

Deaf Communication

“About 1 in 5 adults have low literacy skills. Deaf adults are twice as likely to have literacy problems as hearing adults” RNID

Kenneth Macintosh MSP, Vice Convenor of the Cross Party Group on Deafness and Member of the Education Committee, launched the Deaf Communication Report at Donaldson’s College at the start of September. The report was commissioned by The City of Edinburgh Council Community Education Service, Edinburgh’s Further Education Colleges and Donaldson’s College and was funded by CLAN Edinburgh.

Janet Allan, Principle of Donaldson’s College, welcomed everyone to the college and underlined how pleased Donaldson’s was to have supported the research project.

Angus Whyte from CLAN thanked Fiona Henderson, the author of the report, and was keen to emphasise that the launch of the report was only the start. He said

“For many people this might be the end of the effort, but we will be meeting with the steering committee and Fiona to look at her recommendations ... I am certain they will show us the way forward ... we will push for further development from the report, so watch this space”.

Kenneth Macintosh underlined the importance of access to education for all. He reported that a recent national debate on education in Scotland revealed

“... anyone who has a barrier to learning in this country does not get the best start in life, they are held back and develop low self esteem ... there is an opportunity gap”.

He highlighted the following recommendations from the report

- The need for an increase in the number of trained Deaf British Sign Language tutors of literacies
- An increased number of BSL interpreters
- Greater awareness of Deaf issues and culture
- Raise awareness within the Deaf community that some hearing people also have problems with literacy
- Deaf adult learners can study in a learning situation with other deaf learners and be involved in shaping the learning programme

In conclusion, Kenneth said

“This is a good time for deaf learners ... working at a time when there is a great deal of awareness and resources available. The change in the Disability Discrimination Act in October will wake up providers to the practical steps they can take for people who have barriers to learning ... I hope we can put a number of these recommendations into practice”.

Fiona Henderson and the steering group look forward to seeing the recommendations of this report being taken forward by CLAN to ensure that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Edinburgh are given the same literacy/numeracy learning opportunities as hearing people.

The report can be downloaded from the Web at www.clanedinburgh.org/deafcomm





How to run a reminiscence group

LIVING MEMORY ASSOCIATION (LMA) is a unique organisation in Scotland which exists to promote oral and community history and which holds an invaluable photographic archive of 1,100 images presenting a fascinating glimpse into the social history of Edinburgh and beyond for present and future generations to value and enjoy.

In July, LMA appointed John McCaughie as a Reminiscence Trainer to work with volunteers and workers involved with elderly people. He has planned a training day entitled 'How to run a reminiscence group' on Friday 5 November at The Engine Shed, 19 St Leonard's Lane, Edinburgh.

John said

"The LMA is anxious to improve the training opportunities available in all aspects of reminiscence work. These range from how to set up a reminiscence group to using recording equipment and organising exhibitions of a group's work".

As Tutor Organiser with the Workers' Educational Association, John has worked closely with tutors and volunteers organising induction and training courses and he has had experience in the development and delivery of training materials. He is able to offer training and advice to individuals and groups. The training is flexible and responsive to the needs of the volunteers and workers and can be organised in-house.

For further information contact John on 0131 667 0761. Email: john@livingmemory.org.uk

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK AWARDS

The Scottish Adult Learning Partnership (SALP) will be holding workshops in October at various venues throughout Scotland to help support practitioners in completing the new nomination forms for the 2005 Adult Learner's Week Award Ceremony. There are three sets of awards:

1. For adults aged over 21 who have been out of learning for more than 3 years
2. For young adults aged 16-25 who have been out of learning for more than 2 years
3. Tutor Awards for tutors who have worked tirelessly to support students in learning.

Practitioners will be able to hear ideas and tips from previous nominators on how they completed their forms; how important it was for me to win an award from some of the learners and what you can do locally to raise the profile of your work through the awards.

For details of the dates and venues for the workshops contact SALP. Tel: 0131 220 5567. Email: salp@salp.org.uk

SIGHTHILL ESOL GROUP

The multi-cultural ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) reading group at Sighthill Library is a great example of how a library can combine so successfully with community education. Members heard of the group by coming into their local library, CLAN backed it and provides the tutor (and crèche if needed) with the resources of the library, including the dictionaries, books, newspapers and computers supporting the learning.

The group that spans Europe, Africa and Asia meet to share ideas, thoughts and ambitions. The subjects covered are as varied as the interests of the members: today the topic was wind farms as this is a subject close to the heart of one of the group (who is preparing a letter to the council to ask why more is not done to help us to recycle waste).

While light-hearted subjects are just as welcome, and the right of every member to suggest a subject is respected, it is the more serious side of life which prompts the most profound thoughts. This is well illustrated by the following piece written by one of the students.

The 15th anniversary of the massacre of student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in 1989

Theoretically, we cannot imagine we can live without freedom but the fact is otherwise. It is so distressing for me when I read this article of the killing of hundreds of honest people without any crime except calling for freedom. I think freedom is a human right for every person.

It is quite a surprise to me when I see birds flying, singing, floating in the sky happily. I feel jealous because as human beings we cannot sometimes get the same.

I felt so sorry for those people who were killed that day. But at the same time, their families should be proud of them because they taught all the world a very good lesson although it was so painful.

24 June 2004

This ESOL group is open to all, and it is the members who determine how it develops. Everyone is united by a wish to build on the English acquired so far, whether it is a little or a lot, and everyone with ideas (in other words, everyone) is welcome. The more people who join, and share their ideas the more interesting for the group and so we hope others will come to Sighthill Library, 6 Sighthill Wynd (just off Broomhouse Road), on Thursdays 10.00 am - 12.00 noon every week.



Adult literacy and numeracy services at Portobello Learning Festival - 11.9.04



In this edition we are focussing on Web material designed for ESL/ESOL learners. Many of these items would be useful to work on in pairs rather than individually, with the dialogue between learners adding to the learning experience.

The English Language Study Zone (at University of Victoria, British Columbia) has a mixture of reading, grammar and writing activities grouped around five levels of difficulty. The site can be found at <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/index.htm>

PROS: The material is well presented. Particularly good are the reading activities which are based on a short piece (try the Nesreddin stories in the third level) where the learner first completes a multiple choice task, then rebuilds the story from a choice of sentences and finally fills in the gaps in a summary.

CONS: The home page looks unfriendly as it presents the levels in the form of numbers (200, 330, 410, etc.) that doesn't mean much to an external user but do press on!

Activities for ESL students is a collection of quizzes, activities and puzzles covering grammar, vocabulary, idioms and homonyms. It can be found at <http://a4esl.org/>

Quizzes are listed by general type (grammar, vocabulary, crosswords) and level of difficulty or by type and browser requirements (e.g. HTML or Javascript). You have to choose one of these options before reaching a list of topics. As there are over 1000 activities to try, it may take some time to find what you need.

PROS: Unusually this site features bilingual quizzes. Over 35 languages are available including Urdu, Chinese, Turkish and Romanian. Quizzes cover useful vocabulary such as body parts, colours and numbers.

CONS: Many activities use a fairly basic click on right answer or fill the gap method which gives little advantage over pen and paper.

English for Everybody's Game Zone has twenty games for developing a variety of skills in using verb tenses, spelling, vocabulary, parts of speech and numbers. The site is at www.english-online.org.uk/games/gamezone2.htm

PROS: Some items are quite colourful or fun. You might try the Frog Games where you match past to present tenses, the self-explanatory Verb, Noun or Both? and also Make or Do? where you choose whether make or do goes with nouns such as homework, or the garden. Also useful is The Letter Game where you try to make up words from a grid of nine letters with the program accepting or rejecting them.

Community Learning Databases

Edinburgh's Community Learning Strategy aims to have information about learning opportunities available to all citizens and organisations. Over the last 18 months key partners have been working on developing Edinburgh's Community Grid for Learning (EGfL) to offer:

- individual citizens access to information and resources about learning opportunities
- learning organisations access to tools and support to put learning opportunities online
- community learning partnerships and providers access to statistics about local learning.

CONS: The quality is variable. Number Hunt requires you to click on scrambled and moving digits that match a written number which is very difficult! Similarly, Quality Control asks you to click on the misspellings in a 'production line' of moving words. The Prefixes Game is a good idea but doesn't work well.

English Club for ESL learners has lessons and activities covering a wide range of topics at <http://learners.englishclub.com/>

The useful 'hotlinks' list to the resources available allows learners to review prefixes, prepositions, tenses, etc. The quizzes section provides reinforcement covering grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The activities are mainly based on dropdown lists where the learner chooses an example or completes a sentence (e.g. Noun = determination, react, but ... A builder = looks after our bodies, constructs houses ...). These would be good for students to work on in pairs.

PROS: There is a clear home page with a clear choice of lessons or interactive pages. Some students (and tutors) would find the Business English section useful and the Frequently Asked Questions section that attempts to explain the peculiarities of English. In the games section the matching tasks look useful.

CONS: There is a lot on the site and you need to focus on the parts that suit your needs. It is based on US English and there are some distracting flashing adverts.

Free software (suitable for Mac or PC), is available from Bruce Laidlaw: Practice Your English, Practice Your Verbs and Practice Your Stress - which are all suitable for ESL learners. Students can practise common patterns in English, tag questions, verbs, homophones, etc. The programs can be downloaded from www.angelfire.com/ab2/literacy/win.html

PROS: The material was rated excellent by a Canadian Software Evaluation Project making comparisons with commercial products. It is possible to customise them for your learners. There is an interesting paper on the site describing the full set of programs and how they have been used in workplace courses.

CONS: You need to download the programs you want together with a file of sounds and WinPlus (if you don't already have it and you are using Windows) and then install each of these which may be a bit time consuming.

FEEDBACK I would welcome feedback on any of the sites or software we have featured in Beans or suggestions for future editions. Contact Catherine Macrae on 0131 270 6034 / 652 3938 or by email: catherine@clanedinburgh.org

Up to 20 community grids for learning are being created along with a central community learning portal, **myEdinburgh**. Most of the technical components are now in place and a cross-city training programme on the use of the online tools is being delivered by Cityconnect. The first pilots have now been completed and learning opportunities in some areas are already online at www.westedinburgh.org.uk

We would like to ensure, that as far as possible, all literacy and numeracy learning opportunities are included on the database. Fiona Holmes will initially make contact with CLAN project workers to gather information about the various groups.

For more information contact Pete McDougall. Tel: 0131 557 9051 or 07815 885104. Email: pete@cityconnect.org.uk

Edinburgh City Wide Literacies Forum

Saturday 30 October
at McDonald Road Library

Please register as soon as possible
or by Thursday 14 October.
Email: mags@clanedinburgh.org
or phone Gillian/Mags: 0131 270
6070.

Lunch will be available for everyone
and also an attendance allowance of
£15 for literacies tutors employed on a
sessional basis.

MORNING SESSION

Catching Confidence Nina Dutton and Jane Ward

This session will discuss the findings and research tools of a small-scale action research study conducted by NIACE into learners' and practitioners' views on the development of confidence in relation to learning. They will start by using one of their research activities to share views on different levels of confidence. They will then discuss the findings in relation to:

- indicators of confidence
- how increased confidence made a difference to both learning and wider areas of students' lives
- ways in which learning brought about increased confidence.

They will then try out the Catching Confidence tool they designed for the research. This activity supports learners to identify changes in confidence in different aspects of their lives as their learning journey progresses. Finally they will explore ways in which you could use this tool with your learners.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Reflective Practitioners Fiona McDonald *Learning Connections*

This session will focus on the benefits for learners and tutors, on some theory and practical exercises:

- what is reflection?
- definitions
- barriers and how to address them
- practical ways of being a reflective practitioner

Adult Literacies Development Worker - Voluntary Sector

Temporary to March 2006

AP4-5 £19,633 - £24,397 (bar at £22,397)

Edinburgh University Settlement is looking for an enthusiastic, creative and experienced adult literacies worker to develop literacies work in the voluntary sector in Edinburgh. This will involve both capacity-building within organisations and delivery of literacies to service users.

You will lead a small team of staff developing innovative approaches to delivering literacy and numeracy integrated into other learning opportunities and will be educated to degree level (Community Education, Adult Education or equivalent).

Funded by CLAN Edinburgh, you will contribute towards their goals of engaging new learners and improving quality of provision, particularly through adoption of the developing national training framework.

An enhanced Disclosure Scotland check will be required for this position.

Edinburgh University Settlement is an equal opportunities employer.

Enquiries may be made to Margaret Durie, Programme Co-ordinator. Tel: 0131 550 6808.

Job description and application packs available from Kate Brock at 2nd Chance to Learn, Building 3, New Parliament House, 5-7 Regent Road, Edinburgh EH7 5BL. Tel: 0131 550 6805. Email: kateb@2ctl.org.uk

The closing date is Friday 8 October 2004. Interviews from Monday 18 October, 2004.

Learners' Planning Meeting

Saturday 2 October

10.00 am - 1.00 pm

Nelson Room, McDonald Road Library

In the last issue of Beans we featured the June Learners' Event. Following on from the comments we received from learners at that event, we are going to hold a planning meeting for learners to talk about their ideas and to take them forward. Please help make this event a success. Here are some suggested action points.

- **Letting folk know** Let learners know about the meeting, where and when it's taking place and talk in your groups about the possibility of coming along.
- **Getting there** If learners need support to come along, offer to chum them, if possible.
- **Support** If some learners need ongoing support at this event, make sure this is in place and let us know.

Crèche places to be booked by Friday 24 September. Lunch will be available. If you have any questions about the planning meeting or if there are learners you work with who are interested, please get in touch with Lorraine at CLAN. Tel: 0131 270 6072. Email: Lorraine@clanedinburgh.org

If you would like to contribute to future issues of 'Beans', please send your contribution to Fiona Holmes, CLAN Edinburgh, 1-3 Canon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5HE.

Tel: 0131 270 6073. Fax: 0131 270 6074.

Email: fiona@clanedinburgh.org

Web: www.clanedinburgh.org

