

Notes from Workshop Session 1
Policy and practice in Norway and Scotland
Jay Derrick, Chair

Norwegian policy and practice, Helga Arnesen and Tove-Dina Roynestad, VOX/Norwegian Institute for Adult Education

The workshop started with a presentation by representatives from Norway's Vox/Norwegian Institute for Adult Education. The presentation focused on the three current statutory provisions in Norway, the last of which (the Introduction Act) requires 300 hours of training in Norwegian as a foreign language for recent immigrants to be able to apply for a work/residence permit.

There has recently been increased interest in formative assessment at all levels of education in Norway. The government is keen to investigate why the country has not performed very well in PISA, and they are in the process of developing policies to address this. For example, the project "Better Assessment Practice" works with instructors at schools to develop appropriate criteria for assessment of learners.

In another example, "formative assessment" approaches are also embedded in the European Portfolio for adult immigrant learners of Norwegian language.

Scottish policy and practice, John Leavey, Scottish Government, Learning Communities; Lyn Tett, Moray House School of Education; and Anne Sliwka, OECD consultant

The Scottish team presented policy approaches to promoting learner empowerment in adult literacy and numeracy programmes. They also noted that policies in Scotland are shaped by its strong community-based culture. The presenters noted that [while formative assessment is used in programmes across Scotland], the quality of practice varies from practitioner to practitioner. The challenge is to provide adequate instructor training.

Discussion

One of the challenges in promoting formative assessment practices is in how to take advantage of the individual instructors' existing knowledge. Participants also noted a tension between trying to improve instructor practice through a top-down approaches, [such as through overly prescriptive guidelines], and the need for instructors to discover things independently. Similarly there may be a tension between centrally 'prescribed' tools developed by researchers (for example, a DVD Scotland has recently developed for instructors and learners), and the idea that instructors should 'personalise learning' for individual learners.

Participants discussed the need to motivate adult learners to learn, particularly adults from deprived areas. It is important to help adult learners to discover that they can learn. Adult education must be placed within a lifelong learning context and strategy - where all adults see themselves as "learners for life".

Scotland's strong focus on the community offers one way of addressing this challenge, as it is easier to engage with people from the local community. One approach is to focus on activities in which adults engage with their children; many people are very keen to ensure that their children do not fail at school. Other hard-to-reach individuals, such as drug addicts or the homeless, can be reached, for example, through partnerships with other projects, e.g. drug addiction programmes. 'Word of mouth' can also be an efficient strategy, particularly within community settings. Other strategies mentioned included TV

campaigns (there is a campaign known as “Gremlins” in the UK), as well as work-based programmes (e.g., programmes in Denmark, England).

Participants discussed how different countries address questions of cultural diversity and integration of immigrants. In Norway for example immigrants receive 50 hours of training in social studies to help them that help them to adapt life in Norway. They also receive 250 hours of Norwegian language training. In Scotland, training for citizenship and civic and cultural awareness is currently separate from ESOL. At the same time, instructors need to be aware of cultural diversity and such issues need to form part of their training.

While discussing workplace training for adults with low levels of skills the issue of engaging employers was raised. Some employers may be reluctant to train their staff in case they leave once they’ve been upskilled.

French Case Study, Les formations de base en milieu pénitentiaire, Xavier Sesboue, Ministry of Justice, France

General Information

- The case study focused on one particular facility in Lyon, France, but the approach draws on research conducted across 192 penitentiary centres in France
- These programs aim to fight illiteracy through focused trainings
- The three main difficulties in achieving satisfactory results are the following:
 - *Psychological*- first approach aspects (the trainer must be able to gain the attention of the learner)
 - *Time constraints*- each learner has different time durations, and therefore it hard to tailor individual programs
 - Varied levels of knowledge and capacities, as well as diverse age, social groups, etc.

Améliorer l’enseignement et l’évaluation pour les adultes en situation d’illettrisme, France, Benoît Michel, OECD consultant

Benoît Michel discussed the « problematic » of formative assessment in France.

General Information

- The Case studies indicated the main elements to be considered:
 - Assessment approaches
 - The strategies that have been applied and their impacts
 - The trainer’s attitude
 - The risks of the ‘formative assessment’

Discussion

- Workshop presenters agreed that the central explanation for the success of these programmes is the approach of the trainers and the relationships they established with learners.

- However, in situations where most instructors are volunteers (no financial compensatio), it is difficult to persuade all instructors to improve their teaching methods.
- The Flemish presenter, Inge de Win, noted that during interviews with new learners, it is important to assess their motivation to learn, as this contributes to success.
- Concluding reflection: new ways must be found to satisfy the needs of learning adults.