Engaging Learners – in distance and blended learning.
NALA experience

John Stewart, NALA
Information on NALA

National, independent membership-based agency.
Funding via Department of Education and Skills and other sources.

All our work is about:
Ensuring people with literacy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.
What we do

Advocacy and policy development

Promotional Campaigns

Practice development
OECD Adult Skills Survey 2013

Almost **18%** of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of literacy – 525,000 people.

**25%** of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of numeracy– 754,000 people.

42% of Irish adults score at or below Level 1 on the problem solving scale – 825,000 people.
A question of critical mass

Adult literacy budget in Ireland 2013 is €29M and 54,682 attended adult literacy services in ETBs.

• About 10% of those at or below PIAAC level 1 literacy.
• Tuition model is mainly 2 hours per week for about 30 weeks
• Blended learning is not always used.

Further education and training budget in Ireland €900M

270,000 places in further education and training.
NALA advocate 4 policies to engage learners

1. Embed literacy into other policies – e.g. Health, Activation, Youth and Digital strategies.
2. Integrate relevant literacy & numeracy into all learning.
3. Provide more flexible services to meet needs.
4. Promotional, awareness and advertising campaigns.
More flexible services

• **Blended learning, self directed and distance learning** are now key to literacy and basic learning policies.
  
  Ireland - Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019  
  International - e.g. European Commission and UN - see [UNESCO UIL database](#).

• The research on learning among professional adults indicates that blended learning models—supporting online learning with some instructor - or peer-led interactions and dialogue— are more effective than in-person-only models or as effective.

Write on supports flexible learning

www.writeon.ie

• Provides **self directed and distance learning**

• Supports **blended learning**

• Provide **Recognition of Prior Learning**

• Builds on literacy as a social practice

  https://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/nala_guidelines_for_good_adult_literacy_work.pdf

• Another NALA example [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie) supports **family learning**
www.writeon.ie

- Provides for independent self directed learning plans, with telephone tutor and material supports – over 45,000 accounts
- Blended learning resource for providers - 180 centres
- Provides certification at NFQ levels 2 & 3 – with RPL
- Acts as stepping stone to further learning
- Cost effective, quality assured.
The learners’ journey

NALA Freephone
1 800 20 20 65
or
text ‘LEARN’ to 50050

NALA’s Distance Learning Service (DLS)

Learn with a telephone tutor – 30 mins. a week
Self directed Online
www.writeon.ie
Online blended
www.writeon.ie

Provider e.g. ETB Adult Literacy Service
Writeon
- a 2 minute video introduction

• Getting Started on writeon
Easy to use:
Log on – password and user name
Choose level & theme.
Take initial assessment

Themes
- Health
- Family
- Money
- Sport and Leisure
- Technology
- Work
- Environment
Start learning and get qualifications

Over 28,000 interactions in 41 areas of learning !!
### Certification on [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2 Major Award</th>
<th>Level 3 Major Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- choose from 12 Minor awards</td>
<td>Employability, ICT and General Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- choose from 14 Minor awards</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and Speaking</td>
<td>Application of Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Decision Making</td>
<td>Functional Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Learning Goals</td>
<td>Computer Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity and Number</td>
<td>Internet Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern and Relationship</td>
<td>Digital Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape and Space</td>
<td>Career Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Handling</td>
<td>Health and Safety Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Problem Solving</td>
<td>Personal Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Technology</td>
<td>Personal and Interpersonal Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>Managing Personal Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self Advocacy</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Event Participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content and resources at Level 1 and Level 4, - no certification yet.
www.writeon.ie Level guides

• Getting Started on writeon
• Writeon2 (Level 2) Guide
• Writeon3 (Level 3) Guide
• Writeon4 (Level 4) Guide
Models of Blended Learning using www.writeon.ie

1. Tallaght Probation Service
   • Used in class and in learners own time.
   • Supports learning and certification 2013 [Case studies of numeracy practice](#)

2. Limerick ESOL Partnership
   • Used mainly in learners own time
   • Extends learning and time on task 2014 [NALA ESOL blended learning report.pdf](#)

3. An Cosan community education
   • Used to support individual learning plans in a tutor and peer support model
   • 2011 [NALA Blended Learning report](#)
Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL

• Integral part of www.writeon.ie.
• Initial, formative and summative assessment against national standards.
• Provides RPL at Irish NFQ levels 2 & 3.
• Only RPL system at these levels in Ireland.
• Example: Activation project for young long term unemployed used RPL to support learning and qualifications.

Blended learning for young unemployed
Blended learning

NALA experience suggests benefits:

– For learners:
  • Facilitates learning in different ways and styles.
  • Learners may require more support than you can traditionally provide.
  • Integrates literacy and numeracy into other learning needs.

– For providers:
  • Expands learning time and optimises learning and tutoring resources
  • Supports learning to meet the needs of a particular learner.
  • Shares content rather than reinvents the wheel every time.
  • Provides for certification and RPL

– For policy makers
  • Can provide greater outcomes and achievement
  • Optimises resources
Evaluations & evidence

• 2008 Evaluation of DLS
• 2009 Writeon Usability Report
• 2010 Evaluation of DLS
• 2011 Writeon Usability Report
• 2011 NALA Blended Learning Report
• 2014 NALA ESOL Blended Learning Report
• 2014 Write on for work: Guidelines for web-based basic skills support
Strategies for Improving Participation in and Awareness of Adult Learning
European Commission, 2012

NALA “Written Off” -TV series and distance learning www.writeon.ie
listed as one of top 16 case studies by European Commission in 2012.

Some outcomes

- 2014 - 7,717 new accounts
  13,948 visitors

- 45,000+ learning accounts

- 3,500+ learners got awards

- 17,690 L2 minors
  3,898 L3 minors

- 2014 – 20m 39s
  average time on site

- Blended learning:
  Over 100 centres use Writeon today
Mass awareness and advertising campaigns

TV Series 2000 – 2014
- The Family Project  (2013 -2014)
- A Story with Me in it  (2011-2012)
- Stuck for Words  (2010)
- The really useful guide  (2006-2007)
- Read Write Now  (2000-2005)

Aim is to:
1. Raise awareness of adult literacy issue; and
2. motivate people to return to education

Ratings
200,000 - 300,000 watched TV programmes each week !!
How we reach learners - a 30 second TV ad.

• http://bit.ly/ImP0rG
Advertising Campaigns

Take the first step
Call 1800 20 20 65

2007 – 2013
• 3 people
• 3 stories
• 3 reasons for improving their literacy
• 20,000 calls and texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A mother who wants to help her child with homework</th>
<th>An older man who used to have problems reading, writing and numbers</th>
<th>A younger guy who turned his life around</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NALA
National Adult Literacy Agency
Website for parents
www.helpmykidlearn.ie

Aim of website is to give parents fun ideas and tips to support children’s literacy and numeracy development.

It is part of National Literacy & Numeracy Strategy for children.

Nearly 67,000 unique visitors in it’s first year.

Nearly 1,000 subscribers to monthly newsletter.

Supports family literacy practices and learning in the home.
No certification – it’s fun.
Family literacy: Effects of parents and schools on children’s achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Parental effects</th>
<th>School effects</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 7</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age 11</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age 16</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Sacker et al 2002
Desforges to EFLN conference 2009
Reach more. Serve better.

1. Motivate adults to engage in learning e.g. TV ads.
2. Integrate literacy and numeracy development into further education and training provision.
3. Provide distance learning [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie)
5. Support family learning [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie)
Further information

NALA
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Email: jstewart@nala.ie
Tel: (01) 412 7900

Website: www.nala.ie
Plain English website: www.simplyput.ie
Distance learning website: www.writeon.ie
Try It Out – L2

- [underline]www.writeon.ie[/underline]
- Request a password – note it down
- Give yourself a unique username
  (Please add the word [b]test[/b] e.g. [b]test_john[/b] NALA)
- Add in (real or fake) information
- Select Level 2
- Pick any award
- Start working
- Check out portfolio
Some recent NALA achievements

• Secured adult learner seats on 16 Education and Training Boards;
• National adult literacy and numeracy strategy enshrined in law;
• Provide a way to recognise prior learning - at NQF Levels 2 and 3;
• Recognised internationally for using television to increase awareness of adult literacy issues and to support literacy learning;
• Delivered successful promotional campaigns and information resources, for example, www.helpmykidlearn.ie aimed at supporting parents support their children’s learning.
Meeting Learner Needs

- Flexibility
- Unlike School
- Personalised Learning
- Free
- RPL
- Stigma
- Need to Tackle Barrier Issues
- Adaptability
- Usability

Unlike School

Distance Learning Service

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Lítheachta do Aosaigh
Development

- 4 Levels
- 41 ‘minor awards’
- 28,000+ interactions
- 6.5 years development
- 6 Authors, 3 Editors, 2 Instructional Designers
- 1 accommodating Development Company!
- 10 ‘Assessors’, 1 ‘Verifier’, 1 full time Admin person
## Awards given out by round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>L 2 Minor Awards</th>
<th>L 3 Minor Awards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Apr-10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jul-10</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jan-11</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Apr-11</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jul-11</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct-11</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April-12</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>June-12</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Oct-12</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>571</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr-13</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>2,307</td>
<td>234</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Aug-13</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>1,774</td>
<td>697</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec-13</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Apr-14</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>384</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>1,799</td>
<td>431</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dec-14</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17,690</td>
<td>3,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School is obsolete for today’s learners!
•  [Sugata Mitra: Build a School in the Cloud](#)

Free teachers up to teach people individually!
•  [Salman Khan: Using video to reinvent education](#)

Current education doesn’t feed people’s spirits!
•  [Ken Robinson: Bring on the learning revolution!](#)

You don’t need a lot of money or ‘tech candy’ – you just need to change how you think about education!
•  [Raj Dhingra – Can technology change education? Yes!](#)
Models of Blended Learning using writeon.ie in Ireland
Model 1 Tallaght Probation Service

- Level 3 educational programme for 18-35 year olds.
- Use a ‘pen and paper’ approach when doing group work.
- Learners work independently on writeon.ie with some tutor input.
Model 1 Tallaght Probation Service

- Young people are familiar with immediacy of technology.

- Key benefits are the ability to;
  - diagnose individual learning needs,
  - quickly develop individualised working plans,
  - maintain greater levels of motivation,
  - ensures privacy and allows learners to work at individual pace,
  - achieve accreditation,
  - address and deal with behavioural issues in the classroom.
“This is probably one of the few times they’ve felt a sense of achievement in years. They particularly like using the pull and drag facility, the fact that you can click on something and ‘ding, ding’ numbers are coming up and that you can get through some exercises in under thirty seconds and then you’re done. They think ‘it’s cool.’” Blended Learning tutor

“I’ve seen guys coming out of here beaming, you know, after twenty minutes they’re literally beaming. They ask if they can go on and do the next exercise. It’s really important here, I can’t emphasise how important it has been. It has changed lives here. I really mean that.” Blended Learning tutor
Model 2 ESOL Blended Learning Project

• Carried out at the request of Limerick ESOL Partnership.

• Focus of project was learners’ use of www.writeon.ie

• Took place over 10 week period and involved 41 ESOL learners.

• Primary aim was to highlight benefits, to learners, providers and organisations of using www.writeon.ie as part of blended learning approach to the tuition of ESOL learners
Model 2 ESOL Blended Learning Project

- ESOL learners keen to learn outside of classroom time – www.writeon.ie provided an opportunity to extend learning time.
- Good literacy resource for literacy and language development
- Reported increased confidence in a number of learning situations.
- Increased confidence level when expressing themselves in English.
- Encouraged independent study.
- Encouraged work towards accreditation
Model 3 An Cosán

- Group of learners with different needs.
- Tutor conducts own needs analysis with individuals.
- Learners and tutor negotiate which awards to work on.
- Learners work on own, supporting each other as needed.
- Tutor addresses issues individually in one-to-one or at front of class if issues recurring.
- Learners begin with writeon.ie before moving on to other ICT work.
- Peer support was a large part of the class.
- Learners work independently at home or in their local library.
NALA’s Blended Learning Project 2010

- 12 centres
- Using ‘traditional’ approach
  - One-to-one, Group
  - Books, DVDs, CD-Roms, TV, tasks, etc
- Combining it with www.writeon.ie
  - To expand capacity – one tutor, many one-to-ones for example
  - To offer independent study options
  - To introduce computers
  - To offer accreditation at level 2