



Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

Literacy and Numeracy Policy for Further Education and Training



Louth and Meath Education and Training Board



Introduction

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board is committed to the delivery of the Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019) which aims to deliver a high quality learning experience leading to better outcomes for all those who engage in Further Education and Training (FET).

The FET strategy identified five clear goals to direct and measure the development and implementation of further education and training.

Strategic Goal 2 Active Inclusion and Strategic Objective 2.2 'Devise and Implement a strategy to promote literacy and numeracy across FET' outlines four key actions to accomplish this goal.

- Improve literacy and numeracy levels amongst the adult population with a particular focus on providing individuals with the necessary competencies to achieve their personal, social, career and employment aspirations by promoting literacy and numeracy provision.
- Support FET staff through CPD to attain the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to respond effectively to the literacy and numeracy needs of learners and provide intensive literacy tuition.
- Embed literacy and numeracy within FET provision as appropriate, and conduct research to identify best practice models across all FET levels and settings
- Set appropriate targets and objectives for literacy and numeracy programmes (with regard to priority target groups) and monitor and evaluate against the agreed objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for a whole organisation approach to Literacy Awareness and Integrating Literacy and Numeracy into programme delivery across the FET sector. It builds on the earlier publication Integrating language, literacy and numeracy into ETB further education and training courses ETBI Revised edition, 2016 see <https://www.etbi.ie/etbi-services/education-resources/literacy-and-numeracy>

What is literacy?

Historically literacy was a measurement of reading and writing. The definition of literacy has changed and evolved over time and is now considered in a much broader context to reflect skills, knowledge and competence required by individuals to participate fully in family, community, work and society. Provider Operational Guidelines for Literacy Programmes (DES 2013) defines literacy as:

Literacy is fundamental to personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability. Adult Literacy is:

the provision of basic education, including reading, writing and numeracy skills, and ICT for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies to enhance their participation in personal, social and economic life.

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) goes beyond this definition and includes listening and speaking as core literacy skills needed to communicate and handle information.

What does 'integrating literacy' mean?

On Further Education and Training courses, 'integrating literacy' means developing the subject knowledge and skills and the related language, literacy, numeracy and ICT as interwoven elements of a single process. (Integrating Literacy: Guidelines for Further Education and Training centres NALA 2013)

Research carried out by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy UK (NRDC 2006) indicates that integrating literacy language and numeracy approaches on vocational programme results in higher retention and success rates. It further indicates that learners benefit from being taught by teams of staff, each with their own different area of expertise, working closely together.

Galway and Roscommon ETB (GRETB) distinguishes between integrating and embedding literacy and language. Integrating is more associated with a whole organisation policy integration of literacy, language and numeracy while embedding refers to the addressing and teaching of literacy, numeracy or language when teaching another subject (GRETB FET Strategy: Literacy, Language and Numeracy)

Integrating Literacy and Numeracy Research Report (SOLAS 2018) 'shows there is already a base of existing practice in integrating literacy and numeracy that ETBs can build on'. The research recommends focusing on increasing the visibility of existing practice and providing tailored support to enhance the existing landscape. The report cites the following as an area for consideration (p42)

Ensuring support for a plurality of models for integrating literacy and numeracy within FET. The study found there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to effectively integrating literacy and numeracy. Models are most effective when they reflect the needs of specific groups of learners, the characteristics of each programme and are rooted in the local context, building on existing infrastructure and capacity within the FET provider.

Policy

Louth and Meath ETB whole organisation literacy policy is seen as an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Louth and Meath ETB recognises the importance of literacy and numeracy within FET programmes, to successful outcomes, to the personal growth of individuals and to capacity building to engage with family, work and community life.

Louth and Meath ETB is committed to the development of a whole organisation approach to literacy, and to improving literacy and numeracy levels amongst the adult population, providing individuals with the necessary competencies to achieve their personal, social, career and employment aspirations.

The Literacy Policy aims to ensure appropriate plans, procedures and opportunities are in place to enable the organisation to:

- Offer quality and holistic education and training opportunities to learners
- Ensure all education and training programmes are supported by the development of literacy and numeracy skills
- Ensure all learners are supported in improving their literacy and numeracy skills
- Ensure subject specific literacy, language and numeracy is taught in all subject areas
- Provide Literacy Awareness Training for all administration, guidance, reception and frontline staff
- Provide Integrating Literacy training for teaching/tutoring staff

Literacy is everyone's responsibility

The responsibility for integrating literacy into FET programmes requires a whole-centre approach involving senior managers, centre heads, programme coordinators, teachers, tutors, and staff members. Administration staff, reception front line staff should be literacy aware to enable them to recognise signs of literacy difficulties and to respond appropriately.

Louth and Meath ETB's Further Education and Training Senior Management will:

- actively promote literacy awareness for all staff and the integration of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in the development and delivery of all Further Education and Training Programmes
- facilitate an FET Literacy Working group with responsibility for developing and implementing a Literacy Plan for the organisation (Appendix 1)
- facilitate Literacy Awareness Training for administration, guidance, reception and frontline staff
- facilitate Integrating Literacy training for all teaching and tutoring staff on all education and training programmes
- include literacy awareness training and integrating literacy training in their annual CPD schedule and facilitate attendance by staff.

Louth and Meath ETB's Further Education and Training Centre Managers and Programme Coordinators will

- actively promote a whole service approach to integrating literacy and numeracy
- participate in the organisation's Literacy Working Group and contribute to the development and implementation of a literacy plan for their centre's programmes (See Appendix 1)
- collaborate with the organisation's literacy service on methodologies to analyse the literacy and numeracy skills required to successfully complete their programmes

- develop a flexible working partnership between FET teachers/tutors and literacy staff to respond to learners' programme related literacy needs
- have a clear recruitment and access policy in place, including assessment/screening, to ensure correct placement of learners and identify potential literacy/numeracy difficulties
- inform learners of the literacy and numeracy skills required to successfully complete programmes
- disseminate information on support/access courses available to learners
- facilitate staff attendance at training

Louth and Meath ETB's Further Education and Training Literacy/Basic Education Service will

- actively promote a whole organisation approach to literacy and numeracy
- provide Integrating Literacy Training to programme coordinators, teachers and tutors
- provide literacy awareness training for administration, guidance, reception and frontline staff
- support education and training managers/programme coordinators and Guidance Counsellors in assessing the literacy skills of learners applying for courses
- assist centres in the use of Plain English in the development of brochures and publicity materials
- support literacy proofing of assessment materials e.g. guidelines, briefs and tasks
- collaborate with centre managers/programme coordinators to address literacy barriers to learning and to fair assessment
- recommend strategies to assist learners to develop literacy skills required to successfully complete their FET programme


Louth and Meath Further Education and Training Guidance and Information Service will:

- actively promote a whole service approach to integrating literacy and numeracy
- participate in the organisation's Literacy Working Group and contribute to the development and implementation of a literacy plan

- Collaborate with the Literacy/Basic Education Service on assessment of learners
- inform learners of the literacy and numeracy skills required to successfully complete programmes
- provide information and advice on support/access courses available to learners
- facilitate staff attendance at training

Louth and Meath Further Education and Training Teacher and Tutor will:

- Include literacy and numeracy skills relevant to their subject as an overall objective of the programme
- Analyse programme content to determine the literacy and numeracy skills required by learners to participate fully on the programme
- Embed literacy and numeracy skills in Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans
- Support students to identify their individual Learning Style
- Collaborate with centre managers/programme coordinators on literacy assessment for all learners
- Use a range of teaching strategies and methodologies to support learners who may have difficulties in literacy, language and/or numeracy related to the programme
- Use Plain English when designing notes and handouts
- Literacy proof assessment guidelines, briefs, tasks etc
- Collaborate with other subject tutors to integrate assessment where possible
- Attend Integrating Literacy Training

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Appendix 1

The FET Literacy Working Group

A Literacy Working Group will be established to plan and implement literacy policy/procedures for the organisation. The working group should include members from all sectors of FET to help implement and drive the plan and to liaise with their department staff and subject teachers/tutors on literacy issues and developments

The Literacy Working Group will be responsible for:

- Developing and implementing a Literacy Plan for the whole organisation
- Establish a training schedule/calendar for literacy development
- Establish structures to monitor, evaluate and review the literacy development plan
- Driving and activating the literacy plan focusing particularly on developing a whole organisation approach

The Literacy Working Group will be comprised of the following:

- Senior Manager
- Literacy/Basic Education Centre Manager
- Programme Coordinators
- Guidance Counsellor
- Tutor representatives