

Improving basic skills in the Irish workplace

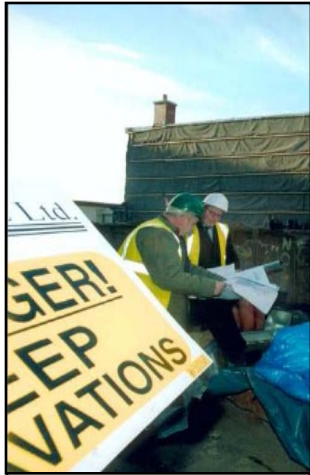
**EBSN conference
“Working Skills”
27 – 29th June 2011**

**Helen Ryan
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)**

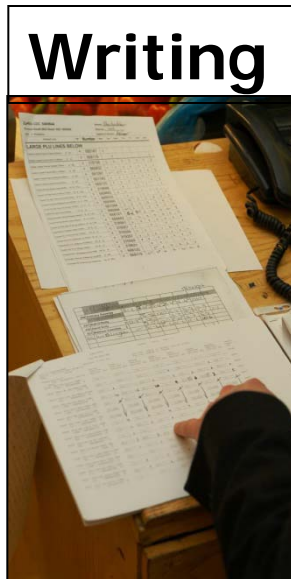
What is NALA?

- Independent member based organisation
- Committed to making sure adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - can fully take part in society, and
 - access learning opportunities that meet their needs
- Our vision: We want Ireland to be a place where adult literacy is a valued right and where everyone can both develop their literacy and take part more fully in society.

What is literacy?



Reading



Writing



Technology



Listening and speaking



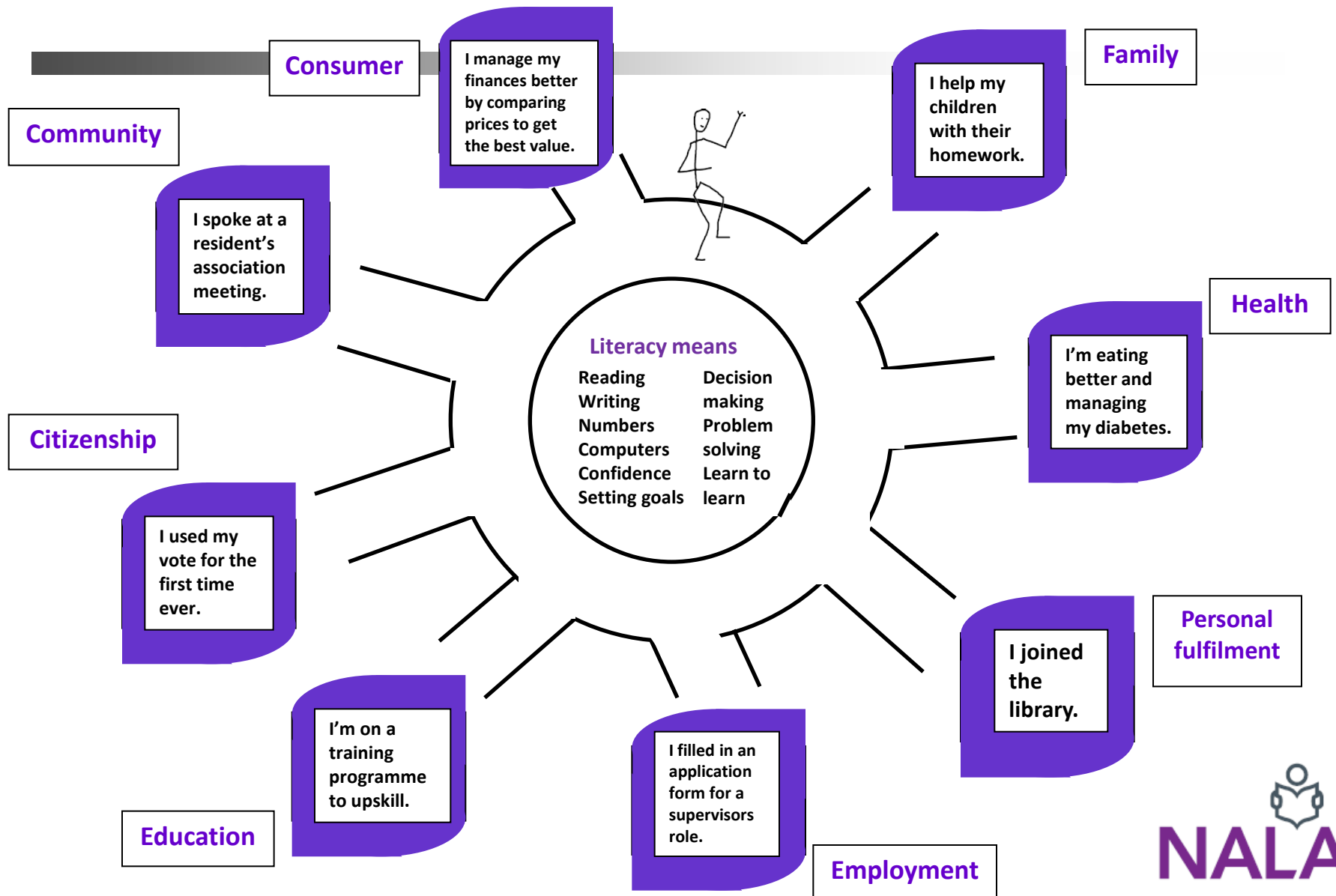
Maths



Self confidence and self esteem

Realising potential

Literacy and numeracy: essential lifelong learning throughout life events



Changing demands on literacy skills

- Literacy skills are changing all the time.
- **Deskilling** -> literacy is like a muscle - use it or lose it.
- **Spikiness** – we are good at some things; not so good at other things – multiple intelligences.
- **Context** and **purpose** is important – consider the literacy in the immediate setting.

Profile of Irish population

- **17%** (388,600) people in the labour force have less than a level 4 qualification (CSO, 2011).
- PISA findings for 15-18 year olds - our **reading** levels Ireland has dropped from 5th to **17th place**, the sharpest decline among 39 countries.
- **1 in 10** leave primary school system with a literacy difficulty, rising to **3 in 10** in disadvantaged areas. (ERC, 2004)

Addressing literacy needs

- Since 1997, provision of adult literacy learning opportunities has grown from 5,000 places to **45,000** in 2009.
- Annual funding increased from approximately €1m in 1997 to **€28m** in 2011.
- In spite of these successes, support is still only being provided to approximately 9% of adults at level 1 identified by IALS.

Employers identified . . .

Hard skills

- **44.3%** of employers stating a shortfall in writing skills
- **13.1%** of employers stating a shortfall in numeracy

Soft skills

- **56.95%** of employers observe a lack in communication skills by new recruits

Source: Grad Ireland Survey, 2011

Solutions for the workplace

- Workplace basic education programmes
- Integrating literacy into workplace and job specific training
- Distance learning
- Blended learning

Workplace basic education (WBE)

- Workplace Basic Education Fund established since 2005 – current budget €2.8 million.
- 100% grant aided training
- Targeted at employees in the private sector
- Piloted initially through national state training agency, FÁS, now funding is with state adult education provider – Vocational Education Committees (VECs)
- Paid learning leave is sometimes given – depends on the workplace

Skills for Work – May – Dec 2010

- 236 courses delivered
 - 12 sectors
 - 23% in retail; 15% cluster groups; 11% food and beverage
- 1,664 participants with 1,594 completing
 - 35 hour courses with 6 -8 participants in each group
 - 872 receiving FEATC level 3 accreditation
- Demographics
 - 45% Male; 55% Female
 - 41% aged 45 - 54
 - 31.5% with no formal education

Integrating literacy

- Designing and delivering education and training programmes in a way that also develops literacy and numeracy at the same time, produces the “double duty dollar” effect.
- Adopting an integrated approach involves the prioritisation of continuous professional development and training budgets.
- Very slow movement on integrating literacy into workplace training – biggest challenge is that most trainers are self-employed.

Distance Learning



- NALA provides a quality **Distance Learning Service** for adults to improve literacy and numeracy skills in the privacy of their homes, library, workplace or local community setting.
- Our current service comprises of:
 - TV series – A Story with Me in It – currently broadcasting on Mondays at 7.30p.m.
 - Freephone tutor support line
 - An interactive learning website – www.writeon.ie
 - Printed materials and DVDs and CDs

Write On

helping you improve your reading, writing and number skills



- Start Learning
- About WriteOn
- Need Help?

Please note June 30 2011 is the deadline for receipt of applications for awards eligible for the 100Euro completion bonus. For more information on this, please call us on 1800 20 20 65.

Hello, my name is Aine. To use this Website, you need a password. If you already have a password, please enter it below. If you don't have a password, click on 'New Password' to continue.

New Password

OK

- There are **44** other learners online at the moment.
- Write On has **15008** learners.
- 757** learners have now achieved 3,294 minor awards and 300 major awards at Level 2.
- 68** learners have now achieved 210 minor awards and 16 major awards at Level 3.



Investing in your Future

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The National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthaichta do Aosaigh

Blended learning

- Using a variety of approaches, best determined by the needs of the learner and the capability of the provider.
- It is a way of creatively matching using different approaches to learners, content and contexts.
- It may or may not involve computers!

However great potential to blend face-to-face learning with interactive online learning, for example through www.writeone.ie

Write On

helping you improve your reading, writing and number skills

Online



Log out

Partner

Learning Journal
Check your results

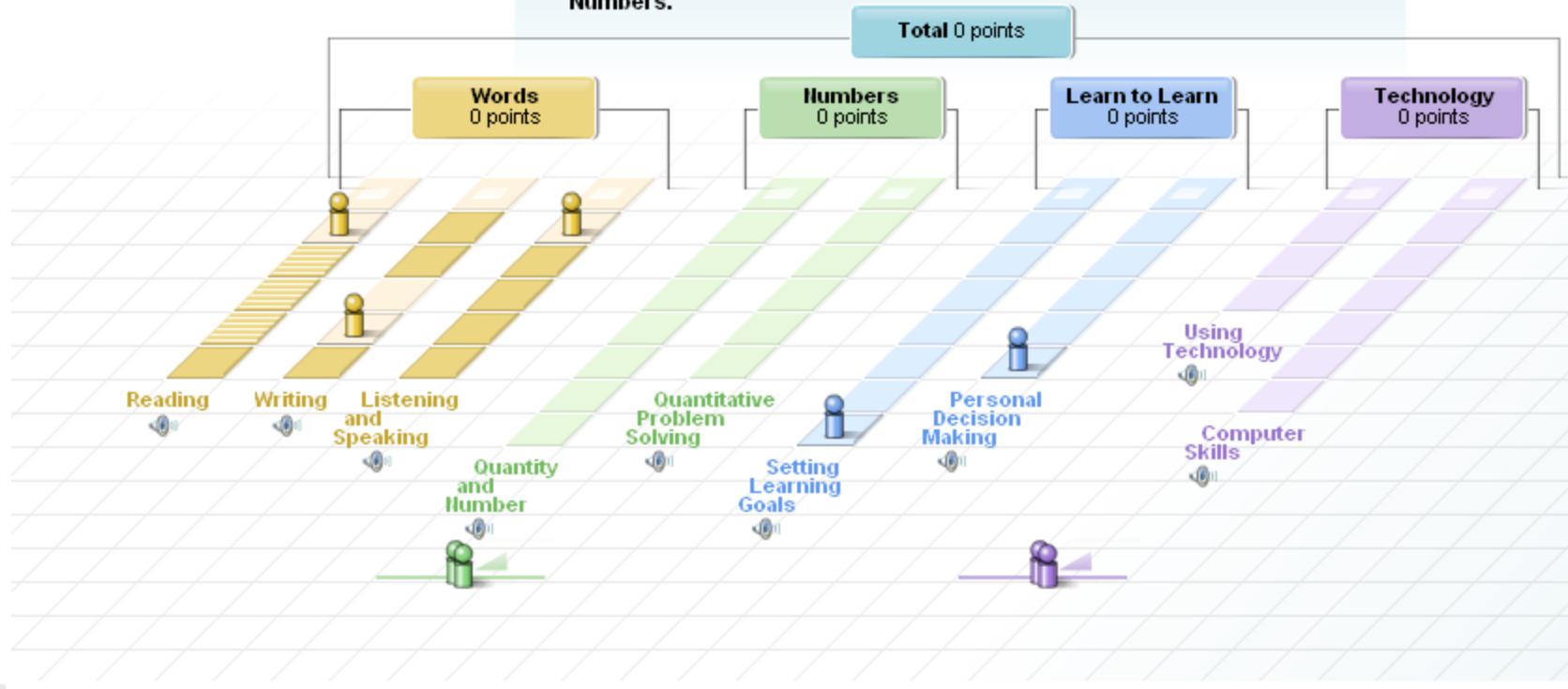
Entertainment

Communication

are still working on
site, please report
problems by
ing > NALA on 1-
20-20-65 or e-
ing
ara@nala.ie for
a support.

To start learning, move the mouse over the figures and click the start button.

To receive the Level 2 Certificate in General Learning, you must get 30 points. You must also complete one award from Words and one award from Numbers.



Conclusion

- Demand for higher and changing skills
- Need to address the issue in the workplace - particularly important with new technologies and vulnerable workers
- There is a business case for this!
- Should design the solution based on needs of the learner and the capability of the provider
- Use blended approaches to reinforce and enhance learning

Further information

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