Engaging Learners – in distance and blended learning.

NALA experience

John Stewart, NALA

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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.

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What we do

Advocacy and policy development

Promotional Campaigns

Simply Put.

Practice development

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

  USA - Making Skills Everyone's Business (2015)

  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.

  U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2010). Evaluation of evidence based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies. Washington, DC: Author.

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 supports **family learning**

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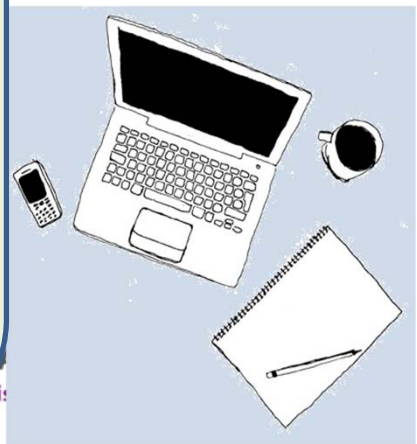
www.writeon.ie

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.



Distance Learning Service

The learners' journey

NALA Freephone

1 800 20 20 65

or

text 'LEARN' to 50050

NALA's Distance Learning Service (DLS)

Provider e.g. ETB Adult Literacy Service

Learn with a telephone tutor – 30 mins. a week

Self directed Online www.writeon.ie

Online blended www.writeon.ie

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Writeon - a 2 minute video introduction

- Getting Started on writeon

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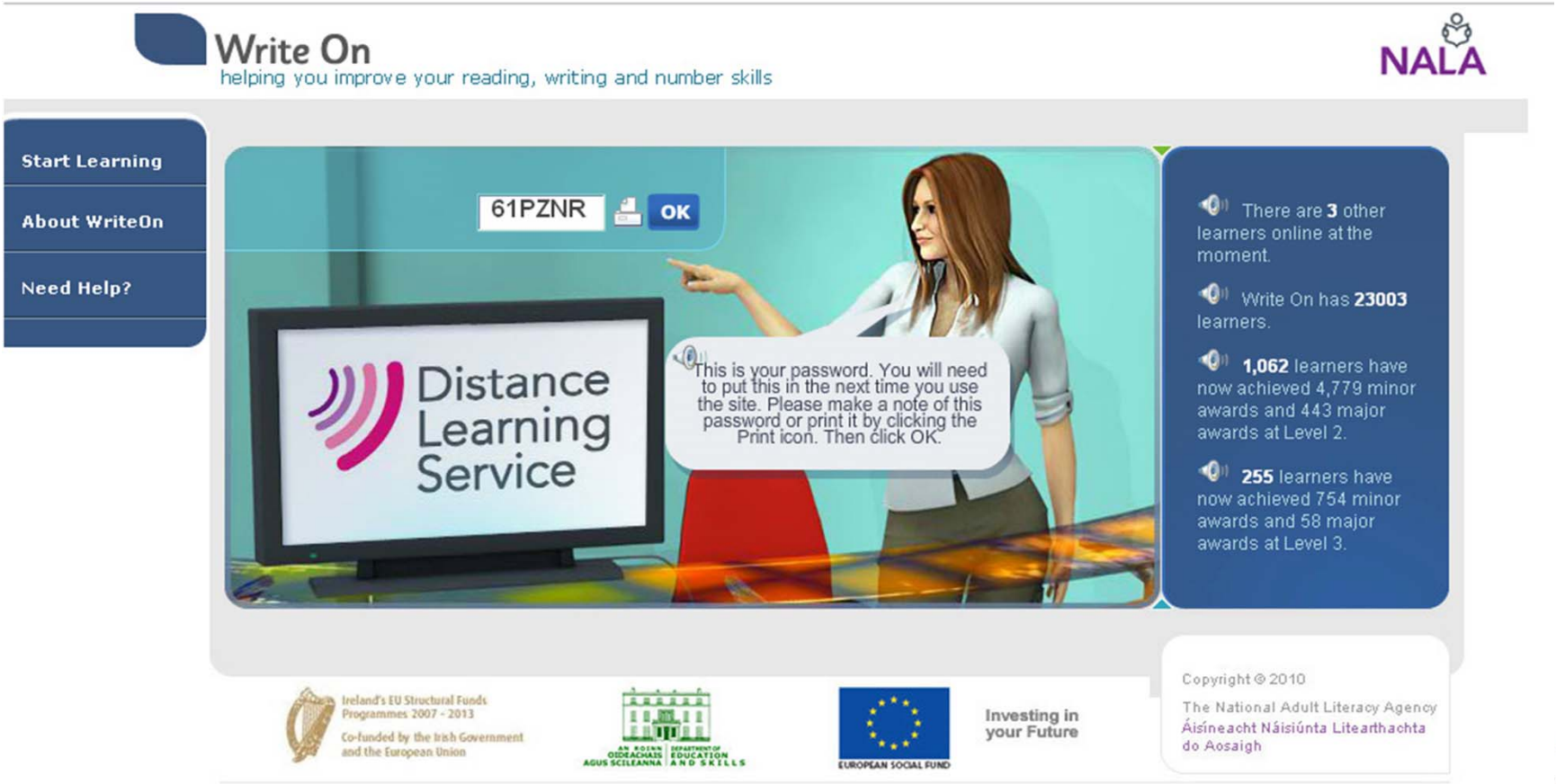
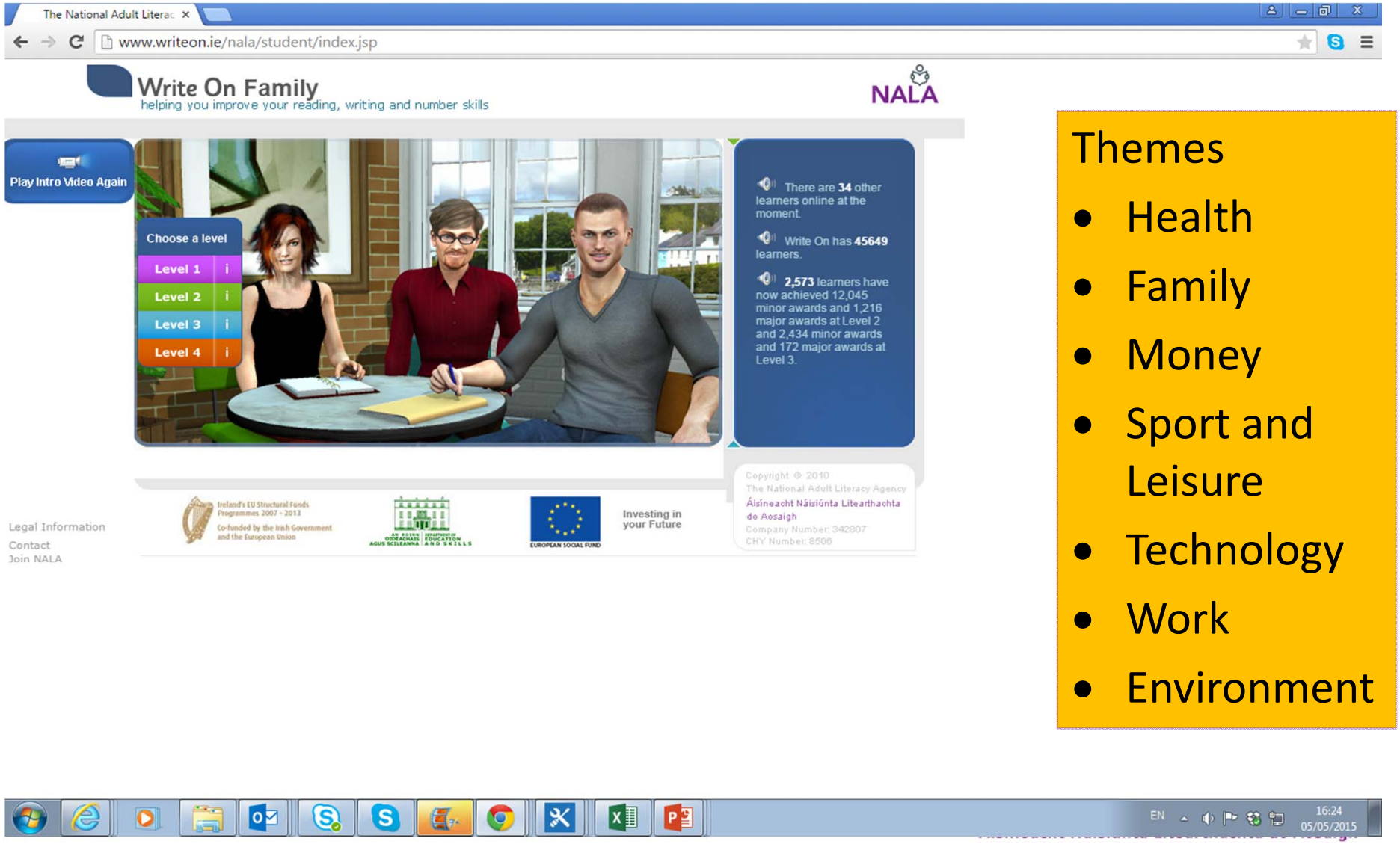
Easy to use: Log on – password and user name



Choose level & theme.
Take initial assessment

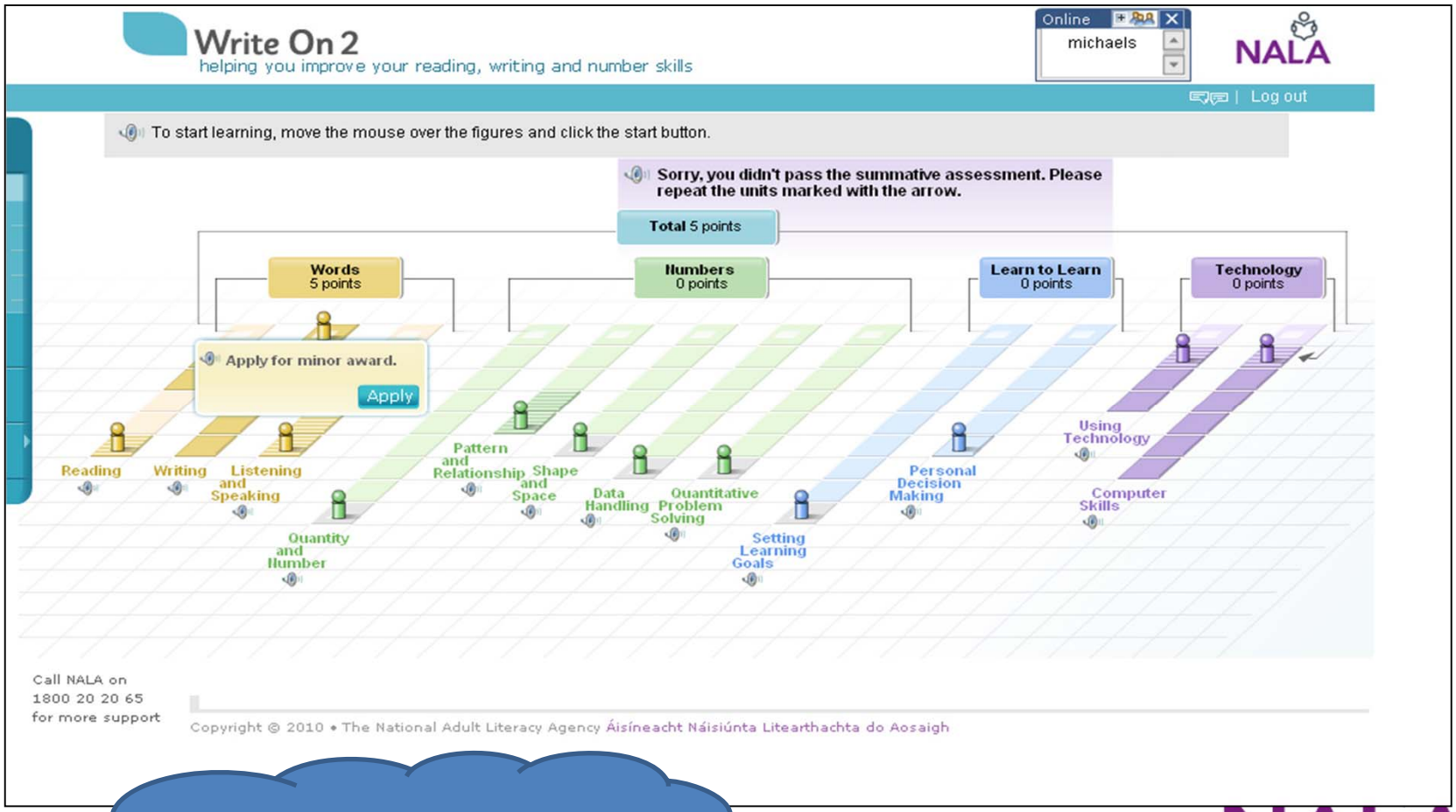


Themes

- Health
- Family
- Money
- Sport and Leisure
- Technology
- Work
- Environment

Distance Learning Service

Start learning and get qualifications



Over 28,000 interactions in 41 areas of learning !!

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Certification on www.writeon.ie

Level 2 Major Award - choose from 12 Minor awards	Level 3 Major Awards Employability, ICT and General Learning - choose from 14 Minor awards
Reading	Communications
Writing	Mathematics
Listening and Speaking	Application of Number
Personal Decision Making	Functional Mathematics
Setting Learning Goals	Computer Literacy
Quantity and Number	Internet Skills
Pattern and Relationship	Digital Media
Shape and Space	Career Preparation
Data Handling	Health and Safety Awareness
Quantitative Problem Solving	Personal Effectiveness
Using Technology	Personal and Interpersonal Skills
Computer Skills	Managing Personal Finances
	Self Advocacy
	Event Participation

Content and resources at Level 1 and Level 4, - no certification yet.

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www.writeon.ie Level guides

- Getting Started on writeon
- Writeon2 (Level 2) Guide
- Writeon3 (Level 3) Guide
- Writeon4 (Level 4) Guide

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/strategies-for-improving-participation-in-and-awareness-of-adult-learning-pbNC3112514/?CatalogCategoryID=QN4KABste0YAAAEjFZEY4e5L

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Distance Learning Service

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

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Mass awareness and advertising campaigns

TV Series

TV Series 2000 – 2014

- **The Family Project** (2013 -2014)
- **A Story with Me in it** (2011-2012)
- **Stuck for Words** (2010)
- **Written off?** (2008 – 2009)
- **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 !!

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How we reach learners - a 30 second TV ad.

- http://bit.ly/ImP0rG

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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**

A mother who wants to help her child with homework http://bit.ly/197AISL

An older man who used to have problems reading, writing and numbers http://bit.ly/ImP0rG

A younger guy who turned his life around http://bit.ly/liPu2n

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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

Achievement	Parental effects	School effects
Age 7	0.29	0.05
age 11	0.27	0.21
age 16	0.14	0.51

From Sacker et al 2002
Desforges to EFLN conference 2009
http://www.efln.eu/assets/sept09conference/Charles_Desforges_EFLN_Pres.pdf

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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
4. Support more intensive learning through **blended learning** and Recognition of Prior Learning.
5. Support family learning www.helpmykidlearn.ie

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Further information

NALA
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

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

Website: www.nala.ie

http://facebook.com/nalaireland

http://twitter.com/nalaireland

http://www.youtube.com/user/nationaladultliterac

Plain English website: www.simplyput.ie
Distance learning website: www.writeon.ie

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Try It Out – L2

- www.writeon.ie
- Request a password – note it down
- Give yourself a unique username

  (Please add the word **test** e.g. **test**_john NALA)
- Add in (real or fake) information
- Select Level 2
- Pick any award
- Start working
- Check out portfolio

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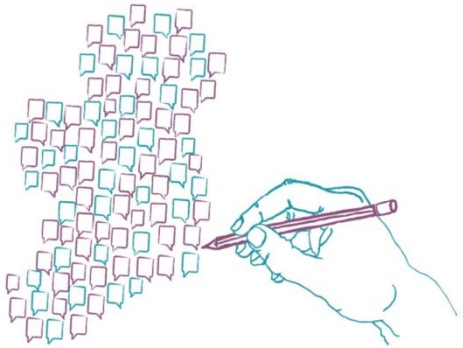
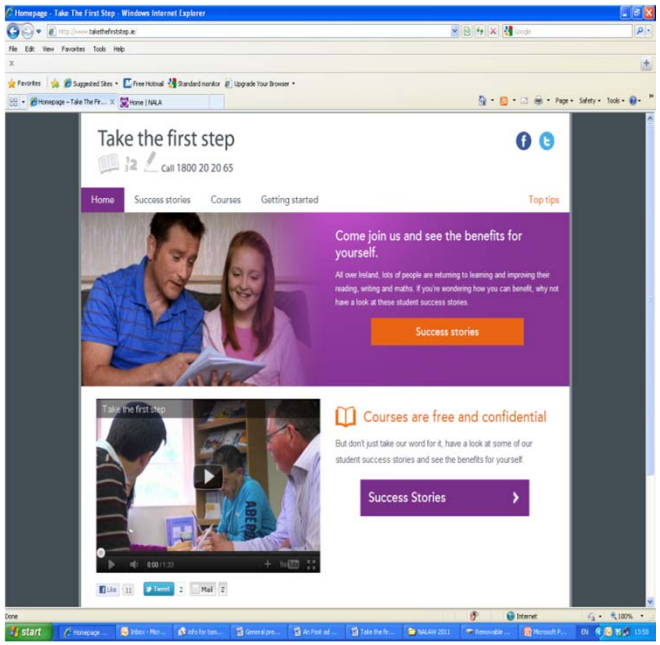
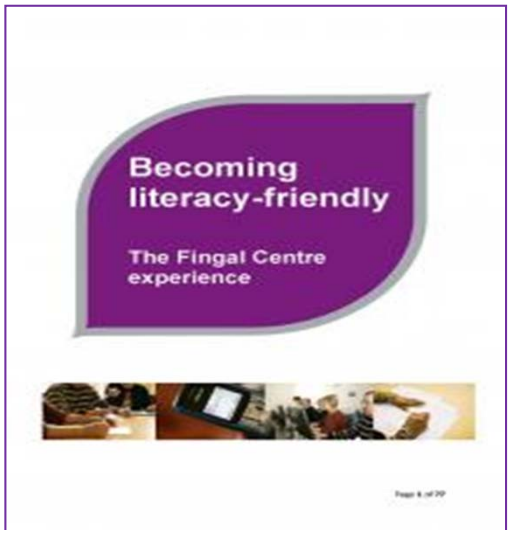
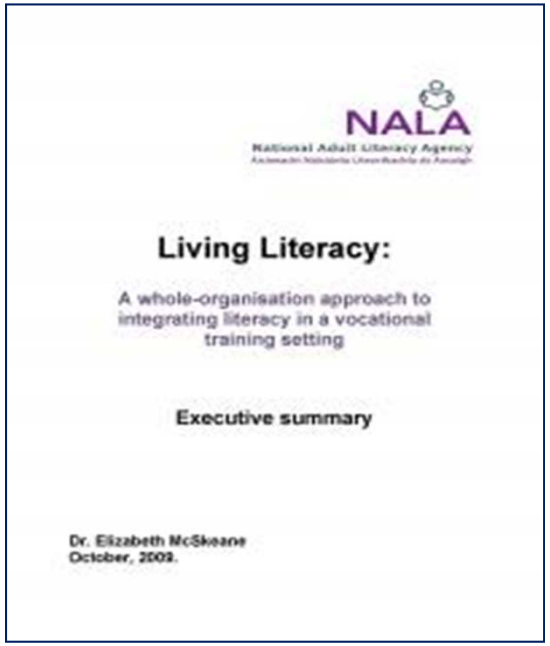
Supplementary information



Plain english conference
Dublin September 2015







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.

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Meeting Learner Needs

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Development

4 Levels

41 ‘minor awards’

28,000+ interactions

6.5 years development

10 ‘Assessors’, 1 ‘Verifier’, 1 full time Admin person

1 accommodating Development Company!

6 Authors, 3 Editors, 2 Instructional Designers

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Distance Learning Service

Awards given out by round

Round	Date	Learners	L 2 Minor Awards	L 3 Minor Awards
1	2008	11	75	0
2	2009	33	156	0
3	Feb-10	138	645	0
4	Apr-10	45	185	0
5	Jul-10	132	594	0
6	Jan-11	94	440	18
7	Apr-11	381	1,376	267
8	Jul-11	212	412	273
9	Oct-11	109	415	71
10	Dec-11	161	481	125
11	April– 12	233	686	194
12	June– 12	197	588	205
13	Oct-12	612	2,031	571
14	Apr-13	626	2,307	234
15	Aug-13	649	1,774	697
16	Dec -13	359	817	272
17	Apr-14	658	1972	384
18	Aug-14	642	1,799	431
19	Dec-14	315	937	156
Totals			17,690	3,898

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Ted.com Inspiration

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!

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Models of Blended Learning using writeon.ie in Ireland

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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.

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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.

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Model 1 Tallaght Probation Service

"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

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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

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Distance Learning Service

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.

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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

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