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Further Education Centre
The Neale Road
Ballinrobe
Co. Mayo

Literacy and Numeracy Policy at Ballinrobe Youthreach

Introduction

Our Centre endeavours to promote a print rich environment that helps Learners embrace literacy and numeracy as a tool that will help them socially, economically and emotionally during their time in Youthreach and afterwards. Many teenagers leave school early because of their lack of literacy and numeracy skills. It is therefore important that literacy and numeracy are an integral part of their time in Youthreach.

What is Literacy?

Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.

What is Numeracy?

Numeracy is not limited to the ability to use numbers, to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Numeracy encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skill to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living in complex social settings.

(Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People, 2011-2020)



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Our Aims

- To encourage reading, writing, listening, speaking and numeracy skills.
- To integrate literacy and numeracy into all classes in the Centre.
- To promote a print-rich environment.
- To assess learner's literacy and numeracy skills and provide the available resources to improve them.
- Use language in different contexts and have the confidence and ability to do so.
- Understand that language they have acquired may be relevant across all areas of their learning and life and to apply that language where possible.

Initial Assessment

- Learner's literacy and numeracy skills are assessed during the induction phase into the programme. This is achieved both formally and informally.
- The Schonnel Graded Reading and Spelling tests are carried out and a reading and spelling age is calculated from the results.
- Learners presenting with difficulties from the said results are further assessed by Wrat IV (Wide Range Achievement Test). This is an approved test when applying for Reasonable Accommodations to the State Exams Commission for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert Applied learners. (Started in the academic year 2011-2012).
- CAT III testing is also carried out with LCA learners who need a reader for state examinations
- During this Initial Assessment period, teachers observe the work of the Learner in their classroom and informally assess their literacy and numeracy skills.



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- Results are then collated and goals are set for each learner.

Integrated Literacy and Numeracy Methodologies

Learners with Literacy and Numeracy difficulties are integrated into all classes in the centre. Methodologies are used to promote an inclusive environment. Such methodologies include:

- Differentiated lesson plans
- Word banks and posters
- The centre has a print rich environment where signs with text, pictures and relevant numeracy posters are displayed on walls and notice boards.
- Word searches are used in lessons to highlight the key words for that class.
- Teachers give assistance to learners with literacy and numeracy issues within the classroom.
- Students with difficulties are seated in areas of the room where they can be easily observed and given extra help without it being obvious.
- Reading for Leisure: magazines and newspapers are available for learners to browse and read about issues that are of interest to them. They can be available in paper format and on the internet.
- Relevant games to suit numeracy topics are played as the year progresses.
- Pair work and group work are encouraged in all classes which help the development of speaking/communication skills.
- Learners are encouraged to engage in conversation inside and outside the classroom with fellow learners and teachers.



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Extra literacy and numeracy classes

A limited amount of time is available for extra literacy and numeracy classes. Learners with the greatest needs are prioritised for these classes. These classes are given on an individual/ small group basis. Whilst we are aware that students may lose time out of their timetabled classes, the importance of these classes take precedence over any other classes.

Conclusion

The staff at Youthreach Ballinrobe are aware that the learners learn in different ways and therefore a variety of teaching strategies is used to enhance teaching numeracy and literacy skills. Building confidence is a key element to a person improving their numeracy and becoming literate, every attempt at building the confidence of each Learner is pursued in the centre.

The policy is renewed yearly as new resources and methodologies appear every year. Since the last review, we have introduced the CAT III testing.

Reviewed: June 2016