

Scotland Case Study

Empowering Learners and Communities

Lyn Tett, University of Edinburgh

John Leavey, Scottish Government

Anne Sliwka, University of Trier

OECD/CERI International Conference

13-15 February 2008, Paris

Nature and Scale of the Challenge in Scotland

Provision focuses on priority groups:

- ❑ People with limited initial education, particularly young adults.
- ❑ Unemployed people and workers facing redundancy.
- ❑ People with English as a second or additional language.
- ❑ People who live in disadvantaged areas.
- ❑ Workers in low-skilled jobs.
- ❑ People on low incomes.
- ❑ People with health problems and disabilities.

ALN Policy Initiative

Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (2001)

'The ability to read, write and use numbers, to handle information, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners' (Scottish Executive 2001).

- ❑ Since 2001 over 100,000 adults
- ❑ By 2008 more than £66 million will have been invested at a local level
- ❑ First significant investment in ALN provision in over 25 years

Recent policy changes in Scotland

In 2007 a new administration was elected and is now called the Scottish Government.

It published "Skills for Scotland, a Lifelong Skills Strategy" in which it commits to:

- active participation at European level in the Lisbon 2000 agenda
- maximising the impact of community-based learning through Community Learning and Development
- completing the refresh of the Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and the goal of Scotland exceeding world class levels of provision in literacy and numeracy

Recent policy changes in Scotland

The Scottish Government (SG) also reached a concordat with the Scottish Local Authorities that means:

- A fundamental shift in the relationship with Local authorities based on mutual respect.
- The negotiation of single outcome agreements based on the over-arching outcomes set by the SG
- Agreed national indicators and targets that include 'reducing the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems.

Social Practices Approach to the Curriculum in Scotland

- The curriculum revolves around the learner.
- What is to be learned is based on the key life areas and social contexts in which literacy and numeracy are used.
- The focus is on the skills, knowledge and understanding that enable people to do what they want in their private, family, working and community lives.

A Social Practice Approach to Learning

1. Literacies are complex, cognitive activities that integrate feelings, values, routines, skills, understandings and activities.
2. They are located within the social, emotional and linguistic contexts that give them meaning.

Three Scottish Cases

- **Work-based provision:**
Haven Inc., Inverness
- **Further education provision:**
Jewel & Esk College, Edinburgh
- **Community-based provision:**
Buddies for Learning, Paisley

Important principles of Scottish ALN provision

- ❑ Approaches are relevant to learners' chosen contexts and goals;
- ❑ Preferred learning styles are identified and respected;
- ❑ Learning options are flexible and responsive to diverse needs and aspirations;
- ❑ Interaction and dialogue between learners are actively promoted and purposeful;
- ❑ Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in context;
- ❑ Learning is presented as an enjoyable and positive experience.

Formative Assessment in Scottish ALN provision

- ❑ Learning is assessed through the distance that learners have travelled in reaching their own goals.
- ❑ Learning goals are recorded in Individual Learning Plans owned by the learners that records progression towards the goals that the learner identified at the beginning of their programme.
- ❑ This process is difficult and requires committed staff who have had good support and development.

Formative Assessment in ALN

- The focus on learners identifying their own goals lends itself to processes of formative assessment that in turn leads to setting new goals in a virtuous cycle of achievement.
- Research carried out by Tett et al. (2006) shows that being assessed formatively on their achievement is enabling many people who would not have participated in education to make real progress in achieving what they want in the various aspects of their lives.

Positive Outcome Examples

- ❑ 'I am now able to help my children with their homework and that means we are happier together as a family as I'm not so worried about not understanding how they learn to read'.
- ❑ 'I have got a job as a gardener now that I can read and write better and this has always been my goal'.
- ❑ 'I am now the Trade Union representative at work and doing this course has helped me to give advice to other staff about, for example, filling in Health and Safety forms'.
- ❑ 'Learning makes you feel better about yourself you know. Now that I know I can learn I want to go on and do more and so I have now enrolled for a computing course at my local college'.