not finding that the group setting works for them. Group work also has to compliment, rather than compete with, one to one.

Other small steps towards building a sense of community have included the block scheduling of one to one sessions, creating clusters. I hope any tutors working in clusters reading this will try and take these forward by using their skills to encourage some interaction at these times. I suggest that the ABE favourite of coffee break is not a bad place to start.

We also have a core skills 16 week pilot programme running on a Friday morning. The needs analysis for this programme was contributed to by Shirlie project staff and their clients. This has been a constructive partnership to date.

ABE in Inverness has benefited from the sustained input from Gillian Sutherland and Duncan Marshall in facilitating two key learning groups. The message I have taken from these groups is that it all takes time. We must be mindful in looking ahead to what happens at the end of these groups. What are the options for progression? Which providers are best placed to support learners progressing from ABE?

So where are we and where are we going? Some sense of a learning community is emerging. Learners are meeting up socially at other times during the week. I also know from visiting, that the Hilton based spelling group is very much a learning community and that's been one of the benefits of a project running for a couple of years rather than months.

Looking ahead, creating more learning spaces for these small learning communities to come

together from time to time would be useful. A learning forum may be a useful step forward and an opportunity to bring learners and tutors together in equality as lifelong learners. There's so much that could be done. Ideas on a postcard please!

Mark Richardson, ABE, Inverness



Training Courses

Tuesday 20th May 11.00 – 13.00
followed by lunch

Stigma-busting with group work!

Some reflections on facilitating and developing mixed ability adult literacy group work.

Key themes:

- Keeping the literacy and the learners.
- How long is long enough?
- (As HMIE encourage us to ask) So what? What difference does it make?

A presentation of some learners' perspectives in response to those questions.

Presented by Mark Richardson
ABE Co-ordinator, Inverness

Tuesday 24th June 11.00 – 13.00
followed by lunch

Unlocking your local treasure chest

Find out more about how the Highland Council Archive Service can help and support communities and individuals throughout the Highland area. Your chance to share in development plans and contribute ways which we could help support existing literacies work.

Presented by Morag Maclean,
Education and Outreach Officer,
Highland Council Archives

All workshops are **FREE** and will be held at the **Beaufort Hotel, 11 Culduthel Road, Inverness**

To book a place call **Chris McLintock** on **01463 251277** email Christina.mclintock@highland.gov.uk

Haven Company

The Highland Adult Literacies Partnership is pleased to announce that our Workplace Literacies Organiser, Sheila Maher, WEA, took part in an international research project with the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation entitled "Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults"

Along with seven other countries, Scotland contributed three exemplary case studies and we are proud that one of Sheila's workplace classes, at the Haven Company, Inverness, was chosen as an "exemplary case study". There is a book available if you would like to read up on this very interesting project and (for the dedicated) a large body of evidence from the research is available on-line at the OECD website which is accessible through Learning Connections website, Adult Literacies Online at (wait for it!)

http://www.aloscotland.com/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/ALO_TEACHINGLEARNINGANDASSESSM.hcsp?src=11&alo_comment=Yes

For those who prefer hard copy we have a copy of the book in the HALP Office which you are welcome to borrow. It is a very readable account of the research and reflects the leading position that Scotland has taken by committing to an adult literacy and numeracy strategy that is informed by formative assessment. The book ends by proposing seven principles for strengthening practice and policy to address the challenges that are common to all of the nine countries who took part in the research.

ABE News

SQA PDA Pilot

The Inverness and Nairn joint ITALL and Adult Literacy SQA PDA pilot starts in the Spectrum Centre on Saturday 31st May and will run on Saturdays for 6 weeks. Mark, Norman and Mohamed will co-facilitate. Early booking is advisable as spaces are limited.

Further ITALL courses are planned as follows

Lairg	May/June
Dingwall	July
Tain	September

Courses will also run in other areas later in the year. If you are interested, please give your local Co-ordinator a ring. He or she will give you further information and put you on the waiting list to keep you informed about the next course in your area.

Alternatively, if you are a part of a team which you think would benefit from the 2-day Adult Literacies Awareness Course available, please give Norman Ross a call on 01463 251279.

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