

EU Project: Professionalization of Literacy and Basic Education – Basic Modules for Teacher Training: TRAIN

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION

Country report Belgium Summary

1. General description of the situation regarding professionalization of basic skills teachers

The professionalization of basic skills teachers is supported by the communities' policies and the expert organisms Lire et Ecrire, French organisation, and VOCD, the Flemish Support Agency for Adult Basic Education. Many centres organise training courses for people who are either already involved in literacy teaching or who want to become involved. These courses are intended both for unpaid volunteers and for paid staff. Depending on the cases, it takes 6 to 20 days per year, and deals with subjects concerning:

- The causes and consequences of functional/total illiteracy;
- Analysis of the concerned populations;
- A first approach to the pedagogy and the means available to tackle this problem.

Even if the qualification as a teacher is not required and the status is different from status of a teacher, an in-service training is compulsory for the educational collaborators. Then continued training courses are organised for people actively involved in literacy teaching and who want to develop their skills and improve their practical work.

2. National professionalisation policy / program

Description	After drawing up a reference document for "The Profile of a Literacy Educator", two Social Promotion schools in the French community have launched a course leading to the qualification of 'Literacy Educator'.
Priorities / Aims / goals	<p>The guidelines of the strategic literacy plan in Flanders, elaborated in 2005 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational definition of Literacy - Implementation of a quickscan instrument for the detection of literacy risks in job-seekers - Research on the necessity and the possibility of an instrument for thorough literacy screening, to be used for placement in adult education and training - Integrated training pathways taking into account the literacy level of the participant - Inclusion of objectives and actions in the Flemish action plan on poverty prevention - Flexibilisation of the educational offer in adult basic education (→ alternating learning + on-the-job literacy training)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up of school projects in mainstream education - Communication and sensibilisation actions
Target group(s)	Practitioners (teachers, trainers, counsellors...), project coordinators, and organism leaders in the field of literacy and basic education
time span	Since 2005
financial resources	Communities' authorities and the framework of the European Social Fund

3. Current situation for literacy trainers / practitioners

As well as the "traditional" voluntary organisations which have become specialists in the organisation of literacy courses for adults, a variety of initiatives have also sprung up, attempting to fight illiteracy on a voluntary basis. The trainers / practitioners have a background in education or social work, or in some cases, industry and services. They have a variety of knowledge, skills, experience, but no real training to teach adults, native-speakers or non-native speakers, functional or total illiterates. Internal training courses have been organised to enable them to acquire techniques and reach professional standards. The case is that no "turnkey" training courses are available for literacy teachers.

The training courses are not developed haphazardly, but rather in constant interaction between methodological and didactic issues, aimed at taking into account the experience and priorities of the learners and preserving strong ties with the social, cultural and political context.

4. Description of Best Practice / literacy teacher course

Name	LITERACY EDUCATOR
Target groups	A wide range of participants, qualified or not, whether or not they work in basic education.
Duration	1620 hours organised in progressive fashion over 3 years of study.
Qualification/level	Higher pedagogical course for social promotion of short type by the French Community of Belgium.
Goal	It will enable educators or future educators to acquire a solid professional qualification.
content (broadly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to adult literacy teaching - Methodology and didactics of learning - Illiteracy, literacy education - Communication adapted to the professional context - Methodology and didactics of learning specific languages - Communication adapted to literacy learners - Construction and evaluation of specific programmes - Practical immersion, insertion and integration placement - Group leadership and conflict management - Assistance with social and cultural integration - Professional ethics - Integrated assessment

5. Competences – Framework

Reporting to "The Profile of a Literacy Educator", the main competencies required for the teacher in adult basic education in Belgium are:

Ability to have a self analysis one's own way of working

Knowledge of the different training programs and of the legislation governing adult education

Ability to develop projects with actors from the social field, the culture field and the economic field

Ability to team work

Ability to encourage the learner's participation and responsibility to his/her own training

Capability to carry out environment linked collective projects with the group

Ability to think over learning mechanism

Ability to formalise his/her own practices, to keep written documents for the record and to allow any further analysis
 Knowledge of the various pedagogical trends
 Ability to analyse and to identify each learner's starting point, to create and articulate pedagogical sequences coherent to the defined goals and to choose, create and / or adapt necessary tools
 Ability to carry out formative assessment practices
 Ability to encourage shared work
 Ability to manage difficulties linked to group life
 Knowledge of communication principles and technique, and ability to use them

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