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TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR ADULTS IMPROVING FOUNDATION SKILLS

Overview of Policies and Programmes for Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Learners

This annex summarizes information provided by the nine countries that submitted background reports for this study. The full-length reports are available at www.oecd.org/edu/whatworks

AUSTRALIA

Programmes and Policies

Formal training occurs within language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) programs and is generally delivered in the vocational education and training (VET) and the adult and community education (ACE) sector.

- *The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)* funded by the national government but administered by the states and territories provides assistance to eligible unemployed individuals (including migrants) seeking a job, and to improve their skills at functioning effectively in everyday life.
- *The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)*, administered centrally but contracted out to state and territory training organisations, provides language training for migrants.
- *The national government's Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL)* provides workers in industry with LLN training.

To date, there have been generally positive evaluations of all three programs.

Training may be provided in stand-alone courses, units embedded into nationally recognised industry training programs and accredited courses leading to national vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, workplaces, educational institutions, or community centres, and homes by volunteer tutors who provide LLN training (generally language training to migrants).

Past and current national initiatives to address the needs of adult LLN learners in VET and work-based learning include:

- *The National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy* of 1993, which had an early influence on the integration of adult literacy within reforms to mainstream VET provision.
- *The Literacy and Numeracy Training Program (LANT)* adopted in 1998 to improve the employment prospects of unemployed jobseekers also helped to support the Commonwealth Government's 'Mutual Obligation' policy where 18 to 24-year-olds in receipt of government benefits had to engage in training or labour market schemes to maintain access to unemployment benefits.
- *The National VET strategy (Shaping the future 2004–2010)* priorities are concerned with ensuring that all Australians have the competencies to function effectively in

employment. These relate to increasing the participation of mature age workers in training, and encouraging Australians who are not fully participating in labour markets to engage with training. State and Territory initiatives

State and territory governments have also developed strategies aimed at improving language, literacy and numeracy of their adult citizens. To this end they make funds available for adults with low LLN skills to engage in training which will help them move into the labour market.

Funding

Adult basic education programs and activities are funded independently or jointly by commonwealth and state and territory governments, community organisations, and individuals. Commonwealth (national) and state and territory (provincial) governments provide funding aimed at improving access to education (including basic skills education) of all Australians and especially of special groups. In addition, providers across states and territories may independently tender for government funding to deliver such programs.

Instructor Qualifications

Specialist language, literacy and numeracy teachers generally enter the workforce with teaching qualifications, and postgraduate qualifications in the English language, literacy and numeracy field. Vocational trainers enter VET with industry and teaching qualifications. Volunteer tutors have a minimum of volunteer training.

In 2001 well over two-thirds of LLN teachers had teaching experience gained in primary or secondary schools

Different states have also introduced specific qualifications (for example, South Australia has also introduced a formal qualification for literacy professionals) and professional development programmes for instructors and volunteers.

There are 3 major national professional development programmes for trainers and assessors in VET: Reframing the Future Program, Flexible Learning Initiatives, and the Professional Development for Equity programme. Providers of AMEP programs in all states and territories provide or make arrangements for the training of volunteer tutors.

Curriculum and Assessment

- The *Australian Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence* developed in 1993 organised the achievement of competence according to complexity of a task, and the amount and nature of help received by individuals in performing the task. These principles continue to be applied in the assessment of LLN competence.

- In VET programmes, the learning outcomes in accredited curriculum and competency standards in nationally recognised industry programs (Training Package Qualifications) prescribe what a learner must be able to do to show achievement of a certain learning outcome or competency. This includes the assessment criteria and conditions that must be met. However, instructors in these programs may use a range of training and formative assessment tasks and strategies to observe and record student progress towards the achievement of competency.
- Registered training organisations (RTOs) providing nationally accredited VET must identify and support clients who may require or request LLN support in their learning. Trainers and assessors must satisfy standards of competence, and must provide ‘valid, reliable, flexible and fair’ assessments and appropriate feedback to learners.
- For both LLN and VET programmes –a variety of materials and resources (in on-line, print, CD-ROM and video formats) has been developed with government funding to assist practitioners (including VET and LLN trainers and assessors) to undertake assessment including formative assessment. In addition, national websites link practitioners to federal government information on policies and practice, programs and resources. A reading and writing hotline provides advice to callers on where to access LLN resources and training.

Monitoring and Accountability

The *National Reporting System* (developed in 1994) includes standards for the assessment of proficiency gains of learners in specific government-funded language, literacy and numeracy programs. It uses an equivalent five-point scale for reporting reading, writing, numeracy, and speaking and listening competencies. It provides a nationally consistent means of reporting outcomes from these and other nationally recognised and other accredited and non-accredited LLN programmes.

The NRS outcomes achieved by Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP) participants meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for learning and outcomes.

Research and Innovation

- The *Adult Migrant English Program* (AMEP) Research Centre comprising researchers from the National Centre for Language Studies at Macquarie University in New South Wales and the Department of Educational Studies at Monash University in Victoria. This research centre coordinates a national on-line bank of test items for use by AMEP teachers, and organises and conducts a national assessment moderation program.
- The *Adult Literacy National Project* aims to help all adult Australians to improve skills for work, education and training. It funds the reading and writing hotline (which enables callers to link with training providers at no cost), the *Innovative Projects* program, and professional development forums for practitioners.

BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)

Programmes and Policies

The Flemish Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for the formal adult education. Programmes include:

- *Continuing education or social advancement education (OSP)* - Social advancement education is the largest sector within the Flemish adult education. These programmes originated as “evening schools” and “Sunday schools” under general education legislation of 1957. A March 1999 decree helped to modernise the sector. In June 2007, the latest decree on adult education was adopted by the Flemish Parliament. Through the new decree, measures are taken to make the formal adult education long-term stronger, better, more flexible and evenly spread. The reform went into operation on 1 September 2007.
- *Adult basic education* – A July 1990 decree established a network of 29 independent pluralistic centres for adult basic education. The centres for adult basic education offer their own programmes. Over the last few years, the largest number of students have opted for the NT2 course (55.7%). The number of students attending NT1 courses seems to remain stable at 23%, whereas the number of students taking the arithmetic courses seems to remain remarkably low at 3.5%. The centres are also responsible for the coordination of educational courses for prisoners, as well as for the delivery of some literacy courses within prisons.

In addition to providing their own courses, the centres for adult basic education also organise courses on request and in collaboration with other organisation such as the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB), companies, local authorities, etc. These courses range from job application training, to Dutch for the workplace, to security training for the Security Certificate.

- *Supervised individual study (BIS) or distance education* – These courses are targeted to adults who want to obtain a certificate or diploma through the examination boards of the State or Community, or who want to update their knowledge in particular subjects. People completing a BIS-course receive a ‘competence-oriented certificate’. BIS is the most popular form of self-study in prison. Access to this type of education is completely open. Normally a modest course fee has to be paid along with postal costs for submitting homework and in exceptional cases for some of the educational materials.

[Remark: In 2007, the Flemish Minister for Work, Education and Training decided to cut back BIS because it was not considered as a core task of the Ministry. In addition, questions had been raised about the cost and effectiveness of this approach to distance education. However, two target groups will still be able to enrol in the

BIS-courses: prisoners and adults who want to obtain a certificate or diploma through the examination boards of the State or Community.]

In addition, adult LLN learners are served by:

Programmes not under “formal” adult education

- The Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) is the main provider of vocational training for jobseekers. The programmes are jointly controlled by representatives of the employers and the trade-unions. The training is oriented to the needs of employers and employees. Training may be offered in the VDAB’s own centres (there are 14 sub-regional employment offices organising short labour market and function-oriented tailor-made courses in more than 70 “competence centres”) or in collaboration with outside organisations (e.g. on-the-job-training in companies). The VDAB awards certificates that, while not comparable to official diplomas awarded by the educational sector, are nevertheless highly regarded by employers.

VDAB’s basic competence and functions were specified in two decrees of the Flemish Government (dd. March 20th 1984 and December 21st 1999). The competent authority is the Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy.

- *Socio-cultural adult work*: is well developed in Flanders and targets LLN learners as well. The hundreds of organisations in the sector offer a broad range of activities, aimed at both recreational, creative, education and social activities. Reducing socio-cultural adult work to initiatives that fit neatly into one of these fields would be wrong however. Precisely the integration of training, animation, culture and social action is a specific feature of socio-cultural adult work.
- *Networks of providers*: in order to realise its targets adult basic education cooperates with the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB), with socio-cultural organisations and welfare organisations.

Funding

- In June 2007 the Flemish Parliament adopted a new decree on adult education supporting expansion within the sector: the centres for adult education and the centres for basic education should fuse into 14 regional cooperatives. These centres will all receive the same basic funding for their personnel as well as “envelope funding”, based upon the number of hours of courses. However, within this coalition, adult basic education will still maintain its own independence.
- In April 2003 a new decree regarding the recognition and government funding of the organisations providing non-formal adult education was adopted by the Flemish Parliament. The new legislation stipulates the eligibility criteria for the recognition and support for about 100 socio-cultural organisations. It also states that the subsidies will be given on the basis of quantity of activities rather than their quality. Furthermore the government policy subsidises extra cultural infrastructure and programmes, in

particular services offered by public libraries and cultural centres. In general, the government has made a wide variety of facilities available including an administrative structure, adequate grants, infrastructure, materials and equipment and facilities for professional back-up.

- Training provided by the private and non-profit sectors do receive project funding (e.g. money from the European Social Funds - ESF), as well as specific government-supported subsidies to finance (part of) their work. They also co-operate extensively with The Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) and with other formal and non-formal organisations.

Instructor Qualifications

In Flanders teachers must possess a recognised teacher qualification. Depending on the type and level of education a teacher will be working in, the required qualifications differ.

In general there is no separate Flemish path awarding diplomas for teaching in adult basic education, but every professional frequently working with adults with basic skill needs must follow the advanced teacher training focussing on this target group.

In addition, the project “Train the trainers” focuses on the training of adult education teachers focuses on the training of trainers working with adults in very diverse training settings. This programme doesn’t lead to a teaching qualification. Professional development (or advanced teacher training) has been compulsory for educational staff at the adult basic education centres since 1995.

Providers of formal adult education have been able to recruit people without a recognised teacher qualification, because of their “relevant (work) experience”. However, they will not be able to obtain a permanent appointment as a teacher and will earn less than their colleagues with the qualification.

Under a September 2008 decree, all instructors teaching in adult basic education will be required to have a teacher training diploma.

Curriculum and Assessment

Diagnostic assessment

- Since 2004, three general assessment instruments have been developed especially for adult basic skill students – an ICT-intake test, a mathematics placement test and a standardised intake procedure. These instruments include easy hands-on exercises. The standardised intake procedure also facilitates the guidance of students in general: it distinguishes 10 different phases within the student guidance process (i.e. registration, intake, placement, etc.) and includes a discussion of goals and responsibilities. This screening takes place during a two-week intake period.

Modular systems, formative assessment and “student guidance”

- In September 2003 a modular system was introduced in the centres for adult basic education. Under this system, all domains are subdivided into several successive courses (modules), each with its own level of difficulty and annotated final goals. Learning objectives set out in different modules are linked to “key competencies” and development goals. The system also established pathways for learning and progression; before someone can start in a particular module he/she should have required the skills and competencies at the preceding level.
- There is no formal government policy on *formative assessment* in adult basic skills education. The assessment strategies used in the centres for adult education are very diverse among centres and teachers. However, as described in the inspectorate report, more centres are integrating permanent evaluation into their courses. At present, some adult education centres providing courses of general formation are switching from formal evaluation system with tests and examinations to a system based on formative (permanent) assessment only.
- At present, several adult basic education centres use a system of “student guidance” to track individual learner progress from intake through exit from the programme. These documents describe goals and responsibilities, materials available for use, and documentation for each course.

Summative assessment

- The centres for adult basic education are free to choose how they assess whether their students have reached the key competencies and standardised goals established by the government. The centres’ assessment policy must be outlined in an “evaluation code” approved by their board. This code, which is to be provided to students at intake, describes examination methods, timeframe, the composition of the examination board, the deliberation methods and the manner in which the examination results will be communicated.
- Centres are to keep a written reflection of their evaluations over three years for inspection visits and for verification purposes.
- The policy documents don’t include requirements regarding the type or content of the final testing; they only expect that tests will be in line with official goals and competencies. The centres are responsible for the quality of their assessment instruments.

In programmes other than the centres for adult basic education, learners take examinations for specific certificates or diplomas.

Monitoring and Accountability

Under the Inspection Decree of March 31st 1999, the centres for adult basic education are investigated to determine whether they have met final attainment levels and development objectives, and are complying with other statutory obligations. The inspections fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Training. The inspection instrument used is based on the CIPO framework (Context-Input-Process-Output) and uses indicators, variables and descriptions relevant for the sector of adult education.

Research and Innovation

In 1990, the Flemish Government established a Support and Development Agency of adult basic education (VOCB). This support centre functions as a support, guidance and resource institute for adult basic education in Flanders.

DENMARK***Programmes and Policies***

Adult education centres (VUCs) in Denmark are the main providers of foundation learning. They are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, and coordinated at the local level. The different programmes include:

- *Preparatory adult education (FVU)* – Adults over the age of 18 who might benefit may participate in the courses free of charge. FVU is primarily provided by the VUCs and adult education associations, but may also be provided by other educational institutions, including business enterprises, and associations. A state recognised diploma is issued. The programme does not provide formal access to further education or jobs.
- *General Adult Education (AVU)* - Participants may choose as many as courses they wish; all courses are stand-alone. Courses in the core subjects of Danish, English, German or French, social studies, mathematics, and science subjects are provided at least once a year. A number of non-compulsory subjects are also offered. These courses all lead to a final examination, and a certificate. AVU courses may be conducted at business organisations if planned and paid for. A diploma is issued. Exams usually involve the same right to continuing education as the final exams the Folkeskole.
- *Danish for Immigrant Learners* - Immigrants 18 years or older with a residence permit and a civil registry number are entitled to register for the Danish language skills, as well as skills needed to manage a job, complete an education, and for citizenship. The programmes are free for immigrant learners who are covered by the Integration Act and for others who are not self-supporting. Eligible learners are entitled to three years of support. The programme is offered in municipal language centres, other public educational institutions or approved educational institutions, or private provider. The Certificate of Danish Test 3 gives access to further education in combination with other relevant qualifying exam, etc.
- *Courses for individuals with dyslexia* - Courses are provided by county-level institutions or contracted to adult education associations or private organisers. These courses fall under the Special Education –the Act, which sets out guidelines for provision, but does not specify the scope or content of courses.

Curriculum and Assessment

Programmes in Danish, Mathematics and other subjects include several different modules.

Curriculum development, diagnostic and formative assessments

- The preparatory adult education (FVU) curriculum is organised jointly by instructors and participants and is based on the participants' experience and interest, including choice of topics and educational material.
- The curriculum for general adult education (AVU) is developed by the Danish Ministry of Education. Courses at this level lead up to a state-controlled exam.

- The curriculum for Danish for immigrant learners is developed by the Danish Ministry of Education. The Danish course is launched with a “diagnostic test” or “entry level test” provided by the Ministry of Education for each of the 4 levels of the FVU programme. Based on the results the instructor plans learning activities. Learners take tests when they have demonstrated they are ready. Tests are collected in a portfolio, which is intended to document the scope and progress of learning.
- Following the Ministerial order 1200 of 15/12/2000 the Adult Education Centres (VUCs) are required to keep attendance records. Centres may use checklists for attendance, as well as to track learner progress. The checklists are adapted to reflect national aims, as well as to meet local, regional needs, or in the case of workplace provision, the needs of the enterprise.
- The Ministry of Education has various forms outlining criteria to be used by learners and instructors for formative assessment of learner performance, and to adjust teaching and learning. These assessment forms may be adapted to local or regional needs.

Summative Assessments

- For the school leaving examination at the end of Grade 9, the jury is composed of a teacher from another school (call “censor”) and the present teachers of the students (as described in 2.4.). For the observed course, the current teacher (responsible for the School leaving Examination questions), prepares a conversation-subject illustrated by pictures. The subject is selected in the list studied during the year. The candidate discovers the conversation-subject at the time of the examination.
- The Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of the Grade 10 examination.
- Sitting for the School Leaving Examination is not compulsory. However, the School Leaving certificate is a pre-condition for enrolment in many training programmes and certified courses. The courses may demand minimum grades in some subjects as enrolment criteria. Some of The Youth Class students attended the class to improve their results to meet these enrolment criteria.

Monitoring and Accountability

The Danish Evaluation Institute's (EVA) conducts periodic evaluations of educational establishments and private institutions in receipt of a state subsidy.

Adult Education Centres are required to conduct “Surveys of User Satisfaction”. The surveys concern the general condition and context for the participants in a programme (easy access, to the facilities, to the centre, to the instructor, etc...). Programmes may use these to improve services.

Research and Innovation

- The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) - gives advice on and assesses quality work at educational institutions, develops new methods, analyses and communicates Danish and international knowledge on evaluation and quality assurance.
- The Centre of Evaluation –the newly-created Centre of Evaluation has yet to define its aims and objectives.

ENGLAND

Programmes and Policies

Adult basic skills are learned and taught in the many contexts that make up the Learning and Skills sector: further education colleges, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, training organisations, adult and community learning, prisons and young offender institutions, work based learning, on-line learning (learndirect), and education and training for the unemployed and job-seekers (Jobcentre Plus).

Further education caters to 16-9 year olds as well as adults, and includes Advanced Level and General Vocational Qualifications, vocational training courses in all occupational sectors, foundation degrees and professional training. Adult education encompasses accredited and non-accredited programmes and often takes place in community settings. Workplace training includes all National Vocational Qualifications.

Adult literacy, language and numeracy learning can take the form of discrete programmes or specialist learning support for learners enrolled on ‘mainstream’ programmes. Alternatively, it may be embedded (or integrated) in vocational or community development programmes.

Programmes targeted to adult LLN learners include:

- *Skills for Life* - Launched in 2001, Skills for Life is the national strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy. The mission of the strategy is to ‘reduce the number of adults in England with literacy and numeracy difficulties from one in five adults to one in ten or better.’

Skills for Life is co-ordinated by the Skills for Life Strategy Unit (SfLSU) within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). SfLSU supports Skills for Life by working with partner agencies that include the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA), and the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC). LSC is a government agency that administers funding for programme services, through nine regional co-ordinators, to 150 local education authorities (LEAs), and other non-LEA organisations. ALI is a public agency that conducts formal evaluations of the educational institutions that implement Skills for Life programmes.

- *Success for All* – A long term reform strategy for the English Learning and Skills sector, to develop high-quality, demand-led, responsive colleges and providers. The strategy covers the full range of post-16 providers, including colleges, work-based learning providers, adult and community learning, prisons, probation and school sixth forms.

- *The 2003 Skills Strategy (21st Century Skills)* – This programme provides free training in the workplace in basic skills and Level 2. It is designed and delivered to suit employers' operational needs. From 2006/7 there has been a national entitlement to free tuition for a first full Level 2 qualification and new extensive support for learning at Level 3. Adults are helped to make decisions about their careers and training needs by a new one-stop telephone and on-line advice service.

Adult basic skills policy increasingly articulates with related national policies targeting those aged 14 and over, and these policies are briefly documented in *14-19 Education and Skills and Every Child Matters* and in the recent Leitch Review and Foster Report; both have implications for the context and direction of adult basic skills education and training.

Funding

The national government has significantly increased funding for the adult foundation skills sector, appropriating 1.5 billion GBP to meet its target for 750 000 Skills for Life learners to earn certification between 2001 and 2004. Current funding criteria are not always well matched to patterns of provision. For example, providers in rural areas often do not meet funding criteria because they are unable to gather the minimum required number of learners (8 to 10). The 2005 Foster Report on the role of Further Education Colleges in urban areas also found that there is a mismatch between programme aspirations, including for Skills for Life learners, and available funding.

Instructor Qualifications

Following the introduction of the Skills for Life strategy in 2001, all new instructors in adult LLN must earn a Skills for Life teaching qualification, as well as a Post Graduate "Certificate in Education (PCCE), or Certificate of Education. In Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development, greater emphasis than previously is now given to subject knowledge relative to generic knowledge of pedagogy.

Curriculum and Assessment

Skills for Life introduced robust national standards; screening and diagnostic assessment; a national core curriculum and new national tests for literacy and numeracy along with materials to support them. Presently, the Skills for Life Strategy Unit is updating the programme level component that brings new learners into services, assesses their goals and needs, monitors their progress, and seeks their insights into how to improve services.

Curriculum, diagnostic and formative assessments

- The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) does not mandate or recommend particular diagnostic assessment tools. Rather, it encourages programmes to use diagnostic assessments that are appropriate for their learners. The DfES website lists commercially produced assessment tools, and it has made its own assessment tools available for literacy and numeracy. DfES is developing assessment tools for English

for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and dyslexia (for the pre-Entry Level 1 learners). Some programs use commercially available paper and pencil tests for this purpose, others develop their own. If potential learners have problems with the tests, an informal assessment is used.

- The National Core Curriculum is developed in the Skills for Life Unit. This curriculum defines the scope and sequence of the skills learners need to develop to reach each level. Curriculum frameworks provide programmes with clear guidelines on how to group learners into classes and how to assess their learning needs and their progress. Four frameworks have been published. One sets out eight milestones for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities who are not ready to study at Entry Level 1. The other three set out curriculum frameworks for adult literacy, numeracy, and ESOL at each of the five levels (Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 and Levels 1 and 2. The five levels cover the skills taught at primary school level through upper secondary school qualifications— that is, the GCSE A to C levels). The core curricula describe the skills needed to pass a test at each level and suggest ways to teach those skills. The core curriculum document states that for instruction to be successful, it must teach the specified skills and knowledge within each learner’s context.
- The Skills for Life programme has no formal policy on formative assessment. However, programmes may draw on two published source of advice on formative assessment. One of the two sources is a DfES publication, *Planning Learning and Recording Progress and Achievement: A Guide for Practitioners*. The guide was developed by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (which has recently split into a non-departmental public agency, the Quality Improvement Agency), and a non-profit organization, the Learning and Skills Network. The other published source is *Recognizing and recording progress and achievement in non –accredited learning*, which describes a formative assessment process developed in a project undertaken by the Learning and Skills Development Agency and the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (a nongovernmental agency) under a grant from the Learning and Skills Council that began in 2001.

Another new initiative is the Improving Formative Assessment (IFA) project, undertaken by National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), the Universities of Exeter and Brighton, NIACE, and the Learning and Skills Network. The project is evaluating whether and how the principles of formative assessment developed in the school system could be adapted to suit the post-compulsory education system, including Skills for Life. The project began in 2005 and will be completed in 2007.

Summative Assessment

- Learners demonstrate that they have achieved one of the five Levels by taking tests from one of several providers, including the City and Guilds, Edexcel, LCCI Examinations Board, National Open College Network, Northern Council for Further Education, Open College of the Northwest, and the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal

Society for the Encouragement of Arts (RSA) Exams. The tests are administered and scored by the institutions that developed them. Reading is assessed by either paper or computer-based tests. Writing is assessed by tests but also through portfolios of learner work proctored by tutors and judged by evaluators from one of the testing organizations. English language learners demonstrate their listening and speaking ability through structured dialogues assessed by a trained evaluator, either in-person or by audio tape.

Monitoring and Accountability

- The government set *three national targets*, each in increments of 750 000. The first was 750 000 learners achieving qualifications at one of the top three levels by 2004; the second was an increase to 1.5 million by 2007, and the third was an increase to 2.25 million by 2010. Programmes are held accountable for numbers of learners earning certification.
- Each programme conducts an *annual self assessment*. Since adult LLN programmes are usually part of a larger institution, the programme self assessment takes place as a component of the larger institutional self assessment.
- External inspections are carried out in four year cycles by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Both the internal self evaluation and the external inspection use the same data and focus on the same issues. The initial self assessment is designed to identify programme strengths and weaknesses, and these are subsequently corroborated (or not) at the time of inspection. Both evaluations make recommendations for improvement, and institutions achieving the highest grades are subject to less intensive inspection in future years.

Research and Development

Agencies focused specifically on research and development related to adult foundation skill learners include:

- The National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy
- NIACE, The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - England and Wales (Non-Governmental Organisation)
- The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) for Lifelong Learning (formerly the Learning and Skills Development Agency) leads and supports improvement across the sector.

NEW ZEALAND

Programmes and Policies

Recent tertiary education sector reforms call for the improved quality and effectiveness of foundation learning and the government's tertiary education priorities till 2010 include increasing the literacy, numeracy and language levels for the workforce. Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) are expected to take a more prominent role in foundation learning in their regions and will commit to plans of foundation learning provision, performance and outcomes, supported by appropriate capability development.

These reforms build on the 2001 national strategy document *More than words: The New Zealand Adult Literacy Strategy*, which fitted alongside the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy being introduced to schools at the same time.

Three national providers with an explicit focus on foundation learning education warrant special mention:

- *Literacy Aotearoa* is a federation of locally controlled LLN community providers. Smaller member schemes work predominantly in community and Adult Community Education using volunteer tutors while larger member schemes contract to deliver a wide range of programmes in varied contexts, using paid staff. The programme provides resources and training support for tutors.
- *ESOL Home Tutor Service* - offers English language support for non-English speakers, is a federation of locally controlled community providers, where the tutoring is predominantly provided by volunteers. The programme provides resources and training support for tutors.
- *Workbase, the New Zealand Centre for Workforce Literacy Development* - provides programmes in the workplace. The government has also funded Workbase to conduct Research & Development in industry-based literacy, numeracy and language and to provide some sector-wide training and resource development for tutors and provider organisations.

A mapping study of adult LLN provision was undertaken in 2003, but it proved difficult to identify clearly all provision focused on foundation skills training.

Funding

Various streams of mainstream and specialist funding support adult LLN provision. The picture is further complicated where foundation learning is embedded into other courses.

New policies will help to improve tracking of expenditures for different purposes. In addition, funding will shift from annual to 3-year cycles to create a climate of greater

funding certainty and to place institutions in a better position to employ foundation learning tutors on a permanent basis.

Instructor Qualifications

Until recently there has been little pre-service training for LLN teachers and no formal qualification requirements for LLN instructors. Most instructors acquired LLN teaching skills as part of on-going professional development and have an eclectic mix of qualifications, on-the-job experience and ad hoc professional development.

A competency standards-based national Adult Literacy Educator Qualification (ALEQ) for specialist LLN teachers was introduced in 2006 at a level equivalent to the first year of a degree course, with fees subsidies available for participants. In 2007 a shorter qualification has been introduced for tertiary instructors from other disciplines who intend integrating LLN teaching into other subjects.

Major professional development projects over the last two years have involved small groups of tutors from participating organisations working in clusters; each cluster has been exposed to new teaching models and strategies and peer mentoring. The next phase of this project will involve in-house clusters within ITPs.

Curriculum and Assessment

Curriculum, diagnostic and formative assessments

- In 2005 the Ministry of Education released the discussion documents *Key Competencies in Tertiary Education: Developing a New Zealand Framework* and *Draft Descriptive Standards: Describing the literacy, language and numeracy competencies that adults need to meet the demands of their everyday lives*.
- Building on the Draft Descriptive Standards, the Tertiary Education Commission has developed draft Learning Progressions in reading, writing, listening, speaking and numeracy which seek to identify the common progression of knowledge and skills that adults follow to reach foundation level competence. The Learning Progressions inform:
 - foundation learning course content and course descriptions
 - new teaching and learning resources based on a common language
 - professional development for educators
 - diagnostic assessment tools to identify the skills and knowledge a learner already has, and therefore help tutors focus teaching efforts
 - formative and summative assessment tools linked to the patterns of progress described in the progressions.

Summative Assessment

- In the absence of national standardised testing or widely-used literacy assessment instruments for foundation skills in New Zealand, foundation learning providers use a range of proxy measures such as summative assessment against unit standards that have an explicit literacy focus *e.g.* Unit Standard 2976 ‘Read independently texts for practical purposes’; or unit standards that have reading and writing requirements embedded in them (*e.g.* ‘reading a manual’). Foundation learning providers may also design summative assessment processes specific to a programme, for example the completion of institution-specific qualifications, the completion of a worksite-specific assessment or using an Individual Learning Plan to record learners’ personal goals and achievements.

Monitoring and Accountability

- Foundation Learning Quality Assurance Requirements (FLQA), which are aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of provision, have been developed and trialled after consultation with providers. A self review guide assists providers review their systems and processes.

Research and Innovation

- *Learning for Living* is a cross-agency project involving the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, the Ministry of Social Development, the Department of Labour and Career Services. *Learning for Living* has had three broad strands of focus – engagement of learners, effective teaching and quality providers. A number of initiatives, including the PD cluster projects, special funding to increase LLN provision, and the development of qualifications have been developed which together are intended to provide a solid and sustainable infrastructure for the future growth in adult literacy provision.
- The government has initiated a programme of research and evaluation to develop evidence to inform teaching and learning and policy decisions. Projects have included a literature review of international research on effective LLN teaching, an observation study of LLN teachers, a review of assessment practices, evaluations of programmes funded through targeted subsidies and a major evaluation component within the Learning for Living cluster projects.
- To support the focus on workplace literacy and economic productivity, a three year project. The *Upskilling Partnership Programme* has been established under the Department of Labour. The project is establishing and researching 15 different workplace literacy programme models with the central aim of identifying effective workplace practice.
- The Ministry of Education has scoped the development of a computer-based interactive assessment tool that will provide rich data for initial/diagnostic, formative and summative assessment for its future work programme; the Tertiary Education Commission will lead the development of this tool from 2008. The Ministry of Education is developing a generic screening tool during 2007-2008 capable of being used in a variety of contexts.

NORWAY

Programmes and Policies

Legislation and official policies specifically targeted to adult language, literacy and numeracy learners include:

- *Adults' right to education and assessment of adults' practical competence* - The Act on Adult Education (1976) established that adults should have the opportunity to receive subsidised education. A new chapter in the Education Act grants adults an individual, statutory *right* to primary and upper secondary education. Adults who have a “felt need” are eligible to participate in primary and lower secondary education level programmes. Adults who have not previously completed upper secondary school are eligible to participate in upper secondary education. New regulations grant learners the right to adapted education, based on competence, experience and life situation. If necessary, adults also have the right to special education in primary and lower secondary education on the same conditions as young people.
- *The Introduction Act* - Non-EU immigrants receiving their residence permit after 1 September 2005 have a right as well as an obligation to take courses in Norwegian language and social studies. Immigrants must participate for 300 hours if they want permanent resident status and, later on, citizenship. Fifty of the 300 hours are set aside for Norwegian social studies taught in a language the participants can understand. Learners may apply for further training up to 3 000 hours if they need more time to reach a final level.
- *Education and training in the correctional services (2005)* - a White Paper on Education and training in the correctional services [Report to the Storting No. 27 (2004-2005)] recommends increased grants, and greater attention to documentation of non-formal competence. Correctional services and educational sector will initiate pilot projects for further development.

Municipalities are responsible for the development of programmes for primary and lower secondary education for adults, as well as programmes under the Introduction Act. Counties are responsible for upper secondary education.

Funding

The central government provides the bulk of funds required for primary and secondary education to municipalities and counties through “block grants”. Municipalities currently receive a combination of per-capita funding and/or reimbursement for Norwegian language training for immigrants. The reimbursement scheme will expire on 1st September 2010.

Adult education funding for provision under the Introduction Act consists of three parts. Most of the funding is provided through a per capita grant to the municipalities. The subsidy is based on the student's national background (*e.g.* non-western/western). Small municipalities with few participants may also obtain special funding. Municipalities also receive an additional EUR 600 for each learner who is required to participate in Norwegian language and social studies under the terms of the Introduction Act, and who passes the written Norwegian language test. Municipalities may receive an additional EUR 600 for each learner who passes the oral test. The Ministry of Labour and Social inclusion (AID) has the financial and legal responsibility for this training.

The government also funds non-governmental organisations (NGOs), *i.e.*, distance learning institutions and study organisations offering courses under the Education Act and the Act on Adult Education. In addition, The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) arranges centrally financed courses for job- seekers, through its Directorate of Labour.

Instructor Qualifications

Norway recommends that adult LLN instructors hold qualifications in general or subject-specific or vocational teacher education.

Curriculum and Assessment

- Curricula are developed in the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education and include: The National curriculum in Norwegian language and social studies for adult immigrants and the recently developed Knowledge Promotion Curriculum– which has replaced the National Curricula (L 97 and L97 S) for adults with basic skills needs, and for upper secondary learners (R 94).
- Vox holds responsibility for the implementation of the Norwegian language and social studies curricula for adult immigrants.
- The Directorate has also sponsored the development of the European Language Portfolio for Adult Immigrants - based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It is to be validated by the Council of Europe.

Research and Innovation

The Competence Reform - Launched in 1999, provided resources for about 700 competence building projects in the public and private sectors. It also led to the establishment of the Norwegian Institute for Adult Education (Vox) (www.vox.no).

Vox finances projects aimed at pedagogical development for adult LLN learners, initiates surveys, and disseminates knowledge on adult learning through conferences, workshops and networks of exchange.

SCOTLAND

Programmes and Policies

Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) is the responsibility of two Ministers – the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Communities. The Scottish Executive’s Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (ETLLD) advises Ministers on policy for the ALN strategy and support for the ALN Partnerships is provided through the Learning Connections (LC) Adult Literacies Team. LC is part of the Community Regeneration division of Communities Scotland, which is a Scottish Executive Development Department Agency. ALN is a part of strategies for lifelong learning and as well as an important aspect of regeneration of communities. Learning Connections was established in 2003 to support the development of provision

The Development Department is charged with ensuring that social inclusion is the driving force behind the implementation of the ALN strategy.

The 2001 Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report places accountability for local development, funding, monitoring and targets with the 32 Scottish Local Authorities as coordinators of Community Learning Strategies. A fundamental principle is that all local providers of adult literacy and numeracy learning should have access to these new resources, although it will be for the Community Learning Strategy Partnerships to decide and demonstrate collectively how the new resources can be used most effectively. There are significant differences in the ways that local partnerships have developed. However, each local authority embraces all providers across four sectors: local authority community based learning, the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace.

Funding

Since 2001 over 100 000 adults have been served and by 2008, and more than £66 million will have been invested at a local level to tackle low levels of literacy and numeracy. This is the first significant investment in ALN provision in over 25 years.

National contributions are routed to local authorities through “Grant Aided Expenditure” (GAE) Local authorities then round funding to Community Learning Strategy Partnerships and from them to Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) Partnerships who decide and demonstrate collectively how the resources can be used most effectively to meet local need.

Instructor Qualifications

Instructors have varied backgrounds. A 2003 consultation also revealed that 48% of the tutors responding held a qualification at degree level or above. Accredited training is available for tutors new to adult literacies teaching – the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) Professional Development Award (PDA): “Introduction to Adult Literacies

Learning” – a qualification at level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) - intended to establish a Scotland-wide ‘foundation’ level adult literacies qualification.

Learning Connections has also offered a range of opportunities for staff development: an irregular programme of seminars; consultation with key stakeholders in order to ensure that new developments are as appropriate as possible; support for networks focused on themes such as youth literacies, ESOL, disabilities, or based on geographic links.

SQA has developed “ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy” – a 10 session course for qualified teachers of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to enable experienced teachers to work with learners whose English is rudimentary, and who may have few or no literacy skills in their mother-tongue.

Curriculum and Assessment

Curriculum, diagnostic and formative assessments

- The *Curriculum Framework for Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (ALNIS) (Scottish Executive/Learning Connections, 2005) describes the approach to adult literacy and numeracy learning, in whatever context it is delivered. The framework aims to show how this can be done with the learner at the centre of the process. The framework has two parts. The first part summarises some of the main findings from research in order to identify the key principles of learning, teaching and assessment that should underpin the adult literacy and numeracy curriculum. The second part provides a very practical toolkit supporting practitioners in developing learning programmes that implement the key principles. Case studies of current adult ALN practice provide practical examples for guidance. Together, these parts explain the processes undertaken by learners and tutors to identify, plan, carry out and review learning programmes for individual learners.
- Assessment in Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) programmes is defined as a process that helps learners to identify their current skills and knowledge, to plan their future learning and to know how well they are doing in achieving their own learning needs and goals. It identifies, describes and demonstrates evidence of a person’s current knowledge and skills and can also be used to recognise and record learners’ achievements and to assist in identifying how teaching and learning processes can be improved. Most learning is recorded in individual learning plans that are built and maintained with the ideal of maximum learner control. Learners and tutors monitor their progress based on the learner’s identified goals and outcomes. Having set their own learning goals learners regularly review their own progress and this is based on the distance travelled by each individual towards these goals.
- In addition to the curriculum framework, tutors have access to a number of support resources, including: “Working in Groups with Adult Literacies Learners”, 2003, a

resources pack to support a move towards more group and shared learning options for learners, “Using ICT in Adult Literacies Learning” – a training pack, is one of a number of ICT resources produced to support more effective tutoring, and, the “Dyslexia Handbook”, was commissioned by Learning Connections from Dyslexia Scotland and published in 2005. Print copies are available from Learning Connections.

Summative Assessment

- There are no end ‘tests’ of either formal or informal learning in ALN. Rather good practice is seen as building on learners’ existing strengths and assessment is based on them demonstrating their competence in achieving the specific learning outcomes. ALNIS recommends that learner progress should be measured by the changes achieved by literacies learners rather than by passing or failing tests that may have no direct relevance to them. Learning progress is therefore recognised in relation to their lives as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.
- There is an overarching Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) that places qualifications and learning programmes within a national framework based on the levels of the outcomes of learning and the volume of these outcomes. It is an integrated framework, outlining a clear route across all qualification levels that covered both ‘vocational’ and ‘academic’ qualifications. There are 12 levels ranging from access to learning (1) to doctorates (12) and increases in level of demand relate to factors such as complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding and the independence, range and sophistication of application.
- Learners earn accreditation in ‘Communications’, ‘Numeracy’ and ‘Information Technology’ through the SQA at the level that is appropriate for them. This may mean that some achieve a higher level of accreditation than others. An external verifier moderates the achievement of the learning outcomes and examples of suitable forms of assessment are available to tutors. Tutors can develop their own assessment instruments but these must be approved in advance by SQA as meeting their standards of fairness, consistency and transparency. Demonstration of the achievement of these learning outcomes can be done in a range of settings and contexts and, when all the outcomes (usually four) are achieved, lead to a specific qualification.

Monitoring and Accountability

- Local partnerships develop and agree upon strategic plans outlining detailed aims and objectives, along with associated costs. These plans are then assessed and approved by ETLLD and local outcome agreements are issued covering the period of the plans. Progress is monitored annually through yearly reports.
- Programmes financed by literacies partnership funding are monitored by Her Majesties Inspectorate for Education (HMIE).

- Community Learning Strategies coordinators at the local level are accountable for development, funding, monitoring and target setting across three sectors (community and the voluntary sector, further education and the workplace).
- Target for participation include specific groups: people with limited initial education; unemployed people; workers facing redundancy; people with English as a second or additional language; people who live in disadvantaged areas; workers in low skill jobs; people with a health or disability problem.
- There are *no* targets or accountability measures for numbers of learner achievement of or progression to qualifications.

Research and Innovation

Support for the field is provided through Learning Connections Adult Literacies Team. Learning Connections is part of the Community Regeneration Division of Communities Scotland.

Learning Connections is not a research and development agency, but it does encourage programme development and innovation, as well as dissemination. Its functions include:

- Encouraging innovative approaches to the provision of adult literacies, for example, through pathfinder projects. In total there have been 12 pathfinder projects to support innovative approaches to literacies learning
- Making the best use of electronic information and technology to support adult literacies learners
- Identifying, developing and disseminating information and resources about adult literacies
- Engaging in and encouraging research into the provision of adult literacies
- Exploring and disseminating good practice
- Encouraging professional development through a national training framework and training programme
- Providing training in response to the priorities identified by colleagues in the field
- Liaising with practitioners and promoting the sharing of good practice.

SPAIN***Programmes and Policies***

Educational powers have been decentralised and transferred to the governments of the different Autonomous Communities or Regions, so that the latter are in charge of developing and applying the respective regulations with regard to adult training. Consequently, Spanish general laws on education function as framework laws, establishing general principles to be developed by each Autonomous Community according to its specific needs and aims

The General Educational Act, LOE (Ley Orgánica de Educación) establishes the current legal bases for adult education, first set out in the 1990 LOGSE (Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo). It sets out the general principles to be developed by each Autonomous Community

Programmes for social inclusion/training for participation include:

- *Basic education: levels I, II, III* - These programmes are carried out in institutions specialised in adult training or in ordinary educational centres (outside normal school hours). Weekly training does not exceed 12 hours. At the end of Level III, learners receive the Graduated in Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate (*Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*) certificate. It is identical to the compulsory school leaving certificate.
- *Training oriented towards obtaining official certificates and the access to higher level training through open examinations* - Adults with basic training needs may participate in courses to prepare for the examinations to obtain the Certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education, It provides access to Medium-level Vocational Training Cycles (*Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio*). There is also specific training to prepare for examinations to access higher secondary education, higher VET vocational training and for access to university.
- *Spanish for immigrants* - Free courses carried out in Training Centres for Adults. The courses are delivered by specialised teachers using material from the Ministry of Education. Basque, Catalan and Galician courses are also offered in the Autonomous Communities in which there is a co-official language.
- *Social guarantee programmes* - Adults between 16 and 21 years of age (in some Autonomous Communities, the maximum age is 25) and who have not attained the aims of Compulsory Secondary Education or any Vocational Certificate are eligible for these courses. The length of the training ranges from 720 to 1,800 hours, 26 and 30 hours per week. Courses may be adapted to the requirements of a work contract, or through practical training in companies.

- *Distance learning - mentor classrooms (Aulas Mentor)* - Open and distance-learning courses are provided by the National Centre of Information and Educational Communication (*Centro Nacional de Información y Comunicación Educativa*). Courses are accessible in Mentor Classrooms, with networked computers, a “learning facilitator” and a telematic tutor; learners may also study at home, if there is Internet access. Classrooms are mostly in rural areas, located in Centres of Adult Training, in prisons or town councils. Participants may take an examination and the corresponding Certificate (*Certificado de Aprovechamiento*).
- *Other programmes* – Learners also have access to other modes of provision, mostly oriented toward personal development and social participation. They may be provided in several educational institutions such as Popular Universities (*Universidades Populares*), associations, centres for social initiative, etc. Some of them address marginalized groups, such as the elderly, women, immigrants, disabled people and others.

At the different territorial levels, the Labour Administration, in collaboration with other public or non profit organisations, supports several programmes for training for employment and the development of job skills. These Occupational Workshops include: Workshop Schools (*Escuelas Taller*) and Trade Schools (*Casas de Oficios*); Employment Workshops (*Talleres de Empleo*); Training in Professional Placement (*FIP Plan, Formación en Inserción Profesional*), and other ongoing training at companies and work sites. These programmes target long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, and other groups with greater difficulties in professional placement. Generally, participants in these various programmes are not required to hold certificates.

There are also training programmes to prepare for examinations to access higher secondary education, higher VET vocational training and for access to university.

Instructor Qualifications

Recently passed educational legislation requires that adult LLN instructors obtain certificates and have the same work and pay conditions as instructors in general primary and secondary education in order to teach at the corresponding. Regulations in the Autonomous Communities also require that for other kinds of training (*i.e.*, not aiming for official certificates), instructors must adequately document their technical and pedagogical skills for the job. Requirements are identical for instructors providing training supported by the Labour Administration. However, the National Institute of Employment (INEM, or Instituto Nacional de Empleo) is developing a Professional Certificate to accredit professional skills following completion of training. This certificate is now in a pilot phase.

Curriculum and Assessment

Assessment

The Assessment of students has traditionally been summative in Spain, although the LOGSE (*Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo*, Law on the General Ordering of the Educational System) in 1990 introduced autonomous learning as a principle of adult training. The recently passed LOE (*Ley Orgánica de Educación*, Organic Law on Education) again encourages autonomous learning and states:

“The organisation and the methodology of adult training will be based on autonomous learning and will take into account people’s experiences, needs and interests, and may be developed by means of training involving attendance and also by means of distance learning.” (Art.64.2).

The Autonomous learning strategy has been progressively incorporated into some Autonomous Communities since the LOGSE proposed it in 1990. The regulations of the different Autonomous Communities in charge of developing the state framework-law give more or less importance to autonomous learning and formative assessment; this is the case, for instance, of the Autonomous Communities of Aragon, the Canary Islands or Catalonia, which have explicitly chosen formative assessment to assess and re-orient the learning process.

The first step to develop a methodology based on autonomous learning is to carry out a good VIA (*Valoración Inicial del Alumnado*, *Initial Assessment of Students*), which may be used also to recognise informally acquired knowledge. In the new Law on Education it is stated that:

“Adults may carry out their learning both by means of training activities, official or non-official, and by means of their work experience or experience in social activities; this is why there will be a tendency to establish connections between both ways and measures will be taken to validate the learning thus acquired.” (Art.63.4)

Monitoring and Accountability

- The Educational Administrations are in charge of carrying out inspections in every training institution (public, private or state-supported) to ensure the fulfilment of the laws and the improvement in the quality of the educational system. Their functions are to:
 - advise and provide information related to different providers’ rights and duties.
 - participate in the evaluation of the educational system.
 - collaborate to improve the teaching and administration at training centres, as well as the “educational renewal process”.
 - survey extent to which providers are meeting the intent of laws, regulations and other general provisions governing provision.

- The General Educational Act, LOE (*Ley Orgánica de Educación*) requires that the government –after a previous consultation with the Autonomous Communities– make an annual report to the Congress of the Deputies on the main indicators of the Spanish educational system, the results of the Spanish or international diagnosis-assessments, and the recommendations on the basis of the latter, as well as on the more important aspects of the report of the State School Council (*Consejo Escolar del Estado*) on the educational system.
- Programmes under the jurisdiction of the Labour Administrations are inspected by the territorial delegations. Training centres also submit reports documenting the extent to which they have fulfilled programme plans, qualifications attained by learners, and professional placement.
 - The FIP programme, providing training for the unemployed, also evaluates collaborating centres where courses are given, with follow up by the State Employment Public Service-National Institute of Employment (INEM) or the appropriate organisation for the Autonomous Community.
 - Continuous Training Programmes for those in the workforce, are also evaluated by the State Foundation for Employment training (*Fundación Estatal para la Formación en el Empleo*) evaluates the scope of training, how well it is meeting the needs of employers and workers, and whether its impact on the competitiveness of companies. Programmes also submit student self-assessments carried out during the training, and verified in reports.

UNITED STATES

Programmes and Policies

Adult education programs in the United States that receive Federal funds are currently governed by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). The statute establishes the fundamentals of the adult education system, including the definition of literacy; the purposes of the program; who is eligible for the program; how Federal dollars are dispersed; and accountability requirements.

Programmes receiving federal funds include:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE), which is usually oriented to the General Educational Development (GED) or high school equivalence degree, and
- The English Literacy Program for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Eligible participants in adult education and literacy programs are at least 16 years of age; not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and lack adequate basic skills and do not have a secondary school diploma or equivalent, or are “unable to speak, read or write the English language”. The federally-funded adult education system primarily serves learners who are currently employed.

The 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) consolidated more than 50 employment, training, and literacy programs into three block grants to states to be used for adult education and family literacy, disadvantaged youth, and adult employment and training services. WIA’s focus on preparing people for employment and family literacy does not necessarily diminish the importance of services geared toward adults pursuing their education for other purposes, such as citizenship or personal improvement. However, these outcomes are considered secondary. The primary outcomes are learning gains, measured by standardized tests, acquisition of a high school diploma or GED, transition to postsecondary education, training, and/or employment.

Funding

According to the US Department of Education, Federal funds represent between 50% and 75% of total expenditures in 26 states, including Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Over the last ten years for which data are available (Fiscal Year 1995 – Fiscal Year 2004), total funding has increased from 1.2 billion USD to 2.1 billion USD, an increase of approximately 75%. The WIA or AEFLA state matching requirement is 24% of total expenditure. All non-federal dollars (state, local, private) that are reported by states must be expended on services and activities allowable under AEFLA.

The most recent expenditure data, for Fiscal Year 2004, indicates that the federal expenditure was approximately 562 million USD and non-federal expenditure was approximately 1.6 billion USD. The average federal cost per enrollee for Program Year 2004-05 was 621 USD, and the average total cost (federal and non-federal) was 830 USD.

The National Institute for Literacy reports that most programmes are small or mid-sized with a median enrolment of 318 learners, a median budget of 199 000 USD. Slightly more than half of all adult education programmes (54%) are run by local education agencies. The majority of programmes offered classes more than 40 weeks per year with 4-6 hours per week of instruction the most common category of class time. Only 17% of adult education programme staff are full-time employees who work more than 35 hours per week. Part-time staff account for 40% of the workforce. Volunteers account for the largest share, 43%, but this is due to exceptionally large numbers in only two states.

Instructor Qualifications

Requirements for instructor qualifications vary across states. In the three states featured in this study – California, Maryland and Massachusetts – instructors are required to have appropriate qualifications. In California, instructors must have a bachelor degree, earn a teaching credential, and pass a state basic skills test, as well as some having specialist qualifications such as for English for Speakers of Other Languages. There are similar requirements in Maryland and Massachusetts (apart from the basic skills test).

The provision of professional development (PD) is becoming an important part of states' strategies to improve the quality of provision and there are national and state initiatives focused on reading, numeracy, technology, and so on.

Curriculum and Assessment

Programmes receiving federal funds are encouraged but not required to use instruction methods based on evidence from scientific research. Scientific research is defined as studies that use a rigorous methodology, particularly experimental or quasi-experimental, and have been peer reviewed. States must also meet goals defined in the National Reporting System (NRS) [see section on monitoring and accountability].

Summative Assessment

- Largely because of the newly adopted accountability requirements, 85% of adult education programs report using standardized assessments. These programs use them for placement (86%), to monitor literacy gains (84%), to adapt instruction (65%), and to screen learners to identify special needs, such as a learning disability (39%) (Tomassia *et al.*, 2007).

- By far the most common standardized tests used in adult literacy programs include the Tests of Adult Basic Education (or TABE, a reading comprehension test), the practice GED, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (or CASAS, a competency-based assessment that addresses literacy in various contexts including, for example, the workplace), and the Basic English Skills test (or BEST, a literacy measure for English language learners). TABE also measures mathematics skills. BEST Plus is an adaptation of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) oral interview. It is available as a computer-adaptive assessment on CD or a semi-adaptive print-based version. Both versions are administered as a face-to-face oral interview.
- The GED exam consists of five high-school equivalency tests published and administered by the American Council on Education. In order to receive a GED credential, test takers must score about as well as the average high school graduate would score in five academic areas: writing, social studies, reading, science, and math. A newly revised version of the test was released in 2002. The new test has a more explicit emphasis on cross-disciplinary skills, such as information processing, problem solving, and communication, and also requires the student to write an essay. The math section demonstrates a greater emphasis on data analysis, statistics, and probability. Several other approaches to high school equivalence are available.

Monitoring and Accountability

The NRS sets out the following core indicators of performance:

1. Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking English, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills. The benchmark is moving up one “NRS Level”. There are six NRS Levels for ESOL and six for literacy and numeracy, each equivalent to two grade-level equivalents. A student might be one point away from moving up a level or might be two complete grade levels away from moving up a level, but both transitions are considered sufficient improvement.
2. Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement; and
3. Receipt of a GED, high school diploma, or a recognized equivalent.

The NRS provides specific guidelines for assessment. Results are reported through an online, Internet-based system. Types of standards, measures, and collection procedures are provided as well as technical and training assistance to support data collection and reporting. Adults must be pre-tested when entering a programme to determine their level and post-tested when leaving to determine gain.

States also may identify additional performance indicators for adult education and literacy activities and incorporate these indicators, as well as corresponding annual levels of performance, in their state plans. Each state sets performance goals for the percentage of students who will make a one NRS level gain or pass the GED. States also negotiate and report performance on entered employment, job retention, and entered postsecondary

education and training. Each state is judged on whether or not it has met its goal. The goal then increases each year.

Research and Innovation

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), in consultation with the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services serves as a national resource on current, comprehensive literacy research, practice, and policy. NIFL is responsible for:

- Making the findings of scientifically-based reading research available to educators, administrators, and families.
- Identifying effective classroom reading programs and reading programs that include the components of reading as defined by scientific research.
- Carrying out scientifically-based reading research that determines the most effective ways of improving the literacy skills of adults with reading difficulties and how family literacy services can best provide parents with the knowledge and skills they need to support their children's literacy development. The Institute implements this requirement by providing the appropriation authorized by Literacy Involves Families Together (LIFT) law to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to award as research grants.